

Book Project

20 points. May be repeated.

Study a book and create a short (3 page) mini-essay. The object of this assignment is to show you how to read effectively and with a purpose. **You must turn in documentation of each stage of the process**, compiled into a single PDF file.

Stage 1: Choose your book.

You can choose any book related to the course, or select a book from Dr. Record's library. You must okay the book with me before proceeding.

Stage 2: The "Grad School" Trick

Follow the steps here:

<https://savageminds.org/2007/10/01/how-to-read-a-good-book-in-one-hour/>

Stage 3: The "Hasn't Someone Already Done This?" Trick

Find two good reviews of your book. Aim for a scholarly journal, a major newspaper, or a magazine. In addition to Google, you may have luck with:

<http://libguides.lib.msu.edu/bookreviews>. A good review will help you identify potential strengths and weaknesses of the book you might not have noticed. Quality reviews also tell you how the book relates to other books in the field.

Stage 4: The "Google the Author" Trick

You're looking for the author's expertise, reputation, other work, and really anything that sheds light on why they wrote the book.

Stage 5: Crafting a Question

Now that you've studied the book in some detail, seen how it relates to other literature in its field, and Google-stalked the author, it's time to formulate some good questions about the book topic. Thinking about what you've learned so far, plus what we've discussed in class, come up with a set of concerns, themes, and questions.

Stage 6: Check in with me

Provide details of the first 5 stages. Your question should be topical, sharp, and non-obvious.

Stage 7: Reading with a Purpose

Choose one question or concern and see if you can answer it. You should be so familiar with the book by now that it may be obvious to you what the author thinks, but now you need evidence to back it up. Find the evidence, the quotes, the claims.

Stage 8: Book mini-essay

Write up the results. In 3 pages, give a précis of the book, raise your question, and provide the answer. The précis should identify major themes of the book (from the index), its overall thesis and methodology (from the introduction), and its relationship to surrounding literature (as best you can glean from the book's introduction and from reviews of it). Identify the author and their background and motivations (from the introduction, review, and Google). Motivate your own question (based on the book itself, your personal interests, or intersections with course material) and then answer it using the book (use the index and intro to identify the parts of the book to examine, then collect a few quotes to substantiate your claims about the author's position).

Partial Listing from Dr. Record's Library

Abbate, Janet. *Inventing the internet*. MIT press, 2000.

Alter, Adam. *Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked*. New York: Penguin, 2018.

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Graeber, David. *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy*. Brooklyn: Melville House, 2015.

Hanson, Robin. *The Age of Em: Work, Love, and Life When Robots Rule the Earth*. Oxford, 2016.

Hicks, Marie. *Programmed Inequality: How Britain Discarded Women Technologists and Lost Its Edge in Computing*. MIT press, 2017.

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