

Critical Reflective Essay - POLI 15/ICS25

“In this country American means white. Everybody else has to hyphenate.” Toni Morrison

“People of color, women, and gays — who now have greater access to the centers of influence that ever before — are under pressure to be well-behaved when talking about their struggles. There is an expectation that we can talk about sins but no one must be identified as a sinner: newspapers love to describe words or deeds as “racially charged” even in those cases when it would be more honest to say “racist”; we agree that there is rampant misogyny, but misogynists are nowhere to be found; homophobia is a problem but no one is homophobic. One cumulative effect of this policed language is that when someone dares to point out something as obvious as white privilege, it is seen as unduly provocative. Marginalized voices in America have fewer and fewer avenues to speak plainly about what they suffer; the effect of this enforced civility is that those voices are falsified or blocked entirely from the discourse.” Teju Cole

“We cannot educate white women and take them by the hand. Most of us are willing to help but we can’t do the white woman’s homework for her. That’s an energy drain. More times than she cares to remember, Nellie Wong, Asian American feminist writer, has been called by white women wanting a list of Asian American women who can give readings or workshops. We are in danger of being reduced to purveyors of resource lists.” Gloria Anzaldúa

What is a Reflection Paper?

A Critical Reflective Essay is a formal written presentation of a critical analysis on the connections between the readings assigned and your lived experience. Guiding Questions: How do the ideas shared in the readings relate to your own personal understanding of politics and our racial caste system? How do the readings enhance your ability to understand the politics of racism, sexism, heterosexism? How have the readings enhanced your understanding of the use of power to maintain the status quo?

Be sure to include examples from the text, lecture, newspaper articles, videos (youtube), documentaries and handouts as resources in explaining your connection to the content, what you’ve learned and how you feel changed due to this educational experience. You are required to cite all of your sources (3 minimum) and will use APA or MLA format. You must cite the textbooks throughout your reflective essay.

Guiding Questions: How does the content we have covered relate to your own experience? What have you learned about your own personal history that relates to the class content? How have your perspectives been enhanced by the material you’ve been exposed too? How has your racial identity been shaped your family, friends, social networks, etc? What were the contributing factors that influenced your racial and social identity?

A Reflection Paper is not a diary or journal, although these may have been a way of processing your reflections before actually writing the paper. It is a type of essay, and as such requires:

- a formal introduction, a well-structured body which presents your thoughts clearly and logically to the reader
- a formal conclusion
- 4 pages double spaced
- @ least 3 references (must include both textbooks)

A Reflection Paper is designed to show your knowledge of a certain set of readings and, more importantly, your awareness of how you constructed that knowledge. Thus it is an interaction between ideas received from outside (books, lectures, etc.) and your own internal understanding and interpretation of those ideas. More than anything else, a Reflection Paper invites self-reflection. The capacity for self-reflection is a vital personal and professional quality. Self-reflection in this context involves a constant questioning of one’s own assumptions, and a capacity to analyze and synthesize information to create new perspectives and understanding. This is a constant process and leads to an ongoing commitment to improve and refine one’s self.