



Standards for Evaluating Reading Journals

The Classical Roots of Western Literature • Summer 2004

To facilitate your enjoyment of the literature we read and to stimulate class discussions, you will be expected to write a brief journal entry for **every assignment**. Essentially, a journal records your first reactions and/or further considerations as you read (or re-read) the day's assignment. Your journal evaluation will be based on your **consistent and intelligent consideration** of assigned material. Among other possibilities, a successful journal entry can be a series of questions that you would like to discuss with the class, relate a character or event to a personal experience or another text, or provide a brief critical analysis of a passage or character. Creative responses – i.e. short stories, poems, and artwork – are encouraged, although some of the entries must be of the more traditional variety. Not every text will strike you with the same force and one or two “light” entries are understandable. The length of entries is less important than their content, but effective entries are generally at least one handwritten page.

Students having any difficulties with this project should see me as soon as possible.

Journals are evaluated on a scale from A+ to C- or No Credit (NC) for unacceptable work.

A Outstanding Effort:

Substantial entries are made for nearly every assignment.

Entries draw connections to other works examined in class and from personal experience.

Entries treat several of the themes present in each assignment or single themes in great detail.

Entries routinely pose insightful and provocative questions that motivate class discussion.

B Good Effort:

Substantial entries are made for most assignments; some entries are superficial.

Entries often draw connections to other works examined in class and occasionally from personal experience.

Entries usually treat several of the themes present in each assignment and occasionally treat single themes in great detail.

Questions in entries reveal attempt to grapple with themes of assignment and occasionally motivate class discussion.

C Adequate Effort:

Substantial entries are made for some assignments but many entries are superficial.

Entries occasionally draw connections to other works examined in class but rarely from personal experience.

Entries occasionally treat several of the themes present in each assignment but rarely treat any in detail.

Questions in entries reveal completion of assignment but indicate that assignment was partially or incorrectly understood. Questions rarely motivate class discussion.

NC Inadequate Effort:

Little or nothing is recorded in the journal or comments are not related to assignment. Hence, there is not an adequate basis for evaluation.

Inscrutable handwriting renders comments incomprehensible.

N.B.: NEVER refrain from making a comment for fear of how it may effect your evaluation. This rubric evaluates your journal entries over the span of a semester, not a single comment or question, or even your performance on a given entry. 99% of the time, the only inappropriate questions or comments are those that are not made. **Take a chance. Let your opinion be heard.**