

## Major Paper 1: A Critical Conversation

At this point in the quarter, you have acquired a number of the writing and analytical skills necessary to compose a more substantial project. Together, we have explored the nature of *popular culture*, its various forms, and the ways in which those forms have directly impacted your lives. In SA 1, you developed your *rhetorical analysis* skills by writing a critical review of one of our course texts. Building on the *analytical tools* practiced in SA 1, SA 2 gave you the opportunity to more fully embody specific *rhetorical strategies* in your own work while placing two arguments in direct *conversation* with one another. These tools will allow you to successfully produce your first major paper.

**Your Task:** Major Paper 1 will allow you to develop a more *complex claim* of your own and to articulate *stakes*. **Choosing one of the questions from Pop Culture Universe, develop your own stake-driven claim and fully engage that claim with the existing Pop Culture Universe conversation.** To begin the writing process, you should start by *rhetorically analyzing* the arguments of the supporting scholars. Once you have a firm grasp of the existing conversation, formulate **your own** ideas and develop an original *complex claim* with which to place yourself in that conversation, using evidence from **at least two** of the supporting texts.

In crafting this major paper, you should be employing your skills of *rhetorical analysis*, *critical thinking*, *complex claim development*, and *intertextuality*. Make sure you develop a clear argument of your own that fully and consistently participates in whichever conversation you choose. **I am looking for a compelling, interesting, well-organized argument, substantiated with textual evidence.** Be careful to not let the evidence overwhelm your paper, however; remember that you are using evidence to **support your argument** rather than summarizing the arguments of the PCU scholars.

**Sample Pop Culture Universe Questions:** • Is the book actually dying? • Do celebrities have responsibilities as role models? • Does what you like define who you are? • Should popular culture challenge traditional values? • Are video games art? • And many more!

### Requirements:

- 5-7 double spaced pages (1500-2400 words), 12 pt. Times New Roman font
- Based on a unique and complex stake-driven claim of your own, clearly articulated and supported throughout the text of the paper
- Thoughtful incorporation of secondary materials (from the PCU website)
- Supporting texts and your argument must all participate in a single, clear conversation
- Well organized with clear signposting
- Proper use of MLA formatting and citations
- Works Cited page, also in MLA formatting (for the second draft)
- Proofread, proofread, proofread

**Targeted Outcomes:** 1, 2, 3

## Short Assignment 1: Review

You have already learned how to critically analyze (summarize as well as evaluate) texts in class. For Short Assignment 1, you will put that analysis into more formal writing.

**Choose any one scholarly article we have discussed in class and write a review of it.** By “review,” I mean summarize the author’s main argument, analyze how that argument is articulated and supported, and then provide your own evaluation of whether or not that argument is effective and why. Your review should follow the basic style and **audience guidelines\*** as the reviews we looked at in class. You should also pay attention to tone and organization.

This assignment will also include your first **Writer's Memo**. At the end of your review, simply write a note to me about your writing process. How did you get started on this assignment? How might it be different from writing you did in high school (like a book review)? What are your strengths and weaknesses as a writer and how are they demonstrated in this assignment? This is an informal piece of writing that helps both you and I understand the choices you make as a writer.

*\*Remember that the audience for most reviews is readers who have not yet read the text but are considering doing so. Your task should be to give them a sense of whether or not they should read the text you're reviewing and why.*

### Requirements:

- 2-3 pages, double spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins
- Clear summary and analysis of scholar’s argument
- Clear evaluation of your own
- Consistent tone
- Clear organization
- Writer's Memo, **additional 1 page**, 12 pt Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins.

## Short Assignment 2: Letters

As a class, we both analyzed the articles from the debate “Should Popular Culture Challenge Traditional Values?” as well as applied those arguments to an episode of television. Modeling our in-class activities, you will apply those same arguments to a *new* pop culture text of your choosing. **For Short Assignment 2, you will write two letters, each 1-1 1/2 pages long, which will each embody the rhetorical style and argument of Mark Wolf and Keith Booker and will make a claim about your chosen pop culture text.** In short: one letter will be from Wolf to Booker and the other will be from Booker to Wolf. Wolf and Booker do not necessarily have to disagree about the text you’ve chosen, but both letters will maintain the original rhetoric of the authors’ articles. You are more than welcome to have some fun with this—make each letter as sassy, snarky, polite, or friendly as you would like. Be sure, however, to clearly articulate a position in each letter regarding your text (does the text effectively challenge traditional values? Why or why not?).

You will also be required to submit another **writer’s memo** with this assignment in which you reflect on your specific strategies used to embody Booker and Wolf’s rhetoric as well as how you developed the new argument about your pop culture text. Also, how did you feel about the writing process this time? How was it different than the review essay? What are your strengths and weaknesses in this assignment and how have they shifted from SA 1?

### Requirements:

- Total of 2-3 pages, double spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins
- Clear new argument in each about single pop culture text
- Consistent embodiment of each scholar’s original rhetoric
- Clear organization
- Writer’s memo, an **additional 1 pg**, double spaced and in 12 pt Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins