

**GUIDELINES FOR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS AND CLASS  
PREPARATION – 21W.730/Walsh  
SPRING 2010**

The purpose of your homework assignments (listed on course calendar) is to help you to “read as a writer,” paying careful attention to the ways in which authors craft their pieces to address intended audiences. Throughout the term, you will regularly submit short assignments (approx. 1- 1 1/2 typed pg., double-spaced) on required readings and films for class. Sometimes specific homework assignments will be given out in class. For other assignments, you can choose to focus on one or more aspects of the writer’s craft. These assignments will help to prepare you for class discussions as well as your own essay writing.

Here are some general questions to consider in reading articles and chapters for class. In your homework assignments, you will probably only focus on a few of these questions. However, thinking about all of them will be very helpful in preparing for class.

What is the meaning of the title?

What is the tone of the piece –persuasive, angry, informative/neutral, ironic, humorous? What kind of language has the writer chosen for the piece-direct and simple, colloquial, abstract “high academic”, personal/confessional, comic? What’s the effect on you as a reader? What is your impression of the writer/narrator? What do you think s/he assumes about the audience?

How does the writer introduce the essay? How does the writer end the piece? What do the introduction and conclusion suggest about how to read the essay?

What sections, paragraphs, words or sentences seem especially significant? Why? How does the writer use repetition—of words, phrases, sentences or passages—in the piece?

How does the writer use imagery, symbol and metaphor?

What’s the central point of the piece? How does this piece influence your own perspective on a particular social or ethical issue?

How do you see this essay as connecting with other readings (for the course or outside), experiences you’ve had, and issues that you’ve thought about?

What have you learned **as a writer** from this piece?

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21W.730 Writing on Contemporary Issues: Social and Ethical Issues  
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