Summary and Response Assignment Sheet

Throughout your academic career and even in your everyday life, you will often be asked to respond to arguments you see in textbooks, professional articles, political debates, and even in advertisements or on TV programs. What you believe, how you vote, and even how you spend your money are all, in one way or another, a response to the ideas and arguments you encounter on a daily basis. Thus, it’s important not only to develop the ability to think, read, and listen critically so that you can fully understand the messages of textbooks, news sources, politicians, and advertisements, but also to learn to explain and defend your opinions and beliefs in response to those messages.

The Summary and Response Essay will ask you to enter into a larger academic conversation by developing an essay in response to one of the following professional essays: either “Who Are You and What Are You Doing Here? A Word to the Incoming Class” by Mark Edmundson or “Seeing and Making Culture: Representing the Poor” by bell hooks. Your job will be to develop an argument in response to Edmundson’s or hooks’ essay and defend your position with reasons and evidence.

Assignment Guidelines

Title: The title should be creative and representative not just of the basic topic of the paper, but also of the major point being made in the paper.

Introduction: The introduction should include an attention grabber and introduce the topic of the essay being analyzed, placing it within the larger societal context. Please choose one of the methods of introduction in Inquiry Chapter 11 as a model for the introduction.

Summary Paragraph: This paragraph should provide a brief overview of the professional essay’s major claims and organization without trying to cover every detail of the essay’s argument. By providing us an overview of the main points, tone, and basic methods of the essay, you should be able to give us a “feel” for the content of the essay. Your summary should be a well-developed paragraph which is no more than half a page long and should include the following:

1. A statement of the author’s full name and the essay’s full title as well as a very general statement of the essay’s major argument in the first sentence.

2. An overview of the major claims and tone used to support the essay’s argument.

3. A transitional bridge into and statement of your essay’s thesis.

Thesis Statement: The thesis statement should present an arguable claim in response to the professional essay. Be sure your thesis statement responds to the professional essay’s argument and doesn’t merely restate the professional essay’s claim or make a disconnected claim about the subject of the professional essay. The thesis should be located at the end of the summary paragraph.

Response Section: Because it is the main focus of your essay, the response section should include at least 3 fully developed body paragraphs, each with a clear topic sentence and each clearly focused on a
separate reason which supports, explains, or proves your thesis. Each paragraph should engage and respond to a particular claim or element of the professional essay.

**Conclusion:** The conclusion should reiterate the main point of your essay by restating the thesis in different words and tying together the claims made throughout your essay in final support of your judgment. Please use one of the examples from *Inquiry* Chapter 11 as a model for your conclusion.

*Important Note: The goal of this essay is to respond to the professional essay, not to merely restate or explain what the professional essay says. Remember that the summary paragraph is just a small portion of your essay. The main focus should be response.)*

**Essays for Response:** You can choose to write your essay in response to ONE of the following professional essays:

Option 1: Edmundson’s “Who Are You and What Are You Doing Here?” OR

Option 2: hooks’ “Seeing and Making Culture: Representing the Poor”

**Outside Sources:** No outside research is allowed. Do not read or bring in outside articles, ideas, or data. The response to the professional essay should be entirely based on your own experiences, observations, opinions, and knowledge.

**Source Integration and Documentation:** Your essay must incorporate at least two quotations from the essay you’re responding to and should include an in-text citation each time you paraphrase, summarize, or quote from the professional essay. You should also include a works cited entry for the professional essay to which you’re responding.

**Style:** Avoid using the first person (I, we, us, my, our) and the second person (you, your) unless you incorporate first person to provide brief personal examples.

**Format:** Standard MLA formatting; double spaced; 12 point, Times New Roman font; one-inch margins; Works Cited page

**Length:** 3-5 pages, double spaced (not including Works Cited)

**Due Date:** See the Course Schedule. *(Note: In a regular 12-week term, this essay will be due in the next learning unit. You will begin learning about and drafting it in this learning unit, and then you will revise and submit it in the next learning unit.)*