

SUMMARY ASSIGNMENT

DRAFT DUE: October 2, by class time

FINAL DUE: October 7, by 10am

LENGTH: 400–500 words; please single-space

REQUIREMENTS: Write a summary of an article or book chapter which, like Desmond's book, provides a broad overview or a particular vision of your topic. Your summary should both give space to articulating the main argument of the source and make room for other key points that deserve emphasis. You should use a mixture of limited but key quotes, paraphrasing important ideas, and broad summary to give a sense of the full text. You should not be giving your own opinions about the text or responding to it. You will need to analyze the piece in order to draw out its main ideas, evaluate which parts are most central, and clarify its insights. The best summaries are both accurate and clear as to what an author is arguing, yet nevertheless in their act of distilling, selecting key ideas, do offer an insightful perspective on the text.

OTHER INSTRUCTIONS:

- Your summary should be formatted as follows: single-spaced, with your (preferred) name at the top; your title should be an MLA citation of your text.
- In choosing a text, try to balance what will be particularly helpful for your research (i.e., what is specifically pertinent) and what will also be useful to your peers (i.e., what is of general interest).
- Compose this summary with your fellow classmates in mind, those who have not read the article but may be using your summary in order to decide if they should read it in full. We will be posting these to a shared google doc.
- Use “author tags” so that your reader understands that you are reporting the author's ideas rather than suggesting they are your ideas. Work to integrate paraphrased and quoted source material and use correct formatting for quotes.
- Notes on book chapters: they are perhaps more likely to be useful for this assignment, but it can be tricky to choose one out of a whole long text. I recommend introductions where introductions lay out an author's full argument; even better is to read both the introduction and a specific chapter that is of interest as you can then include a specific argument but also understand its broader context as part of an author's larger argument. (It is acceptable to read book reviews of the book to help you understand the broad argument so long as you do not use them to write your summary.)

RUBRIC:

I grade the papers wholistically, but with attention to the following as characters of an A-grade paper and with approximately equal weight:

- Choosing a good source (20%): use a reliable, broadly relevant, and critically significant source that will shed light on your topic and serve as a good foundation for your research

- Capturing key ideas (20%): report the article's overarching argument accurately, concisely, and as comprehensively as possible. The points presented will be key ones or will make use of key details or specific moments that help to get at these main ideas.
- Finding precision & nuance (20%): articulate those key ideas using careful language that gets at the specific complexity of the article. Words should be chosen carefully, sentences should be expressively written (and not overly complex).
- Formal principles (20%): use quotes accurately, with correct citations (i.e., page numbers), and in support of your points; synthesize and demonstrate insight into the article but do not veer into opinion; organize your summary in an appropriate way for the information you're presenting and so that it will be as useful as possible for your peers
- Other requirements (20%): complete the draft workshop, including turning in a draft and revising it before turning in a final giving your peer feedback; also turn your assignment in on *both* ELMS and to the shared google doc