

## INDEPENDENT MA SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT

For your MA Summer Reading, you will have to prepare a list of 10 works subject to Faculty approval and submitted no later than Week 10 of Spring term of your first year prior to the MA Independent Summer Reading Assignment. The list should contain: 10 sources, including 1 to 2 secondary/critical sources.

The books must belong to no more than two of the periods defined by the MA program, and five of the books must be taken from the Departmental Reading List. At least one of the texts should be a literary history or a similar text about the period. This approved list (signed by the faculty advisor) will be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies before the end of the spring term.

**\*The assignment should be mainly a one-page, single space, reader response to every primary source in your Summer Reading List, which means a total of ten pages. The student should submit this dossier to the Graduate Studies Coordinator and the Director of Graduate Studies during the Friday of Week 1 in the Fall term of the second year of the MA.**

**\*In fall term, students will register for a 4-credit, PASS/NO PASS RL 605 with the Director of Graduate Studies as instructor of record. This course number corresponds to independent summer reading and MA forum.**

Please read below the guidelines for both the **Reader Response Assignment for Primary Sources** and the **Annotated Bibliography Assignment for Secondary/Critical Bibliography**.

### READER RESPONSE ASSIGNMENT FOR PRIMARY SOURCES

A reader response assignment asks you to explain and defend your personal critical reaction to an assigned text. In this case, you will provide **one-page, single space response paper to every primary source** in your **Summer Reading List**. Reader response papers can be difficult because they force you, the reader, to take responsibility for giving meaning to the text. Often these assignments feel open-ended and vague, but a good reader response paper will follow a standard essay format that you can easily master. This guide will walk you through the creation of a well-crafted reader response paper.

#### **STEP 1. Pay close attention to what you're reading.**

This may seem too obvious to even say, but we're saying it anyway. You can't put together a solid response to something you've read without giving it your full attention. Pore over the text carefully, take your time and complete a close reading of the work. Take notes in the book's margins or on a separate sheet of paper if you think that will help. In fact, beyond just assisting retention, taking notes can help you engage your mind with the reading material early. That makes it easier to craft a response to that material when you're finally called upon to do so.

#### **STEP 2. Find an angle to take with your response.**

Don't just regurgitate plot points or key developments in whatever you read, or all you're doing is writing a summary. Be critical. Look beneath the surface to try to discover the mechanisms by which the text you're reading operates. You can do this whether you're reading fiction or nonfiction. Ask yourself *meta-questions*. Why do story elements unfold the way they do, beyond what is stated? Why did the author structure things a certain way? How does what you're reading compare and contrast with other, similar stories? How do the in-text elements of what you've just consumed relate to the real world outside the text?

**STEP 3. Craft your angle into an argument.**

You've got something unique and interesting to say about what you just read. Now you must tell your audience why it's unique and interesting. Your argument forms the heart of your paper. Take all the observations you made in step two and forge the ones that most compellingly work together into a pointed claim. Why are your observations correct, and why do they matter? You've got something to prove.

**STEP 4. Draw up an outline.**

This is especially helpful if you have trouble committing your thoughts to paper and find that your essays tend to meander. Essay organization and outline building can significantly increase clarity and decrease the overall time it takes to write an essay. Create broad plans for your work before you start writing.

**STEP 5. Provide relevant textual examples.**

If argument forms the backbone of your paper, textual details are the meat. Make sure you can back up any and all of your assertions with textual evidence, either from your primary source or from other writings (if you care to or are made to do additional research). Supporting details are an important part of making an argument. Use expressive language to make your points, favoring action verbs and active voice. At the same time, keep an eye on the economy of your language - much as we discussed in step four, you don't want to inundate readers with too much extra detail. That means curtailing flowery word usage that doesn't really accomplish anything and knowing how much evidence you need to provide to back up your claims.

**STEP 6. Proofread!**

Again, this one seems obvious, but it bears stating. Have you heard the phrase 'writing is rewriting?' That's what this means. Proofreading is an essential step in the writing process. Read over your short paper, making sure everything flows like you intend it to and that you provide sufficient support for the arguments you're making. Check for basic errors like spelling and grammar mistakes as well as more content-based issues like ill-explained terms or flimsy points. Your text will reap the rewards.

**FORMAT REQUIREMENTS**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- One page per primary source, double-sided</li><li>- Times New Roman, 12-point font</li><li>- 1-inch margins</li><li>- Single spaced</li><li>- One continuous document</li><li>- Header:<br/>Summer Reading List <span style="float: right;">Your Name – Page number</span><br/>Reader Response Assignment</li><li>-all pages stapled in the order you chose, with your reading list as a cover page</li><li>-Bibliographic entry of the primary source following MLA Guidelines:<br/><a href="https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/">https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/</a></li><li>-DEADLINE: Friday of Week 1 Fall term (to Graduate Coordinator)</li></ul> |
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UO Romance Languages Department  
MA Summer Reading Assignment  
Guidelines

### **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR SECONDARY/CRITICAL SOURCES ASSIGNMENT**

You may find models for Annotated Bibliographies following these links:

<http://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography>

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/03/>

<https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/AnnotatedBibliography.html>

**ASSESSMENT:** Pass/No Pass

Each student's summer reading dossier (reader's responses and annotated bibliographies) will be distributed evenly among RL faculty for P/NP evaluation based on the criteria above.