

Critical abstract of a secondary source

DUE: Friday, March 21 by 5pm

Submit on Connect or slide under my office door: BUCH E375

Choose ONE article/chapter: You must do your summary on an article or book chapter that is **not on the syllabus as required or optional reading**. I have compiled over the years a bibliography of readings on Foucault and Nietzsche, which is posted on a wiki so that anyone can add to it (please do!):

<http://wiki.ubc.ca/Course:PHIL449/Bibliography> There is also a link to this on the top menu of our main course page: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil449> **You don't, though, have to just choose an article or chapter from this bibliography!** The bibliography may be helpful for your research project, or maybe not. If you find other resources, I'd love to have them added to the wiki (you could send me an email and I could add them if you want, or you can add them directly yourself).

Posted publicly: These abstracts will be posted on the course website, but I won't attach names or student ID numbers; I'll only copy the text of the abstracts. The point is so that other students can read these and decide if they want to read the articles the summaries are about, for their own research papers. If anyone would prefer that I make the page with the abstracts password-protected, even though no names will be attached, please let me know because I could certainly do that.

What the abstract of the article/chapter should contain

- The idea here is to provide a quick summary, so the abstract should not go into a great amount of depth, but rather summarize the main conclusion and arguments for it in a concise fashion.
- There should also be a brief evaluation of the article/chapter: what you say is up to you, but you could consider things such as whether the argument is clear, whether you have a significant objection to it, or something else that will help other students decide whether they want to read the text.

Format of the abstracts

Length: The abstract should be no more than 400 words (less is fine if you can capture everything in less)—the aim here is for these to be concise and easily scannable by other students so they can decide if they want to read the article/chapter.

Outline vs. narrative? You can do your abstract in either format—either providing an outline of the main points & your evaluation, or giving a narrative of these. If you opt for an outline, be sure your outline gives enough information to make what you're saying clear to someone who hasn't read the text you're discussing (sometimes people abbreviate *too* much in outlines).

Think about your audience as being other students in the course: We can assume the other students have read the texts for the course and know the terms we've been using to discuss them, but otherwise try to avoid words/concepts/jargon that haven't been used in the class—it's hard to know who will have the background to understand these. Or, if it's important to what you're saying, try to define a new concept/word quickly in the abstract.

Criteria for marking (remember that this assignment counts for 5% of your course mark)

I may not have read the text you're summarizing either, so I won't be marking for accuracy in the sense of whether or not you've represented well what seems to be in the text. Rather, I'll be focusing on whether or not your abstract (a) summarizes one or more conclusions and then explains (briefly) the main arguments for them, (b) includes some kind of evaluation of the text, (c) is reasonably understandable to someone who hasn't read the text.

Late penalty: 5% per weekday after 5pm on March 20.