

## **Short Assignment 1 – Rhetorical Analysis**

After our discussion of rhetorical analysis, including intended audience, context, word choice, image choice, and use of sound, as well as the conventions of genre and how these change depending upon one's audience, I think you have started to develop the skills needed to try writing an analysis of your own. In this assignment, you will write a **2-3 page rhetorical analysis** of one of the multimodal texts that we have seen, heard, or read so far (or one of your own choosing). This could include a comic, article, blog post, twitter conversation, YouTube video, or even the syllabus of this class itself. Finally, you will write a **1 page Writer's Memo** describing your process in writing this paper.

The purpose of this exercise is to examine how the creator of a multimodal text attempts to say something meaningful and persuasive to a certain audience.

The following are some questions to consider while you write, though you do not need to address them in this order or even include all of them if you think they don't make sense for the media and genre of the text you choose.

- Who is the intended audience of this text?
- What modes are used in this text? Through what medium is this text distributed?
- Does this text participate in a genre and what are the characteristics of this genre?
- What argument is being made?
- What claims does the author make and what do they do to make those claims persuasive?
- What are the effects achieved by these choices?
- Are you a member of the author's target audience? Do you think the author succeeds in making those claims persuasive?

**Targeted Outcome:** 1 - Identifying demands and conventions of a particular genre, awareness of rhetorical strategies, reading and analyzing texts, identifying claims and evidence.

Submission Requirements:

- 2-3 pages in MLA format, Times New Roman, 12 point font, double-spaced with 1 inch margins.

Due Date: **Monday, 10 April 2017, at midnight on Canvas.**

## **Short Assignment 2: Intertextuality**

We have looked at different texts that make claims that conflict with one another about the issues of women in comics, sexism, and who is made to feel welcome or unwelcome in a discourse community. I think that we are ready to take our discussions a step further by investigating how these texts fit together into a larger conversation that matters to this community. In this assignment, you will take any five of the multimodal texts that we have looked at in this class (or, if you want more freedom, three texts that we have looked at and another two from outside that are related to the subject), and analyze how these texts speak to one another. The purpose of this assignment is to trace how one text working in one genre can inspire others to respond to it by creating another text in another genre and then draw some conclusions about how this discourse community makes meaning.

For example, you could return to James Sturm's comic, "The Sponsor," look at the blog posts, online news articles, Twitter conversations, and other comics that were created in response to it and then try mapping out how this conversation evolved and what arguments were raised by the different stakeholders. This is only an example; in class, we will brainstorm different possible sets of texts that you could examine as a system.

The purpose of this assignment is not only to develop your abilities to summarize, paraphrase, and quote from sources, but also to make an argument about them. Finally, you will write a **1 page Writer's Memo** describing your process in working on this assignment.

The following are some questions to consider while you compose, though you do not need to address them all, depending on the type of multimodal text you decide to make.

- What are the claims made by each text?
- What genre and modes are used by a text?
- How and why does one text inspire the creation of another?
- How convincing are the arguments made by these texts? Why are they convincing or not?
- Do you have a claim to make about how these texts work together?
- What is at stake in this conversation? Who cares about this topic and why?

Media: Please present your findings in the form of a multimodal text. This could be a digital timeline, a Prezi document or slide deck, an infographic, a comic, a paper that uses images as well as alphabetic text, a video, or voice recording, or some other text. Your Writer's Memo should reflect on why you chose the media you did and what you thought the effects of using them were.

Targeted Outcomes: 2, 3 Analyze and synthesize texts, evaluate the complex claim presented in a text, summary and paraphrase, create a complex claim that is persuasive.

Submission Requirements for Writer's Memo:

- 2-3 pages in MLA format, Times New Roman type, 12 point font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins.

Due Date: Monday, 17 April 2017 at midnight on Canvas

## Major Project 1: Mock-up of a Multimodal Text

So far, we have looked at how discourse communities use different genres of text to talk about the issues that matter to them as well as the rhetorical strategies that they often employ. We have also examined how different texts make complex claims and refer to one another other about the claims they make as well as how they agree or disagree with the arguments of others. Now, I am asking you to think about how you would intervene in the discussion taking place in the discourse community that we've been studying (or in some other community that is interesting to you). Basically, this assignment is about creating a **mock-up or storyboard** for how you would create a multimodal text that has something to say about a particular issue and then making an educated guess about how you think your text would be received.

The assignment has two major parts:

**Part One:** You will create a **mockup or storyboard** (this is a kind of detailed plan for a multimodal text) that presents how you would create a text with a complex claim about an issue that matters to the discourse community that we have been looking at. Your mock-up or storyboard could be for a comic, video, podcast, website, object, or some other multimodal text. To get a better sense of a how to approach creating a mock-up or storyboard, look back at Chapter 6 of the *Writer/Designer* text for help.

Just to be clear: I am asking you to create a mock-up or storyboard for a multimodal text, but you are NOT responsible for then making a complete multimodal text based on that mock-up! You will have a chance to do that later in the course after you get to experiment a little more with making multimodal texts.

**Part Two:** In addition, you will also write a **composition statement** that examines why you have chosen a particular type of multimodal text, what you think using this kind of text will allow you to do, how you would distribute this text so that people could see it, and what kind of response you think this text would receive. Also, please use MLA formatting and provide a “Works Cited page.”

Some questions you'll want to address are:

1. Why are you choosing this kind of text?
2. What modes of communication would it use? What would they allow you to do? What would they not allow you to do?
3. What claim would your text make? What would it try to accomplish?
4. Who would your intended audience be? What would they expect from this kind of text?
5. How do you anticipate they would respond to this text?
6. What sources of information would you draw upon or refer to in order to make your claim convincing? Is that something you would need to do? Would you cite those sources

in your text?

If you have any questions, please come to see me after class or come to office hours or email me; I will be happy to talk this over with you!

This will be a multi-draft assignment. After you compose a first draft, you will get feedback not only from me, but also from your classmates during peer review sessions. Once you get this feedback and think it over, you will create a second draft of your assignment.

Outcomes targeted: 1, 2, 3, 4

Remember that, since your text will present a claim or argument, it should include:

- A unique and complex stake-driven claim of your own, clearly articulated and supported throughout the text.
- Thoughtful incorporation of secondary materials (this can include reading we've done for class).
- A single, clear conversation between your argument and the supporting texts that you choose.

Due Dates: **First Draft – Monday, 24 April 2017 at midnight on Canvas**  
**Second Draft – Monday, 01 May 2017 at midnight on Canvas**

### **Short Assignment 3: Mini-Ethnography**

The MP 2 will ask you to create a multimodal text presenting a complex claim about an issue that matters to a discourse community that you choose to study. This issue is potentially quite a broad topic and one of the best ways to ensure an effective paper is by finding a very specific way in which you can approach your subject. Once you have thought of a discourse community and a topic that concerns it, you will need to sharpen your focus, construct an argument, and think about your argument in the context of *why* and *how* it might be persuasively made to that discourse community. This means that you will need to study that community's characteristics.

#### **What is a discourse community?**

For the purposes of this assignment, you can think of a discourse community as some group that shares at least one common public goal, has certain genres of text that it uses to communicate in some available forum(s) for the purposes of reaching that goal, and has a way of talking or writing that shows signs of becoming increasingly specialized over time (Swales 1987). Examples would include: software developers, football fans, kayakers, college students, etc.

#### **What is an ethnography?**

Ethnography is a research method that focuses on the naturally occurring cultural behavior of some group. The researcher often observes, records, and interviews group members to investigate and then describe their beliefs, values, and ways of living (Paltridge & Phakiti 2010).

### **The Task**

For this assignment, you will create a multimodal text that presents information that you collect about a discourse community of your choosing. Part of this work would include observations about the kinds of texts that this community circulates in order to make meaning. How does this community make arguments? What constitutes evidence? Who is allowed to speak? What issues are of interest to them and how are these issues hashed out? Your goal with this assignment is to get a good understanding of the group that you eventually want to present an argument to with your MP2. In a way, you can almost think of it as a kind of “market research.” By learning more about this group and how they think, feel, and talk, you will be able to make an argument or statement that is more likely to move or influence them in the way that you want.

#### **Your mini-ethnography should:**

- 1) Provide a sense of what the goals of your discourse community are.
- 2) Describe the characteristics of members and how members recognize one another.
- 3) Identify issues of interest to the community and why these issues concern it.
- 4) Present or describe typical texts composed by community members and how these texts relate to one another.

**Targeted Outcomes by which your work will be evaluated:** 1 - The writing employs style, tone, and conventions appropriate to the medium and genre you use; 2 – The writing utilizes multiple kinds of evidence gathered from various sources; The writing demonstrates responsible use of MLA.

#### **Submission Requirements:**

- Compose a multimodal text that acts as a mini-ethnography providing a rich description of your discourse community and how it operates. This could take the form of a traditional alphabetic essay that features photographs or screen captures; a series of short video or audio observations and/or interviews edited together; a comic strip; a series of annotated charts or diagrams, etc.
- Write a Composition Statement that examines why you made the rhetorical and material choices you did. The statement should be 1-2 pages, Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced with 1 inch margins. All citations should be in MLA format.

Due Date: **Monday, 08 May 2017 at midnight on Canvas.**

## **Short Assignment 4 – Multimodal Text Proposal**

As you may remember, the MP 2 will ask you to create a multimodal text presenting a complex claim about an issue that matters to a discourse community that you choose to study. You have already done some research on this community, so you now know a little more about who they are, how they communicate, and what kinds of texts they consume and produce. I hope that this have given you some ideas about how you could effectively communicate with this community and persuade them with a text of your own. This assignment is a proposal in which you will come up with a plan for what issue you are going to make a statement about and how you are going to present it to your chosen discourse community.

### **The Task**

For this assignment, you will write a 3-4 page **Proposal** that outlines your goals for Major Project 2. The important parts of this assignment are to explain why this issue matters or is important or interesting to your discourse community, what your argument is (or what you want to persuade people to think, feel, or do) and how you plan to make a multimodal text that presents your argument in a compelling way.

#### **Your proposal should answer some of the following questions:**

- 5) Articulate what issue of interest to your discourse community you're going to address and why this issue is important or interesting to the community.
- 6) Outline your own argument or message regarding this issue. (If you're building off of the message/argument that you already presented in your MP1, this section might be quite short. Instead, you'll want to focus more on the points below.)
- 7) Identify the possible counter-arguments to your claim, and suggest how you might address them, if you think that's necessary.
- 8) Describe how you will present your argument so that it will appeal to your audience.
- 9) Explain what kind of text you will make and why you think it is the best choice of medium for this argument.
- 10) Explore how you might distribute this message. How would you get it front of the right audience? How will you maximize the chance that they will see it and act on it?
- 11) Describe the skills, materials, and assistance you will need to make this thing.
- 12) Offer an idea of how you might be able to measure the rhetorical success of this project.

**Targeted Outcomes by which your work will be evaluated:** 1 - The writing employs style, tone, and conventions appropriate to the demands of a proposal; 2 - The writer is able to utilize multiple kinds of evidence gathered from various sources; The writing demonstrates responsible use of MLA; 3 - The stakes of the argument are articulated and persuasive

#### **Submission Requirements:**

- 3 to 4 pages, Times New Roman, 12 point font, double-spaced with 1 inch margins. All citations in MLA format.

Due Date: **Monday, 15 May 2017 at midnight on Canvas.**

## **Major Project 2 – Multimodal Text**

So far, we have taken a look at how discourse communities use genres to talk about the issues that matter to them as well as the rhetorical strategies that they often employ. We have also examined how different texts make complex claims and refer to one another other about the claims they make as well as how they agree or disagree with the arguments of others. Finally, you have also had a little practice making a complex claim yourself. In this next assignment, you are going to be joining the conversation of the discourse community that you have studying!

The assignment has two major parts:

**Part One:** You will create a multimodal text that presents a complex claim about an issue that matters to the discourse community that you have chosen to study. Your project could take the form of a comic, video, podcast, website, or some other multimodal text. If you are having trouble choosing what kind of text you want to create, you might remember the intertextuality assignment you did about how one text in the discourse community you've studied inspired the creation of other texts. What sort of texts does this community typically create? Why do they choose the media that they do?

Whatever form your text may take, you will also need to consider how I am going to access it. If your text is a digital document, it can easily be sent by email or you can send me a link to it. If it is a live performance, I will need to be able to attend or you will have to record it. If it is a physical object, I will need to be able to access the object in some way. Let me know what you have planned so we can make sure that I will have a way of receiving your text.

**Part Two:** In addition, you will also write a Composition Statement that examines why you made the rhetorical and material choices you did. Please be as specific as possible in your statement. Also, please use MLA formatting and provide a “Works Cited” page. This document will help me assess what your text is trying to do and how successfully it accomplishes its goals.

Some questions you'll want to address are:

1. Why did you choose the kind of text that you did? What modes of communication does it use?
2. What is the claim that your text is making? What is it trying to accomplish?
3. Who is your intended audience?
4. What sources of information did you draw upon to make your claim convincing? How did you cite those sources in your text?
5. Did the claim of your text change as you created this text? Why did that happen?
6. Have you learned anything from this process that might apply to future writing situation?

If you have any questions, please come to see me after class or come to office hours or email me; I will be happy to talk this over with you!

This will be a multi-draft assignment. After you compose a first draft, you will get feedback not only from me, but also from your classmates during peer review sessions. Once you get this feedback and think it over, you will create a second draft of your assignment.

Outcomes targeted: 1, 2, 3, 4

Remember that, since your text will present a claim or argument, it should include:

- A unique and complex stake-driven claim of your own, clearly articulated and supported throughout the text.
- Thoughtful incorporation of secondary materials (this can include reading we've done for class).
- A single, clear conversation between your argument and the supporting texts that you choose.

Due Dates:    **First Draft – Monday, 22 May 2017 at midnight on Canvas**  
                    **Second Draft – Monday, 29 May 2017 at midnight on Canvas**