**Reader’s Response Essay**

A reader response asks you to examine, explain, and defend your personal reaction to a reading. You will be asked to explore why you like or dislike the reading, explain whether you agree or disagree with the author, identify the reading's purpose, and critique the text. There is no right or wrong answer to a reader response. Nonetheless, it is important that you demonstrate an understanding of the reading and clearly explain and support your reactions.

Try not to use a basic approach of just writing: “I liked this book (or article or document or movie) because it is so cool and the ending made me feel happy,” or “I hated it because it was stupid, and had nothing at all to do with my life, and was too negative and boring.” While this is a good place to start, this academic essay requires that you dive a bit deeper, trying to explain to your reader why you responded the way you did to a particular reading and what elements of the text may have elicited that response.

Choose one of the following essays from our text: “Bad Feminist” by Roxane Gay; “The War Photo No One Would Publish” by Torie Rose DeGhett; Human Dignity” by Francis Fukuyama; or “Female Chauvinist Pigs” by Ariel Levy.

**Tips for the Reader Response Writing Process**

The features of your Reader Response should include:

* A clear understanding of the major argument and strategies that the author employs in her/his text. (The author’s thesis and how he/she supports that thesis.)
* A clear thesis that explains the unifying idea that you will explore throughout your essay. (Your thesis.)
* A clear introduction and conclusion.
* Paragraphs that focus on specific passages from the text and how and why you

responded to those passages.

* To help you explore and explain your response to the text, you might consider these questions:
* What does the text have to do with you, personally, and with your life (past, present or future)? With rare exception, it is not acceptable to write that the text has nothing to do with you, since just about everything humans can write has to do in some way with every other human. How much does the text agree or clash with your view of the world, and what you consider right and wrong? Use several quotes as examples of how it agrees with and supports what you think about the world, about right and wrong, and about what you think it is to be human. Use quotes and examples to discuss how the text disagrees with what you think about the world and about right and wrong.
* What did you learn by reading the text, and how much were your views and opinions challenged or changed by this text, if at all? Did the text communicate with you? Why or why not? Give examples of how your views might have changed or been strengthened (or perhaps, of why the text failed to convince you, the way it is). Please do not write "I agree with everything the author wrote," since everybody disagrees about something, even if it is a tiny point. Use quotes to illustrate your points of challenge, or where you were persuaded, or where it left you cold.
* How well does it address things that you, personally, care about and consider important to the world? How does it address things that are important to your family, your community, your ethnic group, to people of your economic or social class or background, or your faith tradition? If not, who does or did the text serve? Did it pass the "Who cares?" test? Use quotes to illustrate.
* How well did you enjoy the text (or not) as entertainment or as a work of art? Use quotes or examples to illustrate the quality of the text as art or entertainment. Of course, be aware that some texts are not meant to be entertainment or art--a news report or textbook, for instance, may be

neither entertaining nor artistic, but may still be important and successful.

**Essay Guidelines**

1. Aim for a length of about 3-5 double-spaced pages, TNR 12-point font.
2. Use the Purdue Owl and MLA handouts to help you properly cite, summarize, paraphrase, and quote the texts you choose to write about.
3. Organize your essay clearly so that it flows smoothly from one paragraph to the next.
4. Make sure your reader understands the difference between your words and ideas and those presented in the text.
5. Your essay should adhere to MLA manuscript format.
6. Any texts or other sources that you quote, summarize, or paraphrase should be cited using MLA documentation format.
7. Because this is reflective writing, you should use the first person (“I”). Avoid using second person (“you”).