Directions: You will be required to keep up with this reading guide throughout the *Mistakes Were Made* unit. We will discuss some of these questions in class or use them as our activity for the day. Do not put this off until the last minute!

Your typed response to all of these questions will be due on the day of the *Mistakes Were Made* seminar, which will count as the test grade for this unit. **Answer in complete sentences. This reading guide will count as 30% of the test grade (see rubric).** There will be a Google Doc online. If you would like to keep a running Doc of your typed responses rather than use a hard copy, feel free. “Make a copy” of the Google Doc so it will be saved in your Drive and you can edit it. However, on the day of seminar, you will need to submit the document to TurnItIn.com by 7:25/9:25 a.m. and bring a printed hard copy to class.

On the typed document, maintain the formatting of the original document, and keep each question. Start typing your responses directly after the question like an annotated bibliography entry.

### Introduction – Knaves, Fools, Villains, and Hypocrites: How Do They Live with Themselves?

1. The authors use George W. Bush, Lyndon Johnson, and Henry Kissinger as examples to show what common human behavior?
2. What are some common examples of this behavior?
3. How is “self-justification” different than lying?
4. Explain how Newt Gingrich and Ted Haggard illustrate Aldous Huxley’s words: “There is probably no such thing as a conscious hypocrite.”
5. What are the benefits of self-justification?
6. Explain the **allusion** and how it relates to the authors’ purpose in writing the book: “[W]e have to recognize the **siren song** of self-justification.”

### Chapter 1 – Cognitive Dissonance: The Engine of Self-Justification

7. Provide a detailed definition of cognitive dissonance and support with examples from the chapter.
8. How does the idea of the pyramid of choice help us understand how the Watergate scandal could have happened?

### Chapter 2 – Pride and Prejudice . . . and Other Blind Spots

9. What does the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles teach us about blind spots?
10. How do blind spots affect Democrats and Republicans?
11. What do the authors say about accepting “small inducements” in reference to the Pyramid of Choice?
12. How are physicians and scientists guilty of ignoring their blind spots?
13. Explain what Al Campanis’s blind spot was.
14. From where do prejudices emerge? How does an *Us vs Them* mentality help us understand prejudice?
15. Explain why “prejudice is the engine of ethnocentrism.”
Chapter 3 – Memory, the Self-justifying Historian

16. Use dissonance theory to discuss how the authors explain what happens when “two people produce entirely different memories of the same event”?
17. How do the biases of memory threaten to make liars of us all?

Chapter 4 – Good Intentions, Bad Science: The Closed Loop of Clinical Judgment

18. How can cognitive dissonance explain the “phenomenon of recovered-memory therapy”?
19. How can the control group guard us against the bias of our direct observations? Provide an example from the chapter.

Chapter 5 – Law and Disorder

20. How can an understanding of self-justification help explain why so many innocent people remain in prison?
21. Provide specific examples where investigators, interrogators, and prosecutors have fallen guilty to acts of self-justification.
22. What are possible solutions to combat the legal system’s “vulnerability to self-justification”?

Chapter 6 – Love’s Assassin: Self-justification in marriage

23. How can resisting the “allure of self-justification” and a willingness to “heed dissonant information” help us in our personal relationships?
24. Why do the authors think that self-justification is the prime suspect in the murder of a marriage?

Chapter 7 – Wounds, Rifts, and Wars

25. Explain how self-justification explains the case of Terri Schiavo and the Shah of Iran.
26. What three strategies do perpetuators of self-justification use to reduce dissonance?
27. How does dissonance theory help explain what happened at Abu Ghraib and on the Crusades?
28. How can resisting acts of self-justification help us to understand without vengeance and make reparations without retaliation?

Chapter 8 – Letting Go and Owning Up

29. How would you contrast the admissions of John F. Kennedy regarding the Bay of Pigs and Ronald Reagan regarding the Iran-Contra scandal?
30. “If letting go of self-justification and admitting mistakes is so beneficial to the mind and relationships, why aren’t more of us doing it?”
31. How do we live with cognitive dissonance? Provide examples from the chapter.
32. What suggestions do the authors make in terms of the inevitable mistakes we will make?