

Food for Thought

For every reading ask yourself these four questions below. Come to class with notes answering these questions:

1) Every author is making an argument through the practice of writing. You should ask yourself the question, "What is he trying to convince me of?" ***Write down a one sentence statement of what you think his argument is.***

2) After deciphering the argument, ask yourself, "How does he convince me he is right?". What techniques, information, data, or theory does he use to prove or assert his point? How does the author lay out or frame his evidence? ***Write down the major features of the argument in an outlined form.***

3) A common way to assert an opinion is to argue against another author, or an established theory. Ask yourself, "Who this person (or idea) is and what particular claims or points is the author questioning or negating?" If the author hides his adversaries, what then is he arguing for?

4) Finally, are you convinced? What do you agree with in the author's presentation and why? What is the most compelling part of his argument? If you are not convinced, why? Where did the author fail? Is his data skewed, ill-framed, or is the theory poor? What could he have done to strengthen his argument? ***Always come to class with four to five questions, or comments, based on your personal perception for class discussion with other students.***