

### **Critical Response Notebooks**

An essential part of this class is your ability to critically engage with the texts that we are reading and discussing. To demonstrate this critical engagement, you are required to keep a critical response notebook.

This notebook should contain **one entry per week**. Each entry should be roughly **2 pages typed, double-spaced and in 12-point type**. Please remember to spell-check all entries! Occasionally I will assign the topic for your entry. This assignment will be announced in class and online. If I do not assign a specific topic, the entry should **focus on at least two of the readings** for the week (excluding “Lexicon of the Debate” selections) and include the following:

(a) *A concise summary (1-3 paragraphs) of the text:* In your own words, summarize the key points of this text. Keep in mind the questions: What is the author trying to say? What is the purpose of this text? What are the main ideas? Please try to be as concise as possible in your summary.

(b) *An examination of some critical questions that this text raised for you and for the class:* Using your reading and our in-class discussions, critically evaluate the text. Ask yourself: What is effective about this reading? What is ineffective? What does the reading fail to address? What does it address? What are the limitations of this reading’s argument? Does the reading provide any viable/valuable solutions?

(c) *An explanation of the relevancy of this text:* Discuss how the reading connects or does not connect to the class, to other things you have read and/or to your own life and experiences. Ask yourself: How does this reading connect to some of the larger issues in the class? To other readings in the class? Does the reading provide accurate descriptions of the world and/or women’s situation within it? Does this reading relate to my life and experiences? What is particularly important for me about this reading? (How) does it make me think about the world differently?

**Note:** Although these entries are brief, make sure to give specific examples with page numbers from the text in your responses. Remember that direct quotations must be properly cited (that is, with quotation marks and page numbers).

These notebooks will be **collected every other week on Thursday**. This notebook is worth 25% of your total grade.

You will **begin** working on these notebooks the week of **September 12**. Your **first response is due** on Thursday, **September 14**. You are allowed to **skip two entries throughout the semester** without it adversely affecting your grade. You must turn in **10 entries in total** by the end of the semester.