

Short Assignment 1: CONFLICTING GENRES

Outcome(s) Targeted: 1

During our first class, we discussed the relationship between **genre** and **audience** and how and why one makes certain **rhetorical choices** in order to achieve a specific purpose (entertain, educate, indoctrinate, inflame, etc.). We also practiced translating a concept from one genre to another in order to reach different audiences and achieve different purposes. Remember: a writer always writes with a **purpose**, to a specific audience or **discourse community**, and according to the **conventions** of a **genre**.

(Option A)

Pick a conflict in which you are invested and then introduce this conflict to two different audiences in two different genres. Each summary should include no less than 250 words.

Whatever conflict, audiences, or genres you choose, the most important part of this assignment is that:

- The who, what, why and when of the conflict is clear
- Beyond the gist of the conflict, any other information you include (and how you include that information) will depend on your audience and the conventions of the genre you have chosen (there are details you'd share with a group of academics or in a *New York Times* article that you might not include for a group of teenagers or in a comedy skit, for example)
- Think about what life experiences your readers are bringing to your text. Sometimes you'll need to consider things like: race, gender, age, class, political orientation, religious affiliation, etc.
- Based on your word choice, the style and tone of your writing, and the images you include (or not), your intended audience should be clear. For example, if you use words like "demystification" and "overdetermination," I'll assume you are targeting an audience of literary scholars...not kindergartners
- When choosing what genre to work in, be mindful of the conventions of that genre and use them appropriately. For example, a stand-up comedy routine will probably use a few four-letter words and a snarky, irreverent tone, while a church sermon will not. Be sure to conduct an informal **genre analysis** before working in any genre with which you are not absolutely familiar.

(Option B)

Just like Truman Capote found the story for *In Cold Blood* as an article in the *New York Times*, I want you to do something similar, only, I'm not expecting you to write an entire book. Dig through the headlines of various newspapers. They can be national, or local. Look for a short news article that appears to have the potential for a good narrative treatment—a news report that is begging to be told as a *story*, with vivid characters, dialogue, action, and setting. You don't have to construct the whole story into a narrative, but build **a single scene of action** with the information from the article. It could be the most pivotal moment in the story, the climax, the calm just before the storm: you decide what you can recreate best and most vividly. The only rule is: all your information must be based on facts you collected from news sources and what you actually know about the place or time (common sense is very useful here, too).

For example, the date December 21, 2014, may become "an unusually sunny day in Seattle," based on what you find in the Farmer's Almanac. Similarly, "the victim, Alicia Jones" may become "Alicia, a 24 year old sophomore studying business at Seattle University" who "walked out her front door, only to be greeted by an ominous masked figure." You might have to find other articles to mine for more details about the event or try to locate images of those people involved in the story or of the scene where the incident happened. The more specific details you have, the better. Put what people said into dialogue, use photographs to help you paint images.

WRITER'S MEMO

This assignment is more of a thought experiment than a test to see whether you're an expert comic book writer or the next Truman Capote. It's a chance to consciously practice making rhetorical choices based on audience and genre. The main goal is to express that you tried to make **CONSCIOUS** rhetorical choices with regard to audience and genre. To that end, this assignment will also include a **Writer's Memo**. This is an informal piece of writing that

helps both you and me understand the choices you make as a writer. When you are finished with the main assignment, simply write a one-page note to me about your writing process—which is to say, your thought process. Answer the following questions according to the option you choose:

OPTION A:

1. Why and how did you choose the audiences and genres you did?
2. What rhetorical choices did you make for each audience?
3. What genre conventions did you use and why?
4. How did your choices change between the two genres/audiences and why did you make these changes?
5. What did you find most challenging about this assignment?
6. What do you think you did well and where could you improve?

OPTION B:

1. Why did you choose the news article you did?
2. How did you decide what scene of action to develop?
3. What rhetorical choices did you make in order to bring your story to life?
4. How does your story differ from the original news piece? Why?
5. What did you find most challenging about this assignment?
6. What do you think you did well and where could you improve?

Requirements (if any of these are not met, your assignment will not be accepted):

- 500-750 words total
- An MLA style header in the top left hand corner of your paper that looks like this:
Your Name
Prof. Grollmus
English 131
12 January 2015
- 12-pt. Times New Roman font (unless you work in a visual genre), double spaced
- 1-inch margins
- A thoughtful Writer's Memo in 250 words or more
- **FOR OPTION A:** if you are working in a genre like Twitter, a comic book, podcast, website, etc., you can stray from the formatting guidelines, but you still need to make sure that your total word count between both pieces is 500-750 words
- **FOR OPTION B:** please include a link to the news article from which you built your narrative scene and following the formatting guidelines exactly

DUE DATE: Post to Canvas by 11:59 P.M., January 12, 2015.

Short Assignment 2: ENGAGING CONFLICT

Outcome(s) Targeted: 1, 2

In class, we've been working on how to break down the rhetorical choices made by others in their own writing (**rhetorical analysis**) as well as how to evaluate sources. We've also been talking about **intertextuality** and putting texts into conversation with one another.

Your Task:

For Short Assignment 2, you will pick two texts that offer competing viewpoints on a conflict of your choice. It could be the conflict you chose for SA1, but it doesn't have to be.

In 2-3 pages, you will compare the rhetorical choices made by each author in the form of a **synthesis essay**. You will want to summarize the authors' main arguments, analyze how that arguments are articulated and supported, and then provide your own evaluation of whether or not their arguments are effective and why. Because you are working with two sources, as opposed to one, organization is crucial. You also want to make rhetorical choices based on the audience for which you are writing.

Be sure your synthesis includes:

- Clear summary and analysis of arguments
- Clear evaluation of your own
- Consistent tone
- Clear organization

Requirements (if any of these are not met, your assignment will not be accepted):

- A strict word count of 500-750 words (2-3 pages)
- MLA heading, page numbers
- Double spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins
- Two articles

DUE DATE: Post to Canvas by 11:59 P.M., April 16, 2015.

Major Project One: Conflict Resolution

In your first short assignment, you were asked to consider issues of **audience** while attending to the conventions of various genres. In the following assignment, you practiced the art of **rhetorical analysis** and **synthesis** by considering two very different takes on a single conflict and analyzing how those arguments were constructed. Now, for your first major project, you will have the chance to use those skills you developed in your first two assignments and focus them toward producing your own **complex, analytic, and persuasive argument**.

Outcome(s) Targeted: 1, 2, 3, 4

Your Task

Write a 5 to 7 page paper (1250-1750 words) in which you argue a resolution to a conflict in which you feel invested. You will want to use at least two texts that support your argument and you want to include one counterargument or concession.

While it is recommended that you stick with the conflict on which you focused for your SA2 so that you can cull from the hard work you've already done, you are welcome to pick a fresh topic for this assignment. For example, you may find it too difficult to conceptualize a resolution to Don Draper's internal conflict on *Mad Men* or too daunting to offer a practical resolution for the Gaza conflict. It is important that you feel confident in the resolution you are offering.

Some questions to guide you as you as you develop a resolution:

1. Is your resolution feasible? Can it realistically be put into practice? How?
2. Is your claim complex? Does it meet the criteria of the BIG FIVE?
3. What arguments can you foresee against your resolution? How can you respond to such an objection in a way that strengthens your own argument?
4. Has your resolution been suggested by others? If so, who are your allies? Are you suggesting the same resolution, or is yours slightly different in some crucial way? That is: are you attempting to improve on a resolution that has already been proposed?
5. Who is the audience to which you are offering your resolution? Is it readers of a local newspaper? A group of literary scholars? Is your audience like-minded or resistant? Are you writing to leaders who you'd like to see put your resolution into practice or are you writing to a more general population?

Expectations

A successful paper will:

1. Define the situation or conflict which you are addressing;
2. Establish an audience who is (or should be) invested in this situation or problem;
3. Clearly state your resolution, which should effectively address the complexity of the conflict in question;
4. Marshal emotional appeals, logical reasoning, details and examples to enhance your points through ethos;
5. Appropriately paraphrase, quote from, and summarize the arguments made by other sources in a way that clearly enriches and supports your argument;
6. Acknowledge and respond to opposing viewpoints; and
7. Convey why it is important that this issue be resolved (i.e. answer "so what?")

Length and Format: 1250-1750 words (5-7 pages), double spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins, MLA formatting and Works Cited Page. **Essays that stray from these requirements will not be accepted.**

DUE DATES:

Rough Draft Due (PEER REVIEW): Bring to class Thursday, April 23

Final Paper Due: Post to Canvas by 11:59 P.M., Friday, May 1