Analyzing the skills of being Compassionately Critical

Final Essay (2500+ words) –25%– This essay should cover a significant amount (i.e. at least two weeks’ worth of material) of course material and have a research component entailing at least three additional scholarly sources. The final essay should focus on material from the second half of the semester, but may also use previous material as well, provided you avoid plagiarizing yourself (i.e. no cut-and-pasting from the midterm). See the syllabus for guidelines on attaining excellence with the essay, but success hinges on the following two aspects: 1) Has the student read and understood a significant amount (at least two weeks' worth) of course material?2) Has the student thought about that material critically, creatively, and clearly for themselves? See "Writing Help" in Blackboard for more resources as well as the Critical Thinking Resource. Write not as if you are summarizing the material to me, but rather as if you are trying to engage, inform, and transform another student who is not taking our course. Avoid phrases like, "In this class,” From the very first sentence, what would make such a student want to seriously read your essay? What information about the material would they need to understand (Summarize)? How should they think critically about the material? What's at stake (Criticize)? And what do you want your reader to take away from your essay (So What)? Overarching Prompt: How do our course's saints, sages, and/or social reformers help you live as a compassionately critical thinker? A successful approach might follow the following format: Summarize, Criticize, and So What? (See the Critical Thinking Resource)– including three components: (1) an accurate reading of a substantial amount of material, (2) thoughtful and reasoned reactions to the readings that present an argued point or points rather than mere opinion or personal response (though those could help as well), and (3) remaining critical questions (i.e. not informational) related to the topic and possible implications for society today and your personal life and values. A possible structure could be to summarize the reading material clearly with explication of a few key quotes, followed by a presentation of your own critical thinking, and ending with discussion of implications for today and your life.