

**ANATOMY OF AN ARGUMENT**

*2-3 pages and a brief presentation*

**ASSIGNMENT C**

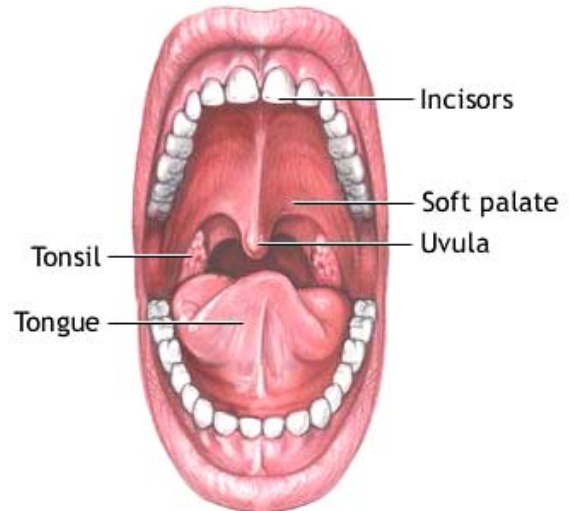
*check syllabus for due dates*

One of the things we'll be practicing throughout this course is the tricky art of reading academic essays.

You can, of course, read academic work for pleasure, for information, for lack of anything better to do. But what we'll focus on exploring in this class are the arguments that academic essays put forth.

We'll thus read rhetorically—that is, for *the way in which an argument is articulated*.

This means, we'll look for basic information about what the **argument** is as well as what **subarguments** support the primary argument. We'll also look for the **archive** (or object of inquiry) that writers select for analysis as well as the **evidence** writers present in support of their arguments and subarguments.



All arguments are underwritten by **assumptions**. Accordingly, we'll work to understand what writers take for granted—what they assume to be “good,” what they assume to be “bad,” what they assume to be problems or benefits or truths or falsehoods. Assumptions sometimes masquerade as subarguments, but, while a subargument is supported by evidence, an assumption is not.

All arguments also have **exigence**, that is, they mean something specific to some specific group of individuals. Writers may be explicit about the exigence of their arguments or they may leave that exigence unstated, but in either case we'll always work to find out what writers believe themselves to be offering and how that makes a difference.

And finally, we'll practice offering our own **critiques** of the work. Critiques can be positive or negative: They can praise the way in which a writer creatively consults bipartisan evidence or deplore the way in which a writer ignores the exigence of an argument for certain populations.

For one course text, you'll be responsible for submitting a written anatomy of an argument and presenting those thoughts to the class.

Your **written** “anatomy” can take whatever form you like—paragraphs or bullet points—so long as you cover these six sections:

- |                  |                          |               |
|------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| (1) argument     | (3) archive and evidence | (5) exigence  |
| (2) subarguments | (4) assumption           | (6) critiques |

Your **spoken** presentation may be done alone or in collaboration with the other students assigned to your reading, but, in all cases, the written portion should be completed and submitted individually.

## **Anatomy of Manjoo...**

### **ARGUMENT...**

While MySpace Music represents a step toward industry acceptance of file sharing, it fails in comparison to other sites, which, independent of industry concerns, have succeeded in designing friendly and functional places to listen to, learn about, and share music.



### **ARCHIVE AND EVIDENCE...**

- Archive: Music sharing sites
  - MySpace Music
  - Muxtape
  - Imeem
  - Last.fm
  - iTunes
  - Hulu
  - YouTube
  - Myspace
- Evidence: Anecdotes
  - Oullette's story
  - Stelios Kazantzidis search
  - Jenny Lewis search
  - Lil Wayne search
- Evidence: Consults...
  - "industry observers"
  - "record labels"

### **SUBARGUMENTS...**

- (1) Muxtape was a brilliant music sharing site because...
- (2) it was simple.
- (3) The internet has great potential for satisfying our musical desires.
- (4) The music industry has become friendlier about upstart music sharing.
- (5) MySpace Music is less than great because...
  - (6) other sites have already done it,
  - (7) it's cluttered,
  - (8) its catalogue is limited,
  - (9) it's hard to share with friends,
  - (10) it's always tied to MySpace,
  - (11) it has a terrible user interface,
  - (12) a MySpace account is required,
  - (13) there search tool is clunky,
  - (14) music suggestions aren't made,
  - (15) it's full of ads,
  - (16) it's slow.
- (17) MySpace Music is a breakthrough in business.
- (18) YouTube is the best place for quick music access because it's simple and fast.
- (19) Imeem is better for sharing playlists.
- (20) Music industry site designers would do well to copy iTunes and Hulu which are fast, easy, fun, affordable, and well-designed.

### **ASSUMPTIONS...**

- (a) Free music is nice.
- (b) Compensating artists is nice.
- (c) Being able to disconnect music from social networks is important.
- (d) Adolescent associations are undesirable.
- (e) Ads are annoying.
- (f) Copy protection is annoying.
- (g) People need and are entitled to simple, easy, unlimited music.

### **EXIGENCE...**

- Target readers: internet music listeners and site designers (music industry peeps)
- Reason for being written: Release of MySpace Music
- Reasons for being read:
  - Learn about the nature of MySpace Music and its alternatives
  - Better understand the evolving stance of music industry protections
  - Rethink how to balance protections, profits, and accessibility.