

Rhetorical Analysis

On Rhetorical Situations: "Writers who know how to analyze these situations have a better method of examining causality. They have a stronger basis for making composing decisions and are better able, as readers, to understand the decisions other writers have made."

-Kenneth Grant-Davie

The Assignment:

Both in class discussion and through individual work, we have been looking at how rhetoric is present in everything that surrounds us from the way that we dress to the things that we buy to the things that we see. For this assignment, I would like for you to explore and analyze your understanding of rhetoric and its presence in our everyday lives.

By being cognizant of the purposeful choices that writers make, you will be able to make more effective choices as a writer yourself. In your essay, you will focus on how this particular message is formed on the micro-level and how it functions on the macro-level.

What you choose to analyze is up to you; however, I want it to be something that includes words and "not words." You could analyze anything that contains both elements from a magazine advertisement to a commercial to a television episode to a music video to a CD cover, etc. The item for analysis is up to you, but remember that you are writing an in-depth analysis, so choose carefully.

Print advertisement	Commercial	Music Video	Movie Scene
Television Episode	Toy Packaging	CD/Album Cover	Parody Video
Political Speeches	Websites	Children's Book	Magazine Cover
Book Cover	Comic Book	Video Game Aspect	Social Media Profile

Once you have selected your piece, then you will examine the claims that the text is making, the values that it appeals to, the intended audience, and the medium (genre) of the piece. You will need to explain how this particular text creates the argument (think in terms of ethos, pathos, logos) and to evaluate how effective you believe that argument to be. You should refer to the essays that we have read on visual arguments and rhetorical analysis to strengthen your argument (use quotes from the essays in your own essay). Also, you should develop and defend a thesis based on your analysis. Remember that your thesis should derive from the analysis, not the other way around. **Your main task is to determine what the text is saying (thesis) and how it is saying it (what rhetorical devices are being used as support).**

The Analysis:

Your analysis will be evaluated based on your ability to synthesize all that we have been working on in class and apply it to a new text. You may want to consider the following questions when developing your essay:

1. Who is the audience? Does the audience change? How is this genre presented to the audience?
2. Who is the rhetor? What is his role in developing this text?
3. What is the context of this genre on a micro-level (immediate context)?
4. What is the context on a macro-level (ideological)?
5. What is the main argument? (ethos, pathos, logos, rhetorical situation, etc.)
6. What is the purpose of this text? Why was it created in the first place?
7. What does the genre allow its users to do and what does it not allow them to do? What are the constraints?
8. How is the text composed visually? How does the composition affect the argument?

The Format:

The final draft of your rhetorical analysis will be a **digital essay**. Remember what we talked about in terms of digital essays and how they can differ from traditional essays. Be sure that you make careful decisions on how you structure the piece, what media you choose to include, and what you hyperlink or connect to within the text. Since digital essays are so variable, there is not a specific structure that I am looking for, but I would expect for it to reflect what you are looking at and I would expect you to have at least ten hyperlinks as well as make use of media (video, audio, images) at least six or seven times. (These are estimates only!) However, you do have a minimum word count of 1000 words.

Although we are using a digital format, I do expect you to still follow MLA citation guidelines within the body of the essay and to be thorough in your analysis and defense. The essay must be MLA formatted and be live on your writer's website by the prescribed deadline (for the exact date of submission, please refer to your syllabus or see below). Please use MLA citation format for any in-text citations and include the works cited information at the bottom of the essay or offer links for your readers. I will provide you with full submission details prior to the due date of the assignment. Late drafts will not be accepted and assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized.

How is a digital essay different than a traditional essay?

<http://benjamintudley.wix.com/wixcraftandwixary#!digital-and-traditional/c1han>