

Reflective Journal Assignment

(11 weekly journals, 25 points each)

Write a journal entry (about 1-2 pages, single spaced 12-point text - a minimum of 600 words) that responds to this week's prompt and reflects on the week's readings, media, and in-class activities. Upload your journal to the appropriate week on the course Canvas website by noon Monday (for the previous week).

What is a “prompt?”

A prompt is a question or statement that we give you each week to help stimulate your journal entry. We will try to give you prompts that help you dig deeper into the ideas discussed in class and readings. We also plan to give you prompts that help you practice using the vocabulary and tools of systems thinking.

What is a “reflective” journal?

Reflection is careful, critical consideration of an idea. It is one of the most important tools that a systems thinker can employ. Think of a reflective journal as an opportunity to have a thoughtful conversation with yourself about the prompt and the events and readings of the week.

Did you have a strong reaction to a reading? Don't just state your reaction - explore why you think your reaction was so strong. Did you disagree with a video you watched? Don't just tell us that you disagreed. Explain your disagreement - then try to be sympathetic to the opposing point of view and explain why someone might disagree with you. Do you not understand an idea or concept? Say so, but then speculate about what you think the idea might mean, or why it might be useful (or useless).

Your journal entries should be full of attempts to turn half-formed thoughts into more fully formed ideas. We encourage you to have well-reasoned arguments with yourself, or with your professors, or with our readings. Reflective journals should also be full of attempts to explore why you are responding to the prompts in a particular way. Careful and wide-ranging discussion of a “crazy” idea will always make a better journal than a simple statement of opinion with no analysis or critical exploration.

We hope our feedback will help you become better at critical analysis, reflection, and systems thinking. If you ever have any questions about how to write a better reflective journal entry, just ask!