**Rhetorical Analysis Essay**

**Description:** For this assignment, you will be analyzing the use of rhetorical appeals in an artifact of your choosing. Using the strategies discussed in class and your readings, you will analyze the artifact and write a 2-3 page paper describing how the author employs the rhetorical techniques discussed in the course, contextual or situational factors that are relevant to the work and whether or not the author successfully accomplished his or her purpose, based upon the use of rhetorical appeals. You should, at a minimum address the following:

**Author: (Who is the author?)**

**Purpose: (What is the author trying to accomplish?)**

**Audience/Relationship to the Reader: (To whom is the text addressed?)**

**Context: (What are influencing factors surrounding the event of the text?**

**Where/When was the text written?)**

**Voice: (What is the overall tone of the text?)**

**Effectiveness? (Is the author rhetorically effective? Does the text 'move' you? Does the text convincingly get you to think critically/differently about the topic/subject matter?)**

Your rhetorical analysis should also demonstrate how the author addresses or relies on one or more of the three elements of the rhetorical appeals:

**Ethos: Appeals to the character and expertise of the writer or speaker**

**Logos: Appeals based on logic, reasoning, and evidence concerning the subject**

**Pathos: Appeals to the beliefs and values of the audience**

Remember, the writing you do in this class is considered public writing. Therefore, the audience for your rhetorical analysis paper is a knowledgeable stakeholder or educated member of your discourse community (e.g. your instructor, fellow scholars, and/or your classmates). You will be conducting a peer-review after each stage of your writing process (draft & revision).

**The purpose of this assignment is to:**

* Analyze how the author makes use of the rhetorical appeals.
* Articulate and develop a critical and analytical perspective in writing
* Develop strategies for critically engaging information and develop it in writing as evidence for arguments

**Writing the Rhetorical Analysis Process:**

1. **Find Your Artifact**
2. **Write a summary of your artifact**
3. **Consider The Rhetorical Situation:** Read/view the artifact several times over the course of different times/days, paying special attention to not only what the author is saying, but perhaps more importantly, how he/she presents his/her ideas **(SOAPSTone).**
4. **Consider The Rhetorical Appeals**: You should address all three elements of rhetorical appeals (Ethos, Logos, and Pathos). How does (or does not) the author utilize one (or all) of these three approaches? Note: texts rarely utilize only one of the appeals, but rather typically utilize elements of all three.
5. **Develop A Clear Thesis Statement:** This is perhaps the most critical step in the writing process. You must ask yourself, "What is my purpose for writing this analysis?" Based upon your answer, you should be able to come up with a strong (unique) thesis statement. A thesis statement should reflect what you do in your analysis (i.e. a thesis statement is a roadmap for the rest of your analysis). Do not simply restate the author's original thesis (remember the elements of the rhetorical situation -- your purpose is different than the original author's). In addition to stating your stance, your thesis should provide the reader with a clear direction of where you're heading (e.g. what's your topic/issue?, what are your units of analysis?, what conclusion do your come to?, and/or what is the significance of your work?).
6. **Support Your Thesis Statement:** The body of your analysis should be devoted to supporting evidence for your thesis statement (i.e. it should follow your roadmap). This will entail techniques of direct quotation, paraphrasing, and your own assessment. Do not simply summarize what the author has already stated (this is your analysis). Additionally, your paragraphs should each, subsequently, address the various rhetorical elements and the aspects of the rhetorical situation of the original essay (hint: you should limit yourself to one particular element/aspect per paragraph). Be sure each paragraph directly addresses your thesis statement. Note: for several of the rhetorical elements, you may have to go outside of the original artifact, to find the appropriate information (e.g. you may need to do a little research to find the author's birth date and/or professional experience, what was happening, in the world, at the time the essay was written, etc.), if these things are relevant.

For each point you want to make in your analysis, you will want to give examples to support your claims. Using examples to support your claims will help your reader understand why you are making the claim you are making. For example, if you find a place in the text where the author is using pathos to appeal to the reader’s emotions, you should quote the place in the text where this appeal takes place.

1. **State Your Conclusion:** The purpose of your conclusion is to clearly, but briefly, reiterate what you were hoping to accomplish in your essay. In other words, it should reflect (mirror) your thesis. Note: It should not simply be a restatement of your thesis. It is designed to have the reader (re)contemplate on the thesis, in light of the evidence you provided in the body of the text.

**Cautions:** Avoid lengthy, verbatim quotations and/or paraphrases of the original text. While sometimes helpful/necessary, you should limit your use (and/or the length) of these. The majority of your paper should consist of your own analysis.

Avoid attributing your own opinions/beliefs to those of the author. In other words, avoid putting words into the author's mouth. If the author presents an opinion you agree/disagree with, clearly differentiate whose opinion you are addressing. A rhetorical analysis is much less about your emotional response to an issue addressed by the author, and more about your reaction to the process by which the author achieves (or not) his/her intention. This essay is not about whether or not you ultimately "like" or "dislike" what the author has stated. It is about whether the author was successful in persuading you to his/her own opinion (there is a subtle, but critical difference).