Tips on Critical Reading

(Have a pen and pad available for making notes or jogs for later reflection)

(1) Read and reflect on the title and its significance;

(2) Set the context for the text (historical, cultural, social, institutional, political, academic, personal, etc.);

(3) Identify the major purpose as stated in the text. Then, state it separately, in your own words. This begins your engaged dialogue with the author;

(4) Isolate the major themes that are focused upon and developed throughout;

(5) Identify the significant claims or conflicts that drive the work forward; connect these claims to both the context and the major themes;

(6) Frame what seems to be the tone of the text. It is serious and formal? Is it argumentative? What feeling does it seem to want to enduce?

(7) Examine carefully the selection an use of words and images. Make note of them and see to what extent they cluster around a central or core meaning.

(8) State the world view or ideology that emerges. That is, what implicit or explicit understandings are assumed or held about some aspect of the world.