

# Class Preparation

## Assignments

### Assignment Overview

- Includes written questions or observations about course readings or drafts of writing-in-progress
- Students will prepare individually
- Due nearly every class period

### Reading Responses

For most classes, you will be assigned articles or books to read, files to watch, websites to browse, or even games to play prior to class. We will discuss strategies for attending closely to these texts throughout this class, but in general you should not skim. You should pay close attention, note interesting ideas, and ask questions. You will like some of our texts and dislike others, but you should engage them all; don't stop at "I like this" or "I don't like this." Instead, think about what the text is trying to say, and how it's trying to say it. Think about the choices made by its creator—stylistic, tonal, ideological—and how those choices contribute to the text's success or failure. Compare one text with others, whether from our class, from your other classes, or from independent reading.

In order to help you attend closely to our course texts and prepare for each class, you should prepare 3 questions or observations prior to any meeting in which we will discuss assigned texts. These reading responses will serve as prompts for our conversation and demonstrate your initial engagement with the ideas of our class. Your responses should be written down and ready to submit at the beginning of class. In order for your reading responses to be "Satisfactory," they should, in general:

1. Get beyond basic questions or observations of fact and instead work toward questions or observations of significance.
2. Demonstrate close thought about the themes, style, arguments and other elements of our texts, as well as about the relationships among them.

3. Emerge from (and refer to) specific ideas, pages, quotations, scenes, &c. from our assigned texts rather than broad or generic concepts.
4. Genuinely open toward discussion and debate during class (i.e. no leading the witness, your honor).

Reading responses will be deemed “Unsatisfactory” when they indicate lack of preparation or inattentive reading, and will have consequences as outlined in your grading contract.

## **Drafts of Writing-in-Progress**

Throughout the semester you will work on a number of extended writing projects. I have set aside several class periods for in-class workshops and writing development, generally Thursdays every other week. On these days, you should come to class with a draft of your current writing project in hand, ready for review and feedback from your peers or from me. In order for these classes to be marked “Satisfactory,” you simply need to verify with me that you have your draft in hand at the beginning of class.