

Guidelines for reading responses:

NOTE: ALL RESPONSES BUT ONE MUST BE ON STARRED READINGS

I. The technicalities:

1) **Quote *one* passage** (use more *only* if it is necessary) in your response. The words for the quotation will NOT count in your 500 words. Please *begin with a quotation* – one: not none, and not more than one.

2) **Identify** where the passage appears, remembering that I might be using a different edition of the work. (If there are many versions of a work, say, e.g., “Section 3, chapter 2, paragraph 4.”) If we are all reading the same work (e.g., Habermas, Schumpeter), please give the page number; I will use it in ordering your responses for my slides.)

3) **Write about one page:** no more than 500 words (exclusive of the quotation), unless you absolutely need more.

4) **Seven** responses in total: **six on the starred readings**. **Two** are required for **each** of the three sections of reading (i.e. before each exam), which must be on starred readings (these are the longer ones). In addition **one extra** response is required for an un-starred (short) reading in any of the sections, to make seven total.

If you forget to do two in a section, simply add one response to the total you are handing in (e.g., to make eight total of starred readings).

Note: In the first section, there are **only four** starred readings (Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau), from which you must choose two. In the second section, there are **five** (Rights, Federalist Papers, Mill, Marx and Engels, Habermas), from which you must choose two. In the third section, there are **only four** (Habermas, Rawls, Foucault, Asad), from which you must choose two. You may use your seventh response for any of the unstarred readings.

5) When you send it to me, please send me an email with an attachment, preferably in Word, with the document title of: Your last name, your first name, name of author, and, in parenthesis, number of which response this is, 1-7. For example: “Mansbridge, Jane: Hobbes (2).”

WARNING: In the first weeks of the course, if you do not do responses on one or two of the two classes on Aristotle, you will **have** to do responses on two of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, all of which are very long readings. (The two readings after Aristotle are relatively short and **not starred**. They can, however, be used for the seventh reading.)

In general, please do not only ask questions, and please do not ever ask rhetorical questions. Try to imagine answers, preferably from your own experience.

II. The deeper goals:

1) Write 500 words or so on:

- a) What you think the passage means;
- b) Why you think the passage is important enough to be discussed in class OR why it is meaningful to you, with your interests (or both). You might think it was important enough to be discussed in class because it is confusing, or gives insight into the full thought of the writer in an interesting way, or gives insight into some deeper problem of democracy, or relates to one or more of the other writers we have read in an interesting way.

Use your analytic skills. I am interested in all of your reactions, including your emotional reactions, but make sure that if you respond from the heart you *also* engage in analysis of the passage.

Make sure to distinguish between a) what the author said, b) your interpretation of what he/she said, and c) your own thoughts on the subject.

Examine your wording to make it as accurate as you can. Particularly when you make a generalization, do not over-claim.

This does not have to be schematic. Its main purpose is to communicate between you, me, and the class. You do not need footnotes when you are quoting from the author on whom you are commenting, but when you quote, indicate where the quotation appears in the text so that I can find it.

2) The passage you choose need not relate to any of the points I say to “look for” in the reading. It can be about whatever interests you. But the points I say to look for are good guides.

3) The responses are designed with several goals in mind.

- a. The first and most important is to deepen your own relationship with the reading. The response paper gives you a chance to pull out what you find important, process it more deeply, and perhaps relate it to something you have experienced in relation to democracy (this last is *not* at all required; it is only a possibility).
- b. The second is to create a basis for discussion in class. I will star particular points that I think will help excite interest and move the class discussion along. (See below on “in class.”)
- c. The third is to create an intellectual relationship between the two of us, in which I understand what issues in democracy interest you and what your take is on the authors we read. My feedback – with underlining and checks for the main points in which you got to the heart of the theorist’s work, with comments when you might have misinterpreted that work, and every so often with comments on your own experience -- begins to set up a relationship between us. That relationship usually doesn’t gel until your first visit with me to discuss your paper, but it begins through the reading responses.

III. Sending the response and getting it back

- 1) I prefer the response as an attachment. **Make sure your name is on the attachment.** (I hand them back in class and need to have the name on it at that point.) I'd be happy to have the response in whatever form is convenient for you and that I can open, but if it is all the same to you, **I prefer a Word document** named as follows: Your last name, your first name, name of author, and, in parenthesis, number of which response this is, 1-7. For example: "Mansbridge, Jane: Hobbes (2)." Please leave 1.5 inch (at least; 2 is even better) margins, so that I have room for comment. Thanks!
- 2) The responses will be graded "check," "check plus," or "check minus." Most will receive a "check."

IV. In class

- 1) When I return the response to you, a **check** along the side or in the text means: "Yes, duly noted," or "Good point." **Underlining** means that I thought certain words of yours or the theorists were particularly important.
- 2) A **star** means that I'd like to call on you in class about this particular point. I will often **circle** a passage and put **quotation marks** at the beginning and end (or I might forget the quotation marks). I am suggesting here that this is exactly the point I would like you to make, in more or less exactly these words. As you know, one big problem in class discussions is that often people don't come to the point quickly. The circled section is the point you are making, and it will often be best if you could make it in exactly these words, because you have already spent some intellectual energy, conscious or unconscious, in distilling your point to these few words. Let the class benefit from your previous intellectual effort at concision by sticking close to the words you have written. That said, it is dreary to hear someone just read from their notes. So if you could memorize the section in quotes and say it (preferably aiming your voice and your eye contact at the person who is farthest from you in the class), that would be the best of all. If you think it is important to do so, please expand on the point so that others can understand it. We have **two goals** here. The first is **concision**, so as to optimize others' learning. The second is real **contact**, and forming a relationship with others in the class. These two goals sometimes conflict. So use your judgment. But the goals are congruent in one deep sense: The overall point is to communicate what you have to say to others in the most effective way possible. This involves both concision and eye-contact relationship.

The star and the number next to the star will warn you that I will ask you to speak when we get to that particular numbered slide. The slide number might change slightly, however, because as I work on the PowerPoints before class I sometimes subtract or add some at the last minute, depending on what the responses emphasize.
- 3) If I don't hand back your reading response at the beginning of class, please inform me right at the beginning of class and also email me to remind me. I may need you to

email it again. Sometimes the email fails or a response falls through the cracks in other ways.

WARNING RE PLAGIARISM:

Do **not**, whatever you do, cut and paste or otherwise copy **anything** from **any source**, including anything on the Internet, without due attribution. (Attribution means saying where the quotation or idea came from.) Even paraphrases are plagiarism if you fail to provide attribution. It's fine to say you've looked at anything, including articles, lectures on the Internet, or informal sources; but **NOTE** that you have done so. The penalties for plagiarism at the Kennedy School are severe.

I'M LOOKING FORWARD to reading your responses and getting to know your ideas.
Thank you!