## How to Read a Book in Grad School

Chris Endy, Cal State LA History Dept.
For more tips, see
web.calstatela.edu/faculty/cendy/histlinks.htm

## The linear method - FLAWED



## The "bookends" method - MORE EFFECTIVE

Table of Contents
and Back Cover,
skim for
overview

## Chapter 2, in some detail

Chapter 3, just a quick skim

Chapters 4-6, out of time! Hope they don't come up in discussion!
 chapters, skim

Body of less critical chapters, quick skim

Conclusion, careful \& detailed reading

Notes and Bibliography, skim

Introduction to each chapter, careful \& detailed reading
$1^{\text {st }}$ PAUSE: WRITE NOTES FOR 10-15 MINTUES

## Questions for Notes Writing During the $1^{\text {st }}$ Pause:

-What is the author's research question, and what is the author's thesis (i.e. the answer to that question)?
-Is the author's thesis or method surprising to you? Why or why not? -How does this argument and method relate to other readings? -What evidence will the author need to provide to prove the thesis? -Which chapters are going to be the most important ones?

Questions for Notes Writing During the $2^{\text {nd }}$ Pause:
-Did you accurately record the thesis during the $1^{\text {st }}$ pause?
-Did the author support the thesis? If so, which chapters and which sources were the most effective or crucial? If not, what evidence or assumptions by the author were weak?
-How does this book relate to other works you've read? Does it confirm other readings? Does it contradict other readings?
-What avenues for new research does this book suggest?

