Reading Analytically in POLS 1500

Joannah O’Hatnick
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Outline

• Reading requirements for your POLS writing assignments
• Purposes for reading
• Strategies for reading efficiently
  • Before you read
  • While you read
  • After you read
Analytical Book Review (20%)

• In order to do well on this assignment, you will have to begin working on the paper well before the deadline. In other words, **start reading NOW!**

• This written assignment is an **analytical** book review of Jennifer Welsh’s book, *The Return of History: Conflict, Migration, and Geopolitics in the Twenty-First Century.*

• Although this book addresses a number of different topics, you will need to **narrow down the focus** of your own essay for the purposes of your own discussion and argument... You should manage this assignment by choosing a particular "angle" or "issue."

• Your book review should contain specific examples from the books, using citations where appropriate. Above all, remember that your book review should **not** simply contain a summary of the book. Rather, **you should develop an argument** based on your analysis of the book.
Analytical Book Review (20%)

1. **How** does the book develop an **argument** about history and progress? **What** does the author **argue** about how we can learn from history? Are we facing unique challenges, or does history simply repeat itself?

2. Are **you** convinced by the author’s **argument**? **In what ways** do you agree or disagree with the book’s **argument**?

3. How has this book **contributed to your own understanding** about today’s global challenges? **What conclusions** can **you** draw?

4. What questions have been provoked by your reading of this? Are there **holes or gaps** in the discussion? If you were to conduct further research on this topic, what question(s) would you ask?
Research Case Study (30%)

• It would be a good idea to think about your “question” while you are reading *The Return of History* and the weekly required readings...

• A possible starting place... is the research question you identified at the end of your book review...

• Your should identify a theme or a “wicked question” from the course...

• Identify a research question that grows out of this theme.
Research Case Study (30%)

1. The Question... what exactly do you want to know? In what context(s) is this question relevant?... Find a “why” or “how” question

2. Illustrative Example

3. General Responses... explain 2 or 3 different perspectives... to your question

4. Broader Issues... are there assumptions that we should consider...

5. Conclusion... consider how your previous discussion and investigation have influenced your own thinking
Research Case Study

• Minimum of 5 sources
  • 1 primary source (not newspaper article)
  • 3 scholarly secondary sources
  • Not including textbook or Return of History
Reading

To learn information

To analyze (read critically)
What do you do when you read?

3 differences between reading a textbook & reading a novel

• What do you do before you read a chapter in the textbook/novel?
• What do you do while you read? Do you read the chapter from beginning to end?
• Do you skim, and why?
• What notes (if any) do you take?
• What do you do if you don’t understand something?
• Do you read differently if you’re being tested on the content of the book?
THE RETURN OF HISTORY
Conflict, Migration, and Geopolitics in the Twenty-First Century
Jennifer Welsh
Reading the book analytically and efficiently

What can you do before you read the book?

• Read through the assignment!
• What has been mentioned in class about the book?
• Preview the book – read the back cover, reviewers’ comments, table of contents
• Ask yourself questions:
  • What do I already know about these topics?
  • What is completely unfamiliar to me?
  • Why did Dr. McBurney choose this book? What does he want us to learn?
  • What do I want to learn? What am I interested in?
Reading the book analytically and efficiently

What can you do when you read the book the first time?

• Skim
• Mark the text so that you can return to relevant points
• Take brief notes on main concepts
• Focus on reading for information (maybe?)
Skimming academic books

• Read the Table of Contents and the back of the book
• Skim the Chapters and Afterword
  • Focus on first & last paragraphs in each section
  • Pay attention to section headings and section markers
  • Focus on first & last sentences in each paragraph
  • Pay attention to guiding statements
    • “This book aims to...”
    • “First... Second... Third...”
    • “Our first thesis...”
• Ignore examples (maybe)
• Ignore “academic speak”
Skimming journal articles (for Research Case Study)

• Read the title and abstract
• Look up essential terminology (maybe)
• Skim the Introduction and Conclusion
• Skim each section
  • Pay attention to section headings and section markers
  • Focus on first & last paragraphs in each section
  • Focus on first & last sentences in each paragraph
  • Pay attention to guiding statements
    • “This research has three main goals ...”
    • “First... Second... Third...”
    • “Our first thesis...”
• Ignore examples (maybe)
• Ignore “academic speak”
Welsh Ch. 1 Return of History - SKIM

1989-91 v communist regimes
1990s ↑ democracies
↑ refugees, interstate/ethnic wars
↑ UN

Fukuyama ☑

p. 21 Attendance of Lib Democracy
- history of rise of democracy
- liberal democracy - definition?

p. 24 Progress or Resurgence?
- examples > decline in lib democracies

p. 24 Democracy in Crisis at Home & Abroad
- rise of populism pp 30-32
- problems w/ lib dem.
  → wealth inequality (pp 32–33)

p. 39 3 Main Themes
  1. history w/ "modern twist"
  2. use of history
  3. lib. dem. require action to maintain growth

Ch. 1 - Ideas

Fukuyama - read?

LIBERAL DEMOCRACY
- Welsh's definition?
- Other definitions?

1989-91, Fall of E. Germany & other communist states a Europe

Possible topics
- Wealth inequality
- History w/ "modern twist"
- Middle East / Europe
- Other places?
After you read (skim?) the first time...

• Remember why you are reading
• Review the assignment
• Identify what and where to read carefully
• Record in your notes both the knowledge that you have gained from the texts about your themes (reading to know) and your informed analysis (reading to reflect)
1. How does the book develop an argument about history and progress? What does the author argue about how we can learn from history? Are we facing unique challenges, or does history simply repeat itself?

2. Are you convinced by the author’s argument? In what ways do you agree or disagree with the book’s argument?

3. How has this book contributed to your own understanding about today’s global challenges? What conclusions can you draw?

4. What questions have been provoked by your reading of this? Are there holes or gaps in the discussion? If you were to conduct further research on this topic, what question(s) would you ask?
# Two-Sided Notes

## Knowledge/Facts
- Author’s perspective on Theme A is… (p. x)
- Examples… (p. y)
- Supporting information… (p. z)

## Reflection/Analysis
- Do I agree with the author’s perspective of Theme A? Why/why not?
- What potential problems do I see in the authors’ definitions?
- What issues or viewpoints has the author ignored?
## Concept Analysis Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Possible issue #1</th>
<th>Possible Issue #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welsh’s argument</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How arg. is developed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Strength of arg.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributes to my understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaps</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Research Case Study (30%)

1. The Question... what exactly do you want to know? In what context(s) is this question relevant?... Find a “why” or “how” question

2. Illustrative Example

3. General Responses... explain 2 or 3 different perspectives... to your question

4. Broader Issues... are there assumptions that we should consider...

5. Conclusion... consider how your previous discussion and investigation have influenced your own thinking
## Source Comparison Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Source #1</strong></th>
<th><strong>Source #2</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential theme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argument about my theme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Author’s context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Connections to other issues</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assumptions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Concept Map

Article A
- Notes that...
- Example of ...

Article C
- Notes that...
- Similar example to A, except...
- Good quote about X p. 92

My WQ

Article B
- Different perspective on WQ...
- Assumption: seems to believe...

My thoughts about...

Not much evidence about WQ. Why?
The next steps

• Use your notes to help you figure out what you don’t know
• Read the text again
  • Know your purpose(s) for rereading
    • Reading to learn more about an issue
    • Reading to develop your thesis further
    • Reading to find evidence to support/refute a claim
    • Reading to find a small piece of information again
• Record notes
3 Main Points

• Prepare before you read
• Read with a clear purpose
• Record both knowledge and analysis to assist you in your assignments
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Learning Commons Waiting Area (first floor)