Mass Media Studies - LAIS 415 Prof. Jon A. Leydens

**Guidelines for Analytic Reading Memos (ARMs)**

*General*

* Write your ARM about ONE reading, not everything assigned for that class. The schedule will indicate which reading you should address so that we have good coverage of all the readings assigned.
* 1 page (single space, 12pt font, 1.0 inch left and right margins.)
* Use a small header that includes your name, date, and course name.
* Use the title of the reading as your ARM title (e.g., “Virtual integration: How the integration of mass media undermines integration”).
* Use the headings below to label the four parts of the ARM. You do not need to make it a “flowing essay.”
* Proofread your work. Read it aloud and/or give to a friend to check grammar/language/clarity.
* Cite all quotations and connections, including author, date, and page number when relevant (Fejes, 2001, p. 220). If you cite a reading outside the syllabus, add the reference in APA bibliographic form at the end of your ARM, including the URL if available (this does not count toward your page limit).

**Argument**

* This is not a summary, but an explanation of the author’s argument. What is he or she trying to convince you of?
* Consider starting, “Fejes (2001) argues that…”
* Lead with the main point, and follow with sub-arguments according to how much space you have.

**Connection**

* Focus on a *single* connection to another course reading or to a current event article. Do not mention all the readings that have some relationship to the current reading.
* If you connect to a current event, connect to a specific source. It is not enough to make vague allusions to “discussions about the economic crisis” and leave it at that.
* Synthesize: Show the intellectual payoff of connecting these two readings/ideas. It is not enough to simply point out a similarity or the appearance of a concept in both readings. In other words, what do you understand by connecting the two readings that you could not know from only reading one of them?

**Persuasiveness**

* Support your claims about the reading’s persuasiveness with specific evidence from the reading.
* Go beyond discussing whether you “liked” the reading. Wrestle with questions of the quality and quantity of evidence, the logical structure of the argument, the insight provided by examples/case studies, the demonstration of familiarity with other work pertaining to the topic, etc.

**Questions**

* Aim for conceptual questions and avoid factual or highly speculative questions.
* Aim for questions that would provoke an interesting class discussion.
* Explain/clarify/contextualize your questions in the same way that you would if you were to pose them to the class.

*Evaluation -* Each ARM will be graded on a scale:

* 50/50: Inspirational ideas, lucid thinking, outstanding writing, no grammatical or formatting errors.
* 45/50: Demonstration of significant understanding, all sections fulfill goals of the assignment, clear writing with few or no grammatical or formatting errors.
* 42/50: Most sections fulfill goals of assignment and demonstrate reasonable grasp of the reading in question. Mostly clear writing. Some grammatical or formatting errors.
* 36/50: Two or more sections that misinterpret the readings or the assignment. Lack of clear writing. Grammatical and formatting errors.
* 33/50: Significant misunderstanding of the assignment or readings. Unclear writing.

Due dates: Johnson (2/11), Steinhorn/DB (2/20), Fejes (2/25), Kahan et al. (3/18), Nisbet (3/25), The Joneses (4/1)