

Short Assignment 4: Rhetorical Listening to the Other

Inspired by “The Art of Being Persuaded” article, the purpose of this SA 4 is to exercise rhetorical listening to arguments and viewpoints that you don’t necessarily agree with. As Aristotle said, “It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.” By practicing rhetorical listening to disagreements, we’ll be able to understand others better and hold intelligent, compassionate conversations in civil discourse.

Your rhetorical situation:

As you finished SA 3 and have explored multiple ideas and arguments in the scholarly conversation on your topic, craft the *best* argument in the form of a **speech** that your opposing side could possibly produce. You will put yourself in the shoes of the opposing side and make a well-crafted argument, which centers around **a complex claim**, that you will disagree with in your MP 2.

You might have to find a few additional peer-reviewed, scholarly sources for this speech since it will probably have a different line of inquiry from your original topic and tentative argument in SA 3. Since the genre you’re writing is a speech, you can incorporate ONE popular, but substantial source such as the NY Times, the Atlantic, or other reputable mainstream publications. The total number of **sources** you use should be **2-4**.

Logistics:

2-3 pages; 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced

Use 1-inch margins

In-text citations and works cited page in MLA style

Due date: **5/9 (Mon) before midnight** on Canvas

Targeted Course Outcomes: 1, 2 & 3

1. To demonstrate an awareness of the strategies that writers use in different writing contexts.

- The writing employs style, tone, and conventions appropriate to the demands of a particular genre and situation.
- The writer is able to demonstrate the ability to write for different audiences and contexts, both within and outside the university classroom.
- The writing has a clear understanding of its audience, and various aspects of the writing (mode of inquiry, content, structure, appeals, tone, sentences, and word choice) address and are strategically pitched to that audience.
- The writer articulates and assesses the effects of his or her writing choices.

2. To read, analyze, and synthesize complex texts and incorporate multiple kinds of evidence purposefully in order to generate and support writing.

- The writing demonstrates an understanding of the course texts as necessary for the purpose at hand.
- Course texts are used in strategic, focused ways (for example: summarized, cited, applied, challenged, re-contextualized) to support the goals of the writing.

- The writing is intertextual, meaning that a “conversation” between texts and ideas is created in support of the writer’s goals.
- The writer is able to utilize multiple kinds of evidence gathered from various sources (primary and secondary – for example, library research, interviews, questionnaires, observations, cultural artifacts) in order to support writing goals.
- The writing demonstrates responsible use of the MLA (or other appropriate) system of documenting sources.

3. To produce complex, analytic, persuasive arguments that matter in academic contexts.

- The argument is appropriately complex, based in a claim that emerges from and explores a line of inquiry.
- The stakes of the argument, why what is being argued matters, are articulated and persuasive.
- The argument involves analysis, which is the close scrutiny and examination of evidence and assumptions in support of a larger set of ideas.
- The argument is persuasive, taking into consideration counterclaims and multiple points of view as it generates its own perspective and position.
- The argument utilizes a clear organizational strategy and effective transitions that develop its line of inquiry.ⁱ

ⁱ I tried this assignment for the first time in the spring, 2016 and found it to be very successful. It pushes students to learn how someone who disagrees with them would think about their issue and what kind of reasoning they would have, thereby helping students learn to look at an issue from multiple points of view. Because of this scaffolding assignment before students write their MP 2 (research paper), they came up with more complex arguments in their MP 2s.