**Reading is Fundamental**

This class requires a great deal of reading. There is so much information on the subject at hand, so much debate, you wouldn’t get a full picture of the topic if you don’t do the readings. There are other readings beyond that assigned you will have to indulge in for purposes of writing papers and comprehending the topic at hand.

Reading ranks very high on the scale of important things you should be doing with your time. But with so much out there, it can be so daunting you don’t do any of it. This handout is meant to bestow you the tips allowing you can become an avid reader.

* **Find your space.** There are no hard, fast rules to where a good place to read is, but a place with minimum distractions and noise is critical. For me this means not the chair at my computer. Find your space. Explore. Try new areas. This rule works very well with the next one.
* **Set time starts.** Treat reading like a show which starts a certain time. If you know you have to start reading at 3pm, then you are more likely to make sure you’ll be available to read at 3pm. If it becomes a scheduled part of your day, then when the time rolls around you’re more likely to follow through with it.
* **Set page goals, not hour goals.** If you tell yourself you’ll read for an hour that day, you’ll probably spend most of the hour waiting for the hour to pass. Instead, I suggest setting page goals such as read chapter four today. The only problem with this is you might be tempted to blaze though the goal without actually reading. This is why this lesson works well with the next one.
* **An unmarked book is an unread book.** These are your books; write in them! Don’t merely underline, actually write in the margin. This forces you to slow down and think about what you’re reading. It also comes in handy later when you have to look back days or weeks later and recall what you read. Even if the writing is simply a summary, or “BS” written in big letters, you’ll thank yourself.
* **Books are cell phones.** Never leave home without it. You never know when you’ll find yourself with empty time in your day. I find this particularly useful when I have a lot of errands to run—I easily read a chapter while standing in all those lines.
* **Discuss and be amazed.** If you can, discuss for a few minutes what you read with someone. They don’t have to be in the class or even a student. But it helps you understand what you’re reading and encourage you to keep reading. There are few things as satisfying as comprehension.