

44. Guidelines for Program Reflections (aka “Praxis Reflections”)

The praxis reflection serves a number of purposes. First, it gives you an opportunity to reflect on your experiences and transform these experiences into meaning and knowledge. Second, it will help you integrate and synthesize the various components of the MUST program (the field and reading seminars, internship and integration seminars). Third, it will allow you to communicate your questions and feelings to Phil, Sara and Martha. Fourth, it's a tool for problem solving. Finally, it will be useful for integration seminars. We are asking for you to include personal experiences related to your journey through MUST, but these papers are not personal reflections in the usual sense.

Guidelines for Praxis Reflections:

There are two components to the praxis reflection: Summary and Praxis Summary. Praxis refers to the integration of theory and practice. The summary portion is a chance to discuss a very down to earth and practical activity upon which you wish to reflect. The praxis summary asks you to pose a more broad or global question.

Summary

Write 1.5 to 2 pages, and elaborate on some part of your work over the past three weeks about which you want to or need to reflect. Include the following:

1. Identify an opportunity, challenge or obstacle that you encountered as you worked on your projects and tasks. Write about how you dealt with them. It's best to identify one key project, task, challenge or obstacle encountered.

2. Then, given how you dealt with the opportunity, challenge or obstacle discussed above, write about what worked and what didn't work for you.

3. Next write about what you think you learned from dealing with this opportunity, challenge or obstacle, especially as related to your learning objectives. (You don't have to restrict this to your learning objectives.) You can and usually will be theorizing here. You might want to write this section after the praxis component is done.

4. Finally, given what you think you learned, how will you approach this opportunity or obstacle as you encounter it again (if applicable)? You may even want write about how THESE actions worked for this section of your NEXT praxis paper (i.e. the circle of praxis or Kolb's learning cycle that we discussed in class).

Tri-Weekly Praxis Summary:

Write 2-2.5 pages for this section also.

Identify and write about a critical problem, question or issue that arose for you from the program these past two weeks? The question should relate specifically to our class discussions, to reading, field or integration seminars, to your internship or to social change generally. If more than one question came up, feel free to note them. The question you choose should be one that you really want to think about. What issue, problem or question has really been a preoccupation for you recently?

Think about and identify the INTERPRETIVE LENS (Analytical Framework/Theory, model, story about how "social reality" works) that you will use to discuss your question. **Note: try this lens on as YOUR lens. Look through it at social reality as though it were really your own**

mental map. In fact it may be. Your lens can draw from the analytical/theoretical frameworks we've explored from one or more of our readings. You can also alter some of the existing theories we've used or develop your own framework or theory. Don't forget that you are a theorist as well. But be sure to discuss where your lens came from to the best of your knowledge (its history, social production and context).

Use your interpretive lens to discuss the problem you have identified in step one above.

Discuss how and why your framework (lens) is partial and selective. What does it include and allow you to "see" in general **and in relation to your question?** What does it obscure, omit and not highlight in general and **in relation to your question?** Be disciplined and logical about this. Discuss both the limits and possibilities of your interpretive lens. Also, discuss what other lenses might supplement your analysis to get at what your lens obscures or leaves out.

Finally, explore and write about what social groups your framework and the analysis based on it might benefit or marginalize if used to guide policy or political activity.

Don't necessarily try to fully solve or answer the question you've raised. The purpose of this is for you to develop critical reflection skills integrating theory and experience (practice) focused on issues you really care about. The purpose is not definitively solving a problem. Be sure to utilize MUST readings or other literature that you have encountered.