

ANT 265: Contemporary Chinese Society and Culture  
Fall 2008 M,W,F 10:30-11:20 am, Chambers 3084

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### Guide to Response Papers

Response papers are opportunities for you to respond to an idea from the readings, lectures, or class films (I will mark them  $\sqrt{+}$ ,  $\sqrt{\phantom{x}}$ ,  $\sqrt{-}$ ). They should be typed, double-spaced papers of about one page. Response papers provide another way for us to exchange ideas, and give you an opportunity to think through class material through writing.

Your reviews and field essay will be graded on its persuasiveness. Persuasive writing is an important skill to master, no matter what profession you later pursue. Persuasive writing always has a clear thesis statement – a concise sentence or two that tells the reader the main point of your argument. Concrete examples that support or clarify your line of argument convince readers of the strength of your argument, as well as demonstrate to me that you have done the required reading! Writing also helps us think more clearly. The very process of making abstract ideas concrete in coherent sentences and paragraphs clarifies the strengths and weaknesses of our thoughts. A  $\sqrt{+}$  response paper will be thoughtful, specific, and persuasive; a  $\sqrt{-}$  response paper will have little content directly relevant to the course. There is no need for a bibliography in response papers, but if you do directly quote a reading, please put quote the passage.

That said, however, response papers need not be distanced, analytical presentations; they can also be gut-level reactions to the ethnographic or theoretical ideas that a writer presents. Feel free to include your own experiences or anecdotes that help illustrate why a particular reading, or image from a class film, makes you feel a certain way.

Remember, I have also done the reading – **there is no need for you to summarize** what is in each article to demonstrate that you have read the material. Instead, use the material from the readings or films to make other points or to explain your personal reaction. In the limited space that you have, there is also no need for extended quotes. For response papers, there is no need to make full citations from the material. It should be clear from the context what particular work you are responding to. In both response papers and other assignments, I am most interested in reading what you think about a particular idea or your own interpretation of what the author is saying.

Also, do not spend too much time writing your response papers. I suggest **no more than one hour** actually sitting in front of the computer. Instead, devote more time to closely reading the material or discussing it with a friend.

I would prefer email submission of response papers, but if you prefer printing them out, bring them to the class on the day they are due – they provide you with a ready-made script for classroom discussions. Response papers will not be accepted after class. Save your response papers: at the end of the term, they can provide you with a study guide for the final examination!

Lastly, don't forget to type your name on response papers! Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.