

**1. Purposes:**

- Writing weekly Reading Memos will give you a head start on thinking about the material, and help you prepare to actively participate in class discussion. In some cases, they will help you to connect the readings and your research project.
- Reading each other's memos will further lay the basis of class discussion, and they will enable me to more effectively plan the class around your perspectives and interests.
- Writing weekly (argumentative, not descriptive) memos will help you hone your argumentative writing skills.

**2. Submission/ Format:**

- Each student must complete a minimum of 10 reading memos for the 11 weeks where substantive readings are assigned (Weeks 1-7 and 9-12). If more than 10 memos are submitted, only the 10 highest grades will be recorded.
- Please email your memo to the whole class by noon the day before class (Monday). Each student should read all of the memos before coming to class.
- Your reading memo should be between 250 and 400 words. **Provide a word count** at the conclusion of the memo.
- Late reading memos will not be accepted without prior arrangement or a documented medical incident.

**3. Content:**

- Memos should **address the readings on Social Movements theory/ cases**, rather than the readings designated on the syllabus as "Design/ Methods Readings." While you may refer to the Design/ Methods Readings in the memos, they will not be considered complete if they are not focused on the Social Movements theory/ cases readings.
- You are welcome to include discussion of videos in weeks where those are assigned, but again, every memo should primarily engage with the reading(s).
- Your memo may discuss any aspect of the week's readings. However, these should not be descriptive summaries, but should **be analytical and/ or critical**, bringing in your own ideas, experiences, and reactions. In short, you should **have your own point**, preferably clearly stated at the beginning of the memo.
- Generally, your memo should respond to a concept(s) or argument(s) presented in the readings. You might compare different works (among the readings or to other works you know), or relate the readings to a different case. You could explain why you disagree with an author, or explain why you think one author is right or another is wrong, or you could explain what you think is missing from the analyses we read.
- Another option for the memo is to apply some of the arguments and concepts from the reading(s) to your research project/ potential thesis topic. You can use the memo to think through the implications the reading(s) have for your own project.

- You are strongly encouraged to complete all of the Social Movements theory/ cases readings before writing the memo (at the least to skim through all), so that your memo does not address an issue that is well-covered by another reading, without referencing it.
- That said, don't feel you must mention every reading for the week to show that you have done them all. These memos are short, so **don't sacrifice depth for breadth**. Refer to multiple readings only to the extent that they all relate to the same focal concept/ point.
- Citations and References: As these are informal memos, you do not need full citations. Given the word limit, don't waste words on full references, or even titles in most cases. You may use any brief form of referencing the readings that is clear, but I suggest just author's last name, and including the year of publication if there is more than one work by the same author. Ex: "Jones 2012."
- An example of a reading memo is posted on the Syllabus page of the course website.

#### **4. Feedback/ Evaluation:**

- Memos will be graded check plus, check, check minus, no credit (if not turned in by the deadline). A check will be the standard grade. The grading scheme is something like: check is A-/B+, check plus is A, and check minus is B-.
- Memos will be graded on the logic and originality of your analysis, argument, or application of the material to your own project; on your demonstrated grasp of the concepts and arguments in the readings; and on the quality and conciseness of your prose.