

Archaeology of Environmental Change

Midterm Project: Article/Book Chapter Review

Choose a “peer-reviewed” article or book chapter (*not an unpublished Internet article from the web*) on a topic related to archaeology and climate/environmental change (subject to the instructor’s approval). Write a review beginning with an analytical summary of the article’s contents and arguments. Then give your own critical evaluation including what may be unique about the article/book chapter and its significance (or lack of significance) to current local or global concerns. (2-3 pages/~1000 words). **See Syllabus for Due Date.**

Analytical Summary

An analytical summary is a condensed account of an article, chapter, or other work, written in your own words and limited to the essential IDEAS in the original work.

NOTES: To achieve a better comprehension of the text and to be able to write a better analytical summary, writing an outline and taking double entry notes are recommended.

A summary includes certain Essential information:

- In the first sentence, state the author(s) and title of the work you are summarizing, along with the controlling idea (thesis) of the work.
- It should include only the major ideas, not the minor ones.
- In the subsequent sentences, give the major points of the work (the supporting ideas) which develop the argument. You must select what ideas are most important; you should also take care to show the relationship among the points the work makes – definitions, causes and effects, examples (only if they are of primary importance), and so on – as you summarize them. *Transitional expressions* such as “because, however, when, moreover, secondly, in addition” and countless others will help you fulfill this function.
- Events should be in the same order as they are stated in the text.
- Quotes are possible IF they are not abused! (make sure to cite/reference them if you do)
- Finish with a concluding paragraph, perhaps a condensed version of the author’s/article’s conclusion(s), or a restatement of the controlling idea.
- Use indirect speech (i.e. write in the third person [do not use “I”] and the present tense should dominate. “The author writes...” not “The author wrote...”

A summary should be Brief, Clear, Accurate and Critical:

- Be brief, but not obscure.
- Make sure that you use succinct and clear language and that you have not omitted essential links or changed the author’s original meaning (something easier to do than you might imagine!).
- While an analytical summary condenses a work, it also serves as a critical analysis of it. Therefore, your own opinions and reactions are not out of place IF you make sure to argue your point logically and by carefully taking up the points raised by the author(s) in a rigorous fashion. E.g., Bad analysis: “What the author says is real stupid.” Good Analysis: “the author states that women’s opportunities are equal across the globe; a number of studies indicate, however, that this is not true (put references here).” Also, it is NOT about what YOU think, want, feel, etc. Keep your own critical evaluation separate from the analytical summary.