Suggested Materials

- One notebook specifically designated as your reading journal.
- A folder to keep typed and graded reader responses.

A requirement for this course is that you respond in writing to every reading assignment listed on the course schedule. Every time you read, you will need to follow through by writing a two paragraph response to the reading. The purpose of the reader response assignment is to get you writing and writing a lot, and also to practice summary and the use of direct quotation. Writing skills improve through practice, and also writing reader responses prepares you for class discussion and writing the longer essays. Hopefully, you will share the ideas, questions, and opinions that you arrive at while writing and in that way contribute to an active classroom environment.

The syllabus and the “Required Assignments Checklist” both list the dates when reader responses are due. As you work on your reader response follow the pattern: read, write, then revise, type and edit. All reader responses must be typed before they are turned in for a grade. Reader responses are due six times throughout the semester and count for a total 20% of your grade. In order to pass the course you must turn in six typed reader responses written at a passing level of competency.

Technical concerns:

1. Each reader response must be typed before turning it in for a grade. Typing your responses helps me read what you wrote, but also encourages you to revise and clarify your thoughts. Have you written what you meant to say?
2. Use 12 point Times New Roman font and double space.
3. When quoting directly from the text, use MLA citation format. For complete guidelines, refer to the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.
4. Use a separate folder to keep graded reader response entries. You may want to use these in your longer essays, so don’t lose them.

How to get started:

1. Take notes. Go ahead and write in the margins of your book. (If you are planning on selling back the book, use post-it notes. You may also write your notes in a separate notebook that you designate for this purpose.) As you read, find strong passages and underline these passages or mark the margin with a check. Write yourself a note as to why you found this passage intriguing or puzzling. Write in the margin, on post-it notes or in your reading notebook.
2. When you’re done reading, go back and reread the marked passages and your notes. Stop and think about what you found intriguing or puzzling.
3. Pick one concept, idea, or section in the reading that interests you the most. Summarize this concept or idea in your own words. (Either talk it out in your head or free write your thoughts.)
4. Find a quote that supports your summary.
5. Now you’re ready to write up your two paragraph reading response.
Writing the Reading Response:

The specific topics of the reading responses are up to you, but your reading response must include a summary paragraph with a direct quotation and a response paragraph that presents your own ideas, thoughts and opinions—two paragraphs total.

Summary Paragraph:

1. Begin by stating the author’s name, the title of the article, and the article’s main point:
   a. In “Latinos in Santa Cruz County” Juan Mendoza describes the range of jobs Latinos work at in Santa Cruz county.
2. Continue summarizing the article by paraphrasing details and points made by the author.
3. In the middle of the paragraph, add a direct quotation from the article that supports what you have just summarized. Remember to always introduce a direction quotation with author’s last name:
   b. Mendoza relates that “ many Latinos . . .” (13).
4. After the quote, explain why the quote is important, interesting, and something that the reader should understand.
5. Add a transition sentence to your next paragraph.

Response Paragraph:

You can write about anything that connects and relates to the summary paragraph. Remember these two paragraphs discuss the same subject, but in the response paragraph you’re presenting your own ideas, thoughts and opinions. You may try any of the following:

1. Write about your emotional response while reading the article. Did you feel excited, angry, confused, upset, happy, like a light just went on in your head? Explain your emotional response while reading and be sure to analyze why you felt that way.
2. Explain to the reader why the ideas presented in the summary paragraph are important. What do they need to know and understand?
3. Connect the reading to your own personal experience. Does the text remind you of something in your own life?
4. Argue with the text. Do you agree or disagree?
5. Evaluate the text. Would you recommend this text to others? Why or why not?

Grading Criteria:

1. Two paragraphs total; first summarizes the article and includes a quote, while the second presents your ideas and opinion.
2. Clarity of expression, thoughts, and ideas.
3. Proofread for spelling errors, grammatical mistakes.
4. Engagement with the material. Insight. Effort.