

PSY 244: CHILD AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT CRITICAL BOOK REVIEW

Overview

Selecting a book. You will find a short list of books that will work well for this assignment below. All of these books are written for an educated audience, but one that has not received formal training in developmental psychology. Meeting the book selection deadline will be worth 2 points.

Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls
Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys
*The Learning Gap: Why Our Schools are Failing and What We Can Learn from
Japanese and Chinese Education*
Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools

Forming a 'book club'. You will be asked to form a "book club" with classmates who are reading the same book. You will meet with the members of your book club to discuss the book twice during the semester. To ensure you and your book club members are "on the same page," you *must* complete ½ of the book by the first book club meeting and the entire book by the second book club meeting. You should come prepared to each book club meeting with three questions for discussion.

Writing progress reports. You will be asked to submit progress reports after each book club meeting. Progress reports may be in outline or paragraph form and should include: a) a clear statement of your progress through the book (e.g., by [book club meeting date], I had read through page 128 of my book); b) a sentence or two outlining each of three major claims/arguments made by the authors, and c) a sentence or two outlining each of three critiques of the authors' claims/arguments, and d) three questions that you brought to your book club meeting for discussion. See grading rubric for additional details. Progress reports will be worth 9 points each.

Writing the critical review. Book reviews will consist of two parts: a synopsis and a critical evaluation. For the latter, you will need to read (or re-read) and integrate into your review relevant material from your textbook. Your final, written review is worth 50 points.

Giving an oral presentation. You (and your book club members) will be asked to share your insights from this project with me and with your classmates in a creative, informal presentation. Presentations will be worth 20 points.

Requirements for Writing the Critical Book Review

Your book review will consist of two major sections: a synopsis and a critical evaluation. If you prefer to integrate the synopsis and critical evaluation for better “flow”, feel free to do so. Be sure, however, to provide enough detail in both sections to satisfy the requirements outlined below.

Synopsis (Approximately 3 pages)

In this section, your goal is to provide an accurate and concise summary of the authors’ *major* claims and some of the evidence the authors’ use to support these claims. You will not be able to relate all of the authors’ arguments, but should provide enough detail that your reader has a good sense of (some of) the authors’ most critical claims. You may find existing reviews of the book helpful in writing your synopsis, but your review should reflect your own writing and ideas.

Critical Evaluation and Integration (Approximately 4 pages)

In this section, your goal is to critically evaluate the authors’ claims. What are the major strengths and weaknesses of the authors’ arguments? Again, you will not be able to critically evaluate every point. Focus on two or three major claims made by the authors (it may be helpful to choose the same or a subset of the points you describe in the synopsis) and explain why the authors’ view is either convincing or unconvincing. In this section, you will also want to integrate your critical evaluation with materials presented in your text, lecture, and/or other readings. Explain, in particular, whether the authors’ claims are consistent or inconsistent with the results of these other sources. Provide citations and specific page numbers, where appropriate.

Please keep in mind ... I understand that this may be the first time that you have been asked to write a critical book review. I am happy to provide as much support and assistance as you need. Remember, too, that you can get ideas for your writing from members of your book club or from previously published reviews of these books. However, your writing should be your own. If you do borrow ideas from on-line sources or from previously written reviews, do so sparingly and be sure to cite your sources. Avoid using quotes, unless absolutely necessary. Plagiarism will be taken very seriously.

In preparing your paper, please follow the following guidelines.

- Papers should have a cover page that contains the following information: your name, course name, and section (i.e., time the class meets).
- Papers should be typed on 8.5 x 11-inch white paper.
- Papers should be *stapled*. Please do not use folders, binders, paper clips, etc.
- Papers *should not be shorter than 6 pages and should not exceed 10 pages*, not including cover pages and references sections. All sections of papers (including the cover page) should be double-spaced, with 12-point font and one-inch margins.
- Papers should be proofread carefully for spelling and grammatical errors.
- All sources should be cited and appear in a properly-formatted “References” section. You may use whatever citation format with which you are most familiar (e.g., APA, MLA).
- Be sure to make an *extra copy* of your paper for your records and to *back up* computer files frequently during the writing process.

Critical Book Review Grading Rubric

Student Name _____

Book Selection (2 points)

	Possible Points	Points Earned
<i>Did the student select and purchase his or her book by the deadline?</i>	2	

Progress report #1 (9 points)

	Possible Points	Points Earned
<i>Does the student provide a clear statement indicating the number of pages he or she completed by the day of the first book club meeting? The number should represent ½ of the book. Vague statements (e.g., “I’m about half way through now.”) are <u>not</u> acceptable.</i>	1	
<i>Did the student attend and come prepared to participate in the “book club” meeting (e.g., with well-thought-out questions)? A list of the three questions you brought to your book club meeting should be included in your progress report. These will be evaluated in terms of the level of critical thinking they reflect as well as their likelihood of stimulating discussion.</i>	3	
<i>Does the student appear to be on the right track in terms of identifying and critiquing key claims/arguments?</i>	5	

Progress report # 2 (9 points)

	Possible Points	Points Earned
<i>Does the student provide a clear statement indicating he or she completed the entire book by the day of the second book club meeting? Vague statements (e.g., “I’m nearly finished.”) are <u>not</u> acceptable.</i>	1	
<i>Did the student attend and come prepared to participate in the “book club” meeting (e.g., with well-thought-out questions)? A list of the three questions you brought to your book club meeting should be included in your progress report. These will be evaluated in terms of the level of critical thinking they reflect as well as their likelihood of stimulating discussion.</i>	3	
<i>Does the student appear to be on the right track in terms of identifying and critiquing key claims/arguments?</i>	5	

Final Book Review (50 points)

	Possible Points	Points Earned
Formatting and Style		
<i>Did the student follow the guidelines for writing the critical book review (e.g., cover page, font size, etc.)?</i>	2	
<i>Did the student proofread the paper for spelling and grammatical errors? Is the writing style clear and concise?</i>	10	
Synopsis		
<i>Did the student adequately identify, summarize, and provide evidence for (some of) the authors' <u>major points</u>?</i>	15	
Evaluation		
<i>Did the student critically evaluate the authors' claims, focusing on critiquing the authors' <u>major points</u>?</i>	15	
<i>Did the student integrate material from the textbook, lecture, or other readings in critically evaluating the authors' claims?</i>	8	

Oral Presentation (20 points)

	Possible Points	Points Earned
<i>Did the students clearly present and critically evaluate some of the authors' major claims/arguments?</i>	10	
<i>Was the oral presentation creative, engaging, informative, and well-organized?</i>	10	