

Preparing for the course's discussions

1. BEFORE READING THE ARTICLE, FIND THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- Name of the journal/book where the article is published:
- Discipline of the journal/book* where the article was taken from:

*If you don't know the journal, find some information to be sure of what areas of research the journal normally covers.

- Name of the author(s)
- Discipline within which the author(s) do(es) his/her/their research
- Academic field within which the analysis is framed:

2. PAY ATTENTION TO THE TITLE

- Keywords connecting the title of the article to the content of the class:
- Cultural object or practice that is the focus of the article:

3. SCAN THE ARTICLE

- What is the structure of the article? Pay special attention to *headings* and *sub-headings*. This will give you an idea of what topics or arguments will be addressed in the body of the article.
 - What kind of division do these headings provide for the article? (Headings divide article in themes, chronological order, parts of a process, similar or different items/examples)
 - Write them down:
 - Are there any images, illustrations, charts? If so, take notice of what they show and think about how they relate to the content of the article.
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4. READ THE FIRST PARAGRAPHS/INTRODUCTION

→ Consider the following before you start reading:

- a. Most of the articles we will read in this course will be about films in general. However, films may be approached from different perspectives. It is here, in the perspective, where you have to pay the most attention so make sure you understand what the main argument is.
- b. Most of the articles use a Cultural Studies approach, which means that they will focus on a text (which may be a film or some other cultural object), a context (which is usually historical but may have sub-contexts like political, social, or economic) and/or a lived practice (which refers to the people using these texts, the way the text is used by audiences or the way have impacted a group of people).
- c. Depending on the discipline an author is writing within, the focus will be placed on specific elements of the film, e.g., cinematography, characters, genre, etc. To this you must be very attentive because in here may be contained the crux of the article, i.e., its importance and/or relevance to the course.

→ What is the main argument of the author(s) (this is usually introduced in the first paragraph of an article)

→ If the purpose of the article is explicitly stated, what is it? If it is not, what do you think it is?

→ What object or practice is used for the analysis.

→ If the analysis focuses on a particular period in history, what is it?

→ If you don't know much about this period, find out about it. What is so important about this period in history? What point is the author trying to make about this period in history?

→ How does the author analyze the object? What methods does he/she use?

5. READ THE REST OF THE ARTICLE.

- a. As you read, try to get an idea of how the heading of each section corresponds to its content.
- b. Take notice of the following: Dates, names of people, names of places, words or groups of words in quotation marks or italics. Write them down or highlight them so you can go back to them after you finish reading.
- c. Pay attention to any recurring patterns in the organization of each section.

- Summarize the content of each subsection
 - Underline or highlight keywords (these are usually mentioned often throughout the article) and concepts.
 - Make sure you understand the meaning of these keywords and make sure you understand what the concepts refer to.
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6. READ THE CONCLUDING SECTION

- Does the author arrive at one general conclusion or at more than one?
 - If asked, would you be able to explain how/why the author reached those conclusions?
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7. REFLECT ON THE ARTICLE

- After reading the article, think about what new information you have about:
 - ▶ Films
 - ▶ U.S. culture
 - ▶ U.S. history
 - ▶ U.S. politics
 - ▶ U.S. economy
 - ▶ U.S. people (gender, race, class)
 - ▶ U.S. society (religion, ideology, values, beliefs, etc)
 - Go back to the dates, names of people and places and other references. Why were they important or why are they mentioned?
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8. SUMMARIZE THE ARTICLE IN YOUR OWN WORDS AND PREPARE FOR THE DISCUSSION.