Reading Journal: Write 3 pages each week, commentary on all of the course’s readings, EXCEPT remember to put The Craft of Revision exercises in your personal journal. By the end of the semester, I will expect a balance of responses in your reading journal among all the different books (except Craft).

You’ll need to turn in 22 reading journal pages at mid-term, and a total of 40 at semester’s end. It’s usually easier to have one notebook with two separate sections: one for the personal journal, one for the reading journal. You must turn in the journals. If you don’t, you risk failing the course.

Contrary to some popular opinion, reading is not passive, inert, or lifeless--especially if you invest it with passion and inquisitiveness. In fact, reading requires conceptual and emotional response from you, the reader. As you read, you are not only responding to content; you’re also infusing it with the meaning of your own experience, predicting what may come next, questioning the writer--in essence, holding a dialogue with the writer.

The purpose of the reading journal is to make explicit these responses to reading. It is assumed that you can read for basic comprehension, main ideas, supporting details and that you can figure out or look up unfamiliar words. In your reading journal, go beyond these basics into the realm of interpreting, critiquing, and applying the information you read.

Here are suggestions for ways to respond in your journals to readings:

One method is known as “KWL+” and it goes like this:

**Phase K: What I Know:** Before you read, briefly look over the reading’s title, introduction, and any headings. Then brainstorm a list or freewrite what you think you know about the reading topic.

**Phase W: What I Want to Know:** Brainstorm or freewrite categories and questions about the information collected in the first phase, above. (These may serve as a guide or predictive map for the next phase, generating categories of information you will likely encounter as you read.)

**Phase L: What I Learned:** Record your findings from the reading, making sure to respond to questions posed in the previous phase.

**Phase +: What I Still Want to Know:** Review the previous phase about what you learned, and pose questions that went unanswered or further thoughts you had while reading.

Here are expanded possibilities for approaching reading:

**Preview the text** by scanning title, introduction, topic sentences, headings, graphics, and conclusion. Doing this will let you know what to expect as you read. Write two specific questions you want to be able to answer after you have read. After reading, spend time writing the answers.

**Mark the text**, engaging with it--for example, writing Huh? for difficult or crazy concepts, highlighting or underlining sentences that strike you, or points you particularly agree or disagree with. After reading, return to these spots, record them in your journal and respond to them.
Stop in the middle of a reading and **assess or question what you’ve learned**. A good way to do this is to underline a phrase or sentence from the reading, write it out in your journal, and respond to it. Any response goes; connecting your personal experience with what you read is one of the best qualities of reading.

**Distill key points** after you’ve read by brainstorming a list of the reading’s important ideas. Determine which of these are the most important and use them to write a two- or three-sentence summary of the whole piece.

**Connect key points** of the reading to something you already know. How does this new information relate to concepts you already know? Do these points affirm or contradict your experiences? What is new? Here, again, you’re connecting the reading with your own experience, using the journal to pay attention to the world. *The more we see/make connections between our lives and what we’re studying, the more we can learn and understand.* Both reading and writing are all about making connections.

**Question the author:** Write at least two meaningful questions you’d like to ask the author—questions that can’t be answered by simply reading the text. Write how you imagine the author would reply to these.

**Apply new ideas:** Pick key points and write how these ideas will change the way you’ve thought about or dealt with this topic previously. In what ways can the ideas and values in this reading be applied to issues that you face?