Guide to focused reading for assignments: **reading text books**

A text book is a good starting point if you are not familiar with a topic or area of study. It introduces you to some of the key issues and concerns of researchers and practitioners in the field. It's a good place to find a range of definitions and explanations of relevant models.

You can read a chapter in a text book in different ways: you may read it to get an overview of an unfamiliar topic, or you may read it to look for specific information for your essay. This template is particularly useful once you know what you're looking for in the literature: eg you may have done some preliminary thinking and broken down the seminar or assignment question into a series of sub-questions/ issues for exploration

The questions in red are a very important way to demonstrate critical reading and analysis in your writing. You must show that you understand how the material you have read is relevant to your assignment. You will lose marks if you don't do this.

Question to direct reading?
Reference details: (it's useful to make a note of the source here – it will save you a lot of time later)
What is this chapter about?   **Getting the gist/initial understanding**: Read introduction and summary to chapter; use **'ladder reading':** read introductory and final sentences of paragraphs; use **Index** pages at the back of the book to locate specific information   **For a more detailed understanding of the text:** use some of the following questions to take some brief notes: • *What is the writer's point of view/argument on … ? **Why is this relevant to my assignment?***   • *What 'evidence' does the writer use to support her/his view on…? (Evidence could be previous research, particular theory and/or statistics and trends) **Why is this relevant to my assignment?***

- *How does her/his view compare with other writers I am reading?* **How could I use these comparisons in my assignment?**
- *How have views changed/developed in the last 10 years?* **How could I use these changes in my assignment? Where in the assignment might I include them?**
- *What processes, strategies, approaches does this chapter explain?* **Which processes are relevant to my assignment and why?**
- *How effective are these processes – what positive impact do they have? What are their limitations?* **How could I use this evaluation in my assignment?**

How are key terms or concepts defined?
- *How is the term defined by this author?*
- *What are the key features identified?*
- *How have definitions/understandings changed or evolved? Why have they changed?*
- *Which definition(s) will I use for the purposes of this essay? Why is this definition(s) most relevant?*
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What models, frameworks or theories are relevant to this assignment?
- *What is the model about?*
- *How does the model help us understand a problem/issue?*
- *How can this model be applied in/used to guide practice to address a problem?*
- *What new understanding or solutions does this model provide?*
- *What are the criticisms of this model?*
- *What other model(s) have developed that add to this model?*
- *How is this later model relevant to my essay?*

SUMMARY: What information is most relevant to my _assignment, seminar, exam_**? Why is it relevant?**

- *Using this part of template can encourage you to actually start writing parts of the course work.*