English 131
Fall 2017
Instructor: Ainsley Kelly   First Assignment Sequence: MP1

Major Paper 1: A Complex Claim and Rhetorical Analysis using Jason P. Steed's "The Social Function of Humor" in 23 Tweets

Outcomes Targeted: 1, 2, 3, 4

In your First Short Assignment, you used your knowledge of **close reading**, **main points**, **genre**, **audience**, and **rhetorical conventions** to summarize, revise, and reflect on the UW's mission statement.

In your Second Short Assignment, you considered multiple **genres**, performed **rhetorical analysis** on multiple sources, and organized your thoughts into a persuasive **synthesis**. You then analyzed the **effectiveness** of the author's rhetorical strategies in accomplishing the intended **purpose**.

In this course, we have been discussing how language can be used to **powerfully appeal to an audience** and how it can create feelings of identification and belonging within **discourse communities**. Conversely, we have **critically observed** that language can either fail to reach an intended audience due to its **rhetorical shortcomings** or it can use rhetorical strategies to *intentionally* alienate or exclude a particular audience.

For your First Major Paper, you will read an article which proposes a theory of how the **genre of humor** simultaneously plays a role in both issues of identification, belonging, and acceptance and in issues of alienation, exclusion, and oppression.

Your Task:

You will read **Jason P. Steed's 23 tweets on "The Social Function of Humor"** and use your reflections on Steed's argument to write a **5-7 page essay** in which you create a **complex claim** supported by an **organized, persuasive** argument **analyzing** the role of humor in a source of your choice.

*Optional: you may also use the assigned reading from Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking Fast and Slow* as an additional critical lens.

https://twitter.com/5thcircappeals/status/763098172633657344

Steps to take before writing:

Step 1:
Perform a close reading of Steed's critical text about how humor can be used to "assimilate or alienate" in social and political contexts. Reflect critically on Steed's **argument** and **rhetorical strategies.** Consider why Steed might have used the **genre of Twitter** to share his argument with his audience and consider how the genre affects your reading experience.

Step 2:
Choose a text that uses humor as a rhetorical strategy. Your text can be in **any genre** and in **any language** (it doesn't have to be in English). It can be a movie, T.V. show, comic, advertisement, comedy routine, play, song etc. that you find funny in some way or that you believe is intended to be funny.

When you choose your source, keep in mind the **constraints** of this assignment.
- Does the source offer you enough material to analyze for 5-7 pages?
- Is the source short enough (or can you limit the **scope** of your analysis) enough to write a focused, organized paper?
- Can you **summarize** the text well enough to your audience that a reader will be able to follow your argument even if they have not read/viewed/experienced your source?

Step 3:
Perform a close reading of your source. Consider your source's rhetorical strategies, audience, genre, purpose, and effectiveness. Consider how Steed's argument applies to your source.

MP1: Write a complex claim analyzing the role of humor in your source text. Use Steed's argument to guide your analysis.

A successful MP1 will…
- demonstrate that you have developed a **critical understanding** of Steed's ideas
- utilize a source that allows you to fulfill the requirements of the assignment, given the **constraints** of your page length and audience
- **summarize** and **contextualize** your chosen source for your audience
- **synthesize** Steed's thoughts with your own analysis of the source text
- make a **complex, arguable claim** that does not rely on binary reasoning
- **organize** your thoughts into a persuasive argument, using **framing** to direct your reader
- use **specific evidence** from your source and from Steed's text to **support your claim**
- use appropriate **rhetorical strategi**es to **persuade** your reader
- consider possible **counterarguments**
- utilize **revision strategies** to improve your first draft after your **peer review**

Formatting: 5-7 pages, your name, assignment title, page numbers, double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins

DUE DATES:

Thursday, 10/19: One paragraph summary of your chosen source due in class; please also come prepared to discuss your close reading of Steed's text

Sunday, 10/22: MP1 First Draft due on Canvas at 11:59pm

Tuesday, 10/24: Bring a paper or digital copy of your MP1 draft to class for peer review

Sunday, 10/29: MP1 Revised Draft due on Canvas at 11:59pm

Tuesday, 10/31: Bring a paper or digital copy of your MP1 draft to class for peer review