What are ancillary course readings?

Ancillary readings are readings required in addition to your textbook. Professors sometimes distribute photocopied articles or essays, they may ask you to read articles on the web, or they may require an anthology of readings as a supplement to the textbook.

Articles and essays may have fewer headings than textbook chapters so you may need to read more closely to determine the key points and the organization. If an ancillary reading expresses an opinion, you will need to read critically to determine the point of view and decide whether you agree or disagree.

In addition, you need to think actively about why your professor assigned the reading and how it connects to the textbook and the lectures.

What should you ask yourself after you finish an ancillary reading?

♦ Why did the professor ask us to read this?
♦ What is the author trying to explain?
♦ How was the piece developed?
♦ What are the key points?
♦ Do I understand each of the key points? Each concept? Each term?
♦ What questions might the professor ask about this reading during class? On an exam?
♦ How would I organize my answers to these questions?
♦ How does this reading material fit with the material covered in the textbook? In the lectures?