Reading Questions for ***The Republic of Imagination*** (intro)

Note: These questions are just to guide your reading of this complex and fairly lengthy essay. The questions will form the basis of our discussion, and there might be a related in-class writing. Remember, bring the reading with you! You will need to refer to specific passages.

1. **Audience**: Who do you think is the target audience for this book? How can you tell?
2. **Thesis**: One element of Nafisi’s message is the role of literature in an individual’s life –what it does for those who read. She also discusses the role of literature in a free society. What is her view on these related questions? Where does she state her main idea most fully?
3. **Kairos**: This is a book prompted by a concern about American society. What seems to be the author’s worry about Americans’ relationship to our literature (and the world of imagination in general)? Hint: She calls it a “crisis.” What are the negative effects of this crisis that Nafisi either sees or predicts?
4. **Ethos:** Nafisi is analyzing America from an outsider’s perspective, in a sense, though she went to college here and moved here permanently about 17 years before she wrote this book. How does this figure into her rhetorical strategies? Is it a liability, a strength, or both?
5. **Ethos:** Nafisi uses her personal perspective extensively in this piece (and in the book as a whole). How did her description of her father’s influence fit into her ethos appeal? (That is, how did it influence how you felt about her?) How about the story of her encounter with Ramin?
6. **Pathos:** Where does Nafisi appeal to the audience’s sense of patriotism? What other emotions does she appeal to? What values is she defending?
7. **Logos:** This isn’t a data-heavy argument, but Nafisi does offer some evidence for her claims. Find some and consider whether it is persuasive. If it isn’t, what other kind of evidence could she have brought in to support her claims about American society today?