**English 1001**

**Project 2: Rhetorical Analysis**

# Assignment

You are to write a 1000-word rhetorical analysis of a written, reputable source (an article from a mainstream, print news source or a scholarly publication).

# Purpose

Based on what you have read in the textbook and what we have discussed in class about rhetoric and the rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos), this assignment asks you to think about ***how*** and ***why*** a written text works (or doesn’t work) rhetorically. This is similar to what you did on your essay about movie posters and/or social media profile pics, except now you’re analyzing a piece of writing.

In addition to being well written and organized, the most successful responses to this assignment will do the following (these are ***not*** listed in order):

* Describe the rhetorical situation (purpose and target audience) surrounding the text under analysis and accurately summarize the argument presented in the text.
* Include a clear and precise thesis statement (a claim about what the text is trying persuade its audience of & the specific ways it tries to accomplish this task)
* Explain and analyze how the author builds and presents his/her argument.
* Explain and analyze how the author connects with (or fails to connect with) the audience.
* Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of how rhetorical appeals are working in the text.

**Audience**

Your audience for this assignment is your classmates and me.

**Citation and Documentation**

If you quote/paraphrase from your chosen source (and you should), you must include proper MLA in-text citation and a works cited entry. (See your handbook and/or the Purdue OWL link on Moodle for directions on how to do this).

**Tips for Doing a Rhetorical Analysis**

* The first thing to do is read and study the source you’ve chosen to analyze. Based on your reading, ***you must pinpoint the argument in the text***. In other words, you must decide what you think the author is trying to persuade the audience to think or do.
* Then, try to develop an interesting and specific claim about the text itself. You are not telling me *your* viewpoint on the writer’s topic. Instead, you should think about how the text is working, what types of appeals it relies on, what types of language it uses, how it establishes logos, ethos, and pathos, and the ways it engages with the issue at hand.
* Next, identify those places in the text that speak directly to your thesis. What parts of the essay made you argue what you’re arguing in your analysis? How and why did they make you come to your claim or conclusion? At this point you might also want to think about organization. How might you best incorporate these points into your rhetorical analysis? In what order should they go?
* Then, start writing. In a formal essay, you’ll probably begin with an engaging introduction paragraph that also includes your very specific thesis statement. **(For example, “Janice Turner uses several different kinds of arguments in her article ‘Cutting Edge’” is vague and uninformative. Here’s a better thesis: “In ‘Cutting Edge,’ Janice Turner seems to present only the facts about cosmetic surgery, but her word choices and examples persuade readers to rely on their emotions just as strongly as their brains.”)**
* Early in your paper, identify the rhetorical situation for the article or essay you’re analyzing. In other words, explain who you think the target audience is and why you think the author wrote the piece. This discussion will provide important background information for your readers.
* As you move into the body of your essay, you’ll need to analyze the elements of the text you have identified in your thesis. Your paragraphs should begin with topic sentences, then follow these with evidence that summarizes or even quotes the portion of the text you want to deal with. It’s your job to provide context for such descriptions. Next, use your own writing and thinking to demonstrate how this section of the text is working in reference to your claim. Be very clear about how this particular section of the text advances what you intend to say about the article as a whole. This is your analysis section, and it’s the most important thing you will do in this paper. Finally, leave your reader with something interesting to think about in the conclusion.

**What should NOT be included in your rhetorical analysis:**

Keep in mind that ***your focus is not on your own opinion about the author or the topic being discussed in the article***, but on explaining how the author of the article has put together his/her argument and how s/he appeals to the audience. In other words, if you were writing about an essay discussing the war in Iraq, what you think about the war would not be the focus; rather, you would need to show how the author argues his/her point and how his/her strategy is working.