

READING JOURNAL GUIDELINES

About Reading Journals

Reading journals help students complete, comprehend, and assess the general content of the readings. They show that the student is *present* and *prepared*. In addition, they allow the professor to gauge students' progress in those areas.

Reading Journal Expectations

- Reading journals must be uploaded to Blackboard by the time and date indicated on the syllabus. Late journals will not be accepted.
- Reading journals must be typed on a computer.
- Reading journals are graded on a 10-point scale. The lowest two reading journal grades will be dropped.
- Be honest! If you do not complete the assigned reading, summarize as much as you read (if any) and then write, "I did not complete the readings." Your honesty will earn you ½ credit. An attempt to fabricate a summary without having done the reading is considered academic dishonesty (cheating) and will be reported to the honor code council.
- Reading journals are graded using pop grading. This means the professor randomly selects only one article or chapter summary to grade each day. The grade for that summary is the grade given for the entire day's assignment. It also means that you may receive full credit even if some of your reading journal is incorrect.

Reading Journal Parts

- **Summary Paragraphs:** First, write a 100-word maximum summary paragraph *for each reading*. Each summary should contain the thesis of the reading, 2 to 4 main points from the reading, and in-text citations. The title for each summary should be the title of the reading plus the word count.
- **Definitions or Descriptions:** Write a one-sentence definition in your own words for each of the terms provided for that day. Use in-text citations for the sources.
- **Personal Reflection:** Next, write one personal reflection on all the day's readings. Connect the day's readings to other course materials and to your own informed academic perspective of the readings. As before, write the reflection in paragraph form with fewer than 100 words while using correct spelling and grammar. Use in-text citations when you reference the readings.
- **Works Cited Section:** Finally, include a works cited section for each reading using American Sociological Association (ASA) style. While you should write the summaries in the order they are assigned on the syllabus, the entries should be listed alphabetically.

The title for each summary contains the title of the article or chapter that was assigned, and it should be underlined. Please write your summaries in the order that they are assigned in the syllabus.

Use the date the readings are due, not the date you complete them.

Student Name
Course Number
Due Date

Reading Journal

Include the word count for the summary, which must be 100 words or less.

"Understanding Race and Ethnicity"—99 words

Schaefer (2005) introduces the concepts of dominant and subordinate groups, stating that these categories are not based on numerical minority or majority, but on systems of power. Race and ethnicity are two socially constructed categories that society uses to create a stratified system of dominance and subordination. Sociologists use three theoretical frameworks—functionalist, conflict theory, and labeling theory—to examine the creation and consequences of subordinate group status. The functionalist framework describes how it functions for society. The conflict theory states that the system only benefit whites, and the labeling theory illustrates how racial categories are given meaning (Schaefer 2005).

Use in-text citations. Use two in-text citations when multiple sentences come from the same source.

"Biology and the Social Construction of the 'Race' Concept"—82 words

Brown (2001) argues that "race" is a concept with no biological basis. In other words, there are no biologically determined categories that correspond to the racial categories such as Asian, Black, Native American, White, etc. There is no race gene, nor even a collection of genes that determine race. Instead, race is a socially-constructed concept, the development of which tells more about the relationship between people than it tells about what can be known using and practicing a physical science (Brown 2001).

Find the terms to define in the syllabus. Write the definitions in your own words, but you should still cite the source.

Definitions

- **Social Construction:** The sociological theory that concepts and categories such as race and ethnicity do not occur naturally but instead are created by society (Schaefer 2005:27).
- **Functionalist Theory:** The sociological theory that phenomenon in society provide some function for the operation of society (Schaefer 2005:19).
- **Biological Essentialism:** The popular belief that categories of race and ethnicity are the products of our biology, not society (Brown 2001:13).

Use the personal reflection to synthesize the readings and provide your own, academically-informed perspective.

Personal Reflection – 85 words

I found the social construction of race theory to be a bit challenging (Brown 2001; Schaefer 2005). For example, I can look around the classroom and see that people are from different races. If it is so easy to tell someone's race just by looking at them, why can't biologists locate the gene for race? Also, all of the language around race and ethnicity is a bit confusing. Why does Schaefer (2005) use terms like dominant and subordinate group? Isn't a subordinate group the same things as

Include the works cited for each daily reading journal and list them in alphabetical order. Instructions for how to create citations can be found on Blackboard.

Brown, Prince. 2001. "Biology and the Social Construction of the 'Race' Concept." Pp. 131-137 in *The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity in the United States*, edited by Joan Ferrante-Wallace and Prince Brown. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
Schaefer, Richard. 2005. "Understanding Race and Ethnicity." Pp. 17-34 in *Race and Ethnicity in the United States*, 3rd Edition. New York, NY: Pearson Education.

Do you know what is important about each of the circled items on this example?

Student Name
Course Number
Due Date

Reading Journal

"Racial Formations"—97 words

Omi and Winant (2012) not only refute the claim of race as a biological concept but also identify race as a socio-historical concept. Racial categories and the meaning of race are given significance based upon the historical context in which they are rooted. In the United States, race has historically been defined by the rule of hypo-descent, or the "one-drop" rule. The authors also discuss the importance of social, economic, and political forces in racial formation and how racial ideologies factor into our belief in the inherent connection between skin color and differences in intelligence, temperament, etc (Omi and Winant 2012).

"Racialized Social System Approach to Racism"—97 words

Bonilla-Silva (2012) introduces the concept of a racialized social system. He believes that after a society has become racialized, it becomes a structure within itself, taking on a life of its own. He acknowledges that while it is a social construct it has very real effects on our social lives. After someone attaches meaning to a racial category, it becomes very real in its consequences. The placement of people into racial categories does involve a form of hierarchy, which places actors in either super-ordinate or subordinate positions. This then leads to struggles among races and therefore differing interests. (Bonilla-Silva 2012).

Using two in-text citations—one at the beginning of the paragraph and one at the end—is called book-ending. It signifies that the entire paragraph is paraphrased from that source.

Definitions

- **Socio-Historical Concept:** "Racial categories and the meaning of race are given significance based upon the society and the historical context in which they are embedded" (Omi and Winant 2012:19).
- **Hypo-Descent:** The societal norm in which a person with any ancestry from a subordinate race is considered fully a member of that race (Omi and Winant 2012:10).
- **Racialized Social Systems:** "The idea that society is organized along racial lines and that economic, political, social, and even psychological rewards differ according to a race's placement in a racial hierarchy" (Bonilla-Silva 2012:32).

Remember: One summary per reading, one reflection per week, and one document for everything!

Personal Reflection—89 words

I was most interested this week to read about the variance in perceptions of race across cultures (Omi and Winant 2012). I was somewhat unaware of how very static our ideas of race are here in the United States as compared to other places. It astounds me that Puerto Rico has so many different categories that are not based on biology. The social construction of race is also a part of Bonilla Silva's theory of racial formation, although he also claims that race is a structure in society (Bonilla-Silva 2012).

Works Cited

- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2012. "Racialized Social System Approach to Racism." Pp. 32-38 in *Rethinking the Color Line*, 5th Edition, edited by Charles Gallagher. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 2012. "Racial Formations." Pp. 17-21 in *Rethinking the Color Line*, 5th Edition, edited by Charles Gallagher. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.