**Journals and Reading Responses**

Over the course of the semester, you will turn in five journal assignments and five reading responses. These writings will be brief (one page) and less formal than your other essays, but they should be no less rigorous in thought. They should be typed, printed, and brought with you to class.

**Journals**

I will post the prompts for each journal assignment on my course website. These short writings will give you a space to practice a new skill, experiment with style, and take risks with your writing in a low-pressure context.

**Reading Responses**

Your task for reading responses will always be the same. On days marked “Up for Discussion,” to practice critical reading conscientiously and to prepare for discussion**,** you will prepare a response to the reading assignment for that day. These responses should answer that day’s leading question (as marked on the course schedule) by including

* at least one quotes of interest from the reading
* one reference to an outside source you have read on your own that demonstrates you have done your own outside research on that day’s reading (and a citation for that reference)
* one question or idea that could spur discussion among your classmates

As these reading responses are a means to an end, I will be evaluating you not just on *what*you write in these responses but *how*you use them in discussion.

**“Up for Discussion” Days**

Because this course emphasizes the art of argumentation—rhetoric—discussions will be a place for you to deliberate with your fellow students; they will, therefore, be student-oriented and student-run, built around the readings for that day. Through discussion, you will demonstrate your critical reading skills and learn by talking and listening to your peers, practicing argument as turns in conversation. On these days, you will not be evaluated on your participation individually, but rather, as a class.

**Evaluation**

Each journal entry and reading response will count for up to 1% of your final grade for a total of a maximum of 10%. Journals will be assessed according to the following standards:

**Check plus (3 points):**Responds fully and thoughtfully to the prompt. Demonstrates engagement with the relevant readings and/or writing skills. Uses appropriate and fresh expression and an appropriate tone and style for the assignment. For reading responses, the student participates in discussion with their prepared remarks or ideas. Meets the length requirement.

**Check (2 points):** Responds to the prompt, but in a more superficial way. Attempts to engage with the relevant readings or writing skills. Uses appropriate tone and style for the assignment. Meets the length requirement.

**Check minus (1 point):** Does not respond to the prompt.  Does not attempt to engage with the relevant readings and/or writing skills. Does not use fresh expressions or appropriate tone and style. Does not meet the length requirement.

**Journal/Reading Response Grading Scale:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **POINTS** |  |  |  |  |  | **GRADE** |
| **30** |  |  |  |  |  | *A* |
| **28** |  |  |  |  |  | *A-* |
| **26** |  |  |  |  |  | *B+* |
| **25** |  |  |  |  |  | *B* |
| **24** |  |  |  |  |  | *B-* |
| **23** |  |  |  |  |  | *C+* |
| **22** |  |  |  |  |  | *C* |
| **20** |  |  |  |  |  | *D* |
| **<17** |  |  |  |  |  | *F* |