

JOURNAL PROJECT

PROJECT: To promote critical, reflective engagement with the literature we read this semester and to facilitate class discussions, you will produce a personal **journal** for every assignment—a running reaction to the authors, works, and subjects you encounter during this course. Essentially, this entry will capture your first reactions and/or further considerations as you read (or re-read) the day’s assignment. It is not to check on whether you have done assignments (that is a given); it is to encourage you to think critically about readings, to elucidate questions that you have, to formulate questions to raise in class.

WHAT SHOULD I WRITE? At times, focus questions will be provided to guide your meditations, but routinely your journal should reflect your personal thoughts and/or questions about a reading. Among other possibilities, a successful journal entry can be a series of questions that the text provoked and that you would like to raise with the class; relating a character or event to a personal experience or another work read outside of class; or a brief critical analysis of a passage or character. More creative responses—e.g. short stories, poems, and artwork—are encouraged, but most of your entries should take the more traditional form. **N.B.** entries must be completed **at the time of the assignment**; “catching up” on several entries after the fact is not only drudgery but fails to fulfill the purpose of the assignment. These “catch up” entries will not receive credit. You may always, of course, return to an entry and elaborate or comment on your original entry.

HOW LONG SHOULD ENTRIES BE? The length of entries is less important than their content, but effective entries are generally at least one handwritten page. Not every reading or activity will strike you with the same force and the occasional “light” entry is understandable.

FORMAT: You have two options for the format of your journal:

- 1) *a trusty notebook or binder*: the specific type is guided by your preference. Since your journal will be collected during Week 6 (10/10-10/12), I suggest that you do not use the same notebook that you use for other courses. If you keep your journal in your notebook for this course, I request that you place your journal entries in a separate section. I also request that you refrain from colored inks that are difficult to read (pink, green, etc.).
- 2) *an on-line journal or blog*: If you decide to use a blog for your journal, please send me the link as soon as possible. If you would like to publicize it to your classmates, I am happy to assist. If you are interested in establishing a group blog with other members of the class, please contact me for additional details. Free blogs are available through services such as *Blogger* (blogger.com) and *Wordpress* (wordpress.com).

EVALUATION: Your journal evaluation will be based on your consistent and intelligent consideration of the day’s assignment. Don’t think that you need to “crack” the meaning of a given text or invent a revolutionary new interpretation that will change our perception of existence—although that would definitely earn an “A.” While style, grammar, and spelling are not separately evaluated components of your journal grade; make sure your points are clear (and legible!). A complete rubric for evaluating journals is available on the course website.

DUE: Week 6 (10/10-10/12) and at the end of the Final Class (12/14); but you should always bring your journal to class; you may want to refer to it or add a new comment.

AS ALWAYS, DON’T HESITATE TO CONTACT ME WITH QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS.