**Mini Socratic Seminar- Fast Food Nation**

1. Schlosser notes in his introduction, "I've written this book out of a belief that people should know what lies behind the shiny, happy surface of every fast food transaction" (10).  What, in his view, *does*"lie behind" the counter at McDonalds or beyond the pizza box? Who is in control of this industry, and why is Schlosser so concerned about their policies and practices?

1. What goals do you think Schlosser has in writing this book? To make us aware of the goings on in this industry? To inform us about practices we are unaware of? Do you think he hopes for larger change (whether in the industry or in our personal habits and beliefs) by publishing a text like this? What might he expect fro you as a particular kind of reader - college student in the Midwest, etc. - after finishing this book?

1. What view of American culture does Schlosser's book depict and/or promote? How does he describe American farmers, businessmen, children, the general working and eating public, etc.?

1. What is the tone of Schlosser's text? Overall, would you classify this book as cynical, skeptical, pessimistic, etc.? Are there moments of optimism or hopefulness, in your opinion? Where? Where does Schlosser most directly assert his opinion or perspective, and are there sections that are more (or less) biased or opinionated than others?

1. Schlosser's text includes many anecdotes and stories of various people who have participated in the fast food industry (from the creator of McDonalds as we know it to potato farmers to workers injured at meatpacking plants).  What is the effect of these stories, and why are they included? Do we as readers remember their names and actions after finishing the book? Why or why not? What about the photographs of an injured worker, a cow, or Ronald McDonald entertaining children - do these also have a larger purpose or effect on us as readers?

1. Pick a particular segment, chapter, or example that stands out to you once you are finished reading the book. Why did you pick it, and what is Schlosser's larger point in including it? Is it particularly upsetting, graphic, informative, controversial, etc?

1. We learn the history and practices of McDonalds throughout Schlosser's text, and this one particular chain often stands in for the entire fast food industry as a whole. Why do you think Schlosser focuses so much on McDonalds? Is it a fair approach, or do you think McDonalds serves as a kind of "whipping boy" here? What is the general popular view of McDonalds in American culture, in your opinion? Think about other no-so-supportive views of McDonalds over the years (the documentary *Super Size Me,*etc) as well as its more positive visibility in promoting the Olympics, etc.

1. The text takes as its focus the fast food industry, but Schlosser also comments on more institutions and aspects of American society, including big (and small) businesses, the government, consumers, and agriculture. He also raises questions about other related concerns and trends (environmental and land issues, increasing obesity rates, immigration, treatment of workers, etc.). In your opinion, what are the overarching implications of Schlosser's text and his argument about the fast food industry: Does the book recommend some kind of larger, more sweeping result or outcome, or do you think it is (and should be) primarily classified as a study of the food industry?

1. Think about your own experiences with McDonalds and other fast food restaurants over the years. Do you fit in with the facts that Schlosser includes and the assumptions that he makes (for example: "The typical American now consumes approximately three hamburgers and four orders of french fries every week" [p. 6])? Do our own opinions about fast food and your experiences with it shape the way you as an individual reader approach this text? How and why?
2. Schlosser's text was first published in 2001, and it has subsequently been reprinted and expanded and even "inspired" a 2006 film   of the same name about the inner workings of a fictional fast food chain. Schlosser also serves as a key expert in a recent documentary about the food industry called *Food, Inc.*(2009). What do you think endures about this topic and the issues that Schlosser raises? Does his book feel dated to you ten years after its publication, or do you think these are still concerns and details that we should be aware of? Why or why not?