

AP Seminar 2021/22 Reading and Reflection Assignment: Freakonomics

In order to prepare you for the rigors and type of thinking expected of you in AP Seminar, you will read and reflect on Levitt and Dubner's 2005 book *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*. Either edition is fine--whichever one you can find.

1. READING:

You may purchase a physical edition of the text from most bookstores, or a digital version.

https://www.amazon.com/Freakonomics-Economist-Explores-Hidden-Everything/dp/0060731338/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=freakonomics&qid=1621866471&sr=8-2

You may also find a hard copy at Half Price Books, or check one out from a local library. You will need access to the book for several weeks, so make sure you can re-check it out.

Do a **close reading** of the text. A close reading means to keep a pencil or pen or digital document in your hand as you read and make notes in the margins, underline confusing and/or favorite passages, highlight interesting information, and comment on significant language. You will receive a grade for annotating every chapter. I would expect an average of a reflection (a few brief sentences) for every 3 pages in the book.

Use Post-It notes if you'd prefer not to write in the book (especially if it's a library book!), or keep your reflections on a word document with page numbers. Thorough annotations are expected, and they will be checked the first day of class! Annotations can be written in the book, on Post-It Notes stuck on pages, or on separate paper labeled with page numbers that correspond to the book.

2. Reflection:

These authors are well-known for connecting apparently random or unrelated topics and identifying similarities between them, usually involving human behavior.

For **each** of the 7 chapters (6+epilogue), you'll need to go through the following process and answer the following 3 questions.

1. Identify the author's argument, main idea, or thesis (typically 3-5 sentences)
2. Explain the author's line of reasoning by identifying the claims used to build the argument and the connections between them. (typically 300-500 words).

Claims are the conclusions that an author draws from the evidence they present.

Example:

Evidence: 1. Ocean temperatures have increased over the past 200 years.

2. There are less pirates on the ocean than there used to be.

Claim: Pirates are responsible for cooling the ocean.

Thesis: we should encourage sea piracy to counteract global warming.

3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the evidence the author uses to support the claims made in the argument. (typically 200-400 words).

*This is where you evaluate how well the author proved their claims, based on the evidence presented. In the above example, the **evidence** is technically true, but they do not support the **claim**, because they are not **causally related** (one did not lead to the other).*

If you want to read up on logical fallacies like the one above to help you figure out how well the authors use their evidence, this is a great primer: (“15 logical fallacies you should know before getting into a debate” by TheBestSchools.org)



Notes: Be ready to discuss the book, and for a quiz over the **content** of the book (particularly author’s thesis and claims) the second week of school.

Seminar is an engaging, paradigm-expanding course that will challenge you and help prepare you for your academic future, and this assignment is the first step. I am always happy to answer questions over the summer, and can be reached at jami_robinson@lagovista.txed.net. I look forward to seeing you next year!

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