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**On the Review Essay**

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Much like a standard book review that only focuses on one book, a review essay places three or more books in conversation to be both reviewed and analyzed in terms of a unifying theme(s). Journal editors tend to prefer review essays over book reviews because they are more scholarly in nature, more interesting, and more useful to readers. They are often written by authors who are trying to work out some ideas in new books they have read that are related in one way or another, and then lead to much larger scholarly pieces. We will be writing a review essay that discusses three books—two from the Required Texts and one of your own choosing from the Review Essay Book List.

Steps for completing a successful review essay.

1. Select books with subjects that are related to your professional and/or educational interests.
2. Read the books, noting unifying themes.
3. Decide on a theme(s) that you would like to discuss.
4. Locate a scholarly journal / trade magazine where you think you might like to submit your review essay. To do this, read several review essays and book reviews from several different publications to judge their quality, tone, subject matter, envisioned audience, and so forth.
5. Read the sample review essays that are available on the Readings page.
6. Using the samples you have read (both provided and that you have found in a particular journal), compose your review essay.
7. Review essays tend to be longer than regular book reviews: 8 – 10 pages, double spaced, Times New Roman font size 12, 1” margins all around.
8. Write with confidence; you are reviewing, not writing a book report, so apply praise and be critical where appropriate. But, do this in the context of discussing the overall theme/topic you have chosen. The books become a part of the discussion—a natural extension of a discussion—and are not the focus of the discussion.
9. Compose for a particular journal audience. This means that you may be able to assume a certain amount of knowledge for your readers. Be sure, however, to define any key terms and ideas that need to be defined.
10. Add an interesting and meaningful title.
11. At the end of your review, add a paragraph in which you name the journal you have in mind for the review, why you chose it, and how your essay addresses the journal’s readers. Also add a URL to the journal’s web site.