

# TRiO SSS @Evergreen

## Seminar Response Writing Workshop

### 2013

#### **Seminar Response Papers:**

- What are seminar papers? –A tool to help students communicate their ideas and make connections between books, films, lectures, ideas, life experiences, etc.
- Why do we write seminar papers? –Faculty ask for them and they help you synthesis and communicate your learning.
- How can I write a good one? –Follow this handout, ask for help from faculty, peers, and the Writing Center.
- Will it help me prepare for seminar? –YES!

#### **How to prepare to write a seminar response paper?**

- Has the faculty told you to follow a specific format? If so, use it. If not, continue through this handout.
- Thoroughly read the assigned reading/book.
- Make detailed notes as you complete the assigned reading/book.
- Write down three important insights, facts, or perspectives that you learned from the book that you will want to keep in mind?
- Make a preliminary outline of the seminar paper.

#### **Standard Seminar Response Essay Outline:**

- Introduction
- Body
- Analysis
- Conclusion
- Questions you plan to ask in Seminar

#### **The Introduction:**

- Introduce us to the reading/book and author
- Who is the author and what is their background?
- Briefly tell the reader why the book is important and what you plan to tell them in the paper.

## **The Body:**

1. What did the author say?
  - What is the Thesis?
  - Who are the cast of players?
  - What research is used to support the work?
  - What did the reading/book say in plain language?
2. What does it mean?
  - What does the reading/book mean in relationship to the main theme or question of your program?
  - How does it connect to previous/future readings or books in the program?
3. Why is it important?
  - Why or how is the reading/book important for society as a whole and your program?
  - Has it changed your previous notions or understandings of the work in the program?
  - If so, in what ways?
  - What does it mean for you as a student moving forward?

## **Provide Analysis**

- The purpose of a critical analysis is not merely to inform, but also to evaluate the worth or value of a reading/book and author's reasoning for writing it.
- Avoid introducing your ideas by stating, "I think" or "in my opinion." Keep the focus on the subject of your analysis, not on yourself.
- The analysis will present your opinions of the work and while presenting valid justification for them based on your reading.

## **Conclusion**

- Summarize the reading/book
- Tell us what you told us...
- Conclude the seminar paper with what your reaction was to the particular reading/book.

## **Seminar questions**

- List at least three relevant questions you plan to raise in seminar.

## **Other Ways to Write a Response Paper**

### **What and Why Seminar Response Papers:**

- Introduction: What are you going to talk about, and Why is it important?
- Body: Explain What you are going to talk about. Define your key word(s) and/or concept(s). Use quotes and paraphrasing from the text, use other texts and materials from the class, use your background knowledge.
- Analysis: Explain Why the What is important. Connect to class syllabus questions, and themes. Also continue to use quotes and paraphrasing from the text, use other texts and materials from the class, use your background knowledge.
- Conclusion: Repeat (in a new way) the What and Why statements. Also mention what may be some bigger implications of the Why statement. Try to think of a new implication that maybe the author didn't mention.
- Questions you plan to ask in Seminar: Tell students your What statement and ask them if they agree/disagree with your Why statement. Take your Conclusion and ask students if they have ideas to what the bigger implications of your Why statement may be.

**Use Quotes for Seminar Response Papers:** (This may not be appropriate to use in all classes. It can sometimes help when you don't know what to write about.)

- Pick one / two quotes from the reading that you like.
- Write about why you like them.
  - This can sometimes help you start making connections to What you want to talk about, and Why it's important.
  - It also can help you start using quotes and citations in your papers.