

Reading Briefs

City after Civil Rights

AS.230.354

Prof. Michael Bader

Every week, you will submit a response brief on Blackboard. Each response brief should do each of the following:

1. *Briefly summarize* of the main argument and supporting evidence for each reading
2. *Synthesize the main arguments* of the readings in one to two sentences
3. *Identify at least one aspect* of the readings you found confusing or difficult to understand
4. *Describe* at least one aspect of the readings that you found interesting and would like to discuss more.

You should aim, by the end of the semester, to get the summaries of each reading down to no more than two or three sentences. The summary should be able to identify the *main argument* of the piece and the *primary evidence* that supports the argument. One way to think about the summary is to imagine you are writing a literature review where you are summarizing dozens of pieces and to think about what you would write to describe that one piece.

The synthesis allows you to use your creativity to think about how the pieces go together. I have ideas about how the pieces I assigned each week connect to one another, but you might see different ways that they do—or you may even challenge the connections that I see. I want you to practice *drawing connections* across pieces when you synthesize them.

We will have opportunities to develop these skills over the semester, so they do not need to be perfect from the start. Do your best, and please ask questions if you end up confused or needing more direction!