English 101: Summer 2017-- Guidelines for Rhetorical Response to Formal Readings on Backboard

In this first major assignment, students will analyze a literary piece from a group of articles that Mrs. Woodard has posted on Blackboard with an eye toward finding and explaining why they feel the way that they do about this article. Specifically, I am asking class members to consider several aspects of the writing as it relates to the effectiveness of the overall message in the article. Mrs. Woodard reserves the right to ask for volunteers to change topics if MORE than SIX people select the same article. If she asks for volunteers, and no one responds within 24 hours via e-mail after she makes the request, Mrs. Woodard reserves the right to assign articles to students as she deems appropriate.

For this first major essay, students MUST select an article from the “Readings for Paper 1: Rhetorical Response module.” No exceptions will be made to this stipulation.

In this case, though, you cannot just gather your thoughts and answer general questions. You must also look closely at the TONE (mood), STYLE (how the article is written) and how different elements (logos, kairos, ethos and pathos, among them) are incorporated into the article. Remember that purpose of an analysis is to provide an interpretation of a text that helps your audience understand it more deeply.

For your assignment, your purpose is to explain fully how the text develops ideas and strategies that move us or persuade us to identify or act on its argument. In other words, why should people take to heart and act upon the ideas that are being presented in the article that you’ve selected for analysis?

To begin generating ideas for the essay, students should look for examples of the following common rhetorical elements that may be present in the article(s) that they consider:

ETHOS: The believability and credibility of the WRITER. How much does this person seem to know about the subject that (s) he is writing about? Why should we take this person seriously? BE VERY SPECIFIC! You may have to do a bit of research to determine the author’s credentials.

LOGOS: The logic (the degree to which the article makes sense to you as a reader) is critical here. Does the author “connect the dots” well enough to help you understand BOTH major and minor ideas that are presented in the article? To what degree could YOU explain this article to someone else?

PATHOS: How and to what extent does this article play on the emotions of the reader? Does the author seem to try to drum up certain emotions by “pulling at heartstrings?”

KAIROS: How relevant or timely is the subject matter of the article TODAY? Is this something that people are still talking about and/or having significant reaction(s) to? What makes you state this? What details stick out to you to make this a modern issue in your personal opinion?

As you start to read and analyze articles, I want you to look actively through the piece that you will be writing about to answer the following questions as honestly as possible:

- What do you think the main points of the article are? Do they all make sense? Why or why not? BE SPECIFIC!
- To what extent do you agree with the author’s viewpoint? Why?
- To what extent do you disagree with the author’s viewpoint? Why?
- What can be done to improve the article? Why?
- What are the strongest points of the article? Why?
- What are the weakest points of the article? Why?
- Comment fully on the TONE (mood) of the article. Does the author seem serious? Funny? Angry? Sarcastic? Does there seem to be a mixture of feelings in the article? What does the tone seem to contribute to the article as a whole?
- In what way(s) has the article changed your perception on the subject as a whole?

In thinking about your answers to ALL of these questions, keep in mind that your overall GOAL here is to communicate to the reader those points that are persuasive or memorable, and explain WHY they are persuasive, important or memorable. For example, in “Are Colleges Worth the Price of Admission?” how does the author answer this question? Does he give a definite answer, or is the answer implied?

Here are a couple of other important points to keep in mind as you prepare your preliminary and final drafts for this unit in the next few weeks:

**Structuring an Effective Rhetorical Analysis**: Here are a few elements to an analysis that you will want to include:

- An introduction that sets the text against the larger context of the subject or issue it addresses and creates a tone appropriate for the type of analysis to be used.
How To Craft a Successful Rhetorical Analysis:

• **Keep the Purpose of Your Analysis in Mind**: You are analyzing the strategies that the text uses to persuade its audience to identify with or act upon its argument. You need to not only identify this argument, but you need to analyze the most important strategies used to make this argument persuasive. Finally, feel free to develop a paragraph that evaluates how successful the text is in persuading its audience.

• **Go for Depth Rather Than Breadth**: Do not try to cover all of the rhetorical strategies that are mentioned here IF you don’t think that those particular strategies (logos, ethos, pathos, kairos) apply directly in the article that you selected. Instead, focus on the one or two that you feel play the biggest role in moving the audience.

• **Cite the Text**: in MLA Format. Use both In-Text Citations and a Works Cited Page. See the Purdue OWL weblink under the Course Weblinks module in our Blackboard class shell for more information.

Length, Formatting and Source Requirements

• Students will write a final, typed draft of no fewer than FOUR (4) full pages. Students should NOT plan to receive full credit if they write three pages and a few lines. Four pages is four pages. This does NOT include a work cited page. Therefore, the works cited page will begin on AT LEAST page five of this essay.

• Students MUST use a minimum of THREE sources. One source will be the article about which you write. You must select at LEAST two additional sources from the databases that Mrs. Woodard approves for student research. They are the Opposing Viewpoints database and the Points of View database. Both are listed under the Course Weblinks section of our Blackboard class shell. Students MAY use up to FIVE sources.

• Students who do not use the minimum number of sources will lose one full letter grade BEFORE I begin to evaluate other aspects of the paper. Students who exceed the maximum number of sources will lose one-half of a letter grade before I begin to evaluate other aspects of the paper. Students who use a
source that is not approved by Mrs. Woodard will lose one letter grade PER unapproved source. If you doubt whether Mrs. Woodard would approve a source, consult her FIRST. It will save you headaches.

- Students MUST provide an MLA heading (see the Purdue Online Writing Lab web link under the MLA section for more information), and pages must be numbered correctly. As per MLA protocol, the paper should be double-spaced and typed in 12-point Arial or Times New Roman font.

- Students MUST use at least ONE short quote from the article (one to three lines) to ensure that the article is included on the Works Cited list. They MAY use ONE additional short (one to three lines of text) OR one long quote (five to eight lines of text) for a TOTAL of TWO quotes from the article in question.

- Students may also use ONE short quote (four lines or under in length) and ONE longer quote (five to eight lines) OUTSIDE of the article about which they are writing to back up their points. These quotes MUST be taken from the OTHER sources that students use to complete this research paper. Therefore, students have a TOTAL of FOUR (two short quotes and two longer quotes) that they may use. If students exceed the limit of four quotes, if they use more than two long quotes, or if any single quote is over eight (8) lines of text, students will lose one letter grade BEFORE I evaluate other aspects of the paper.

- For more information on how to format and document these quotes, please see Mrs. Woodard’s Sample Paper Submission Handout under the Class Handouts, or check the MLA information on the Purdue web link. Students MAY NOT use more than two TOTAL quotes from outside sources. Also, make sure that you document the source as an online article from a database or other relevant media source (check the piece for more details).

- Students MAY NOT use Wikipedia, Google or any other mainstream internet service provider (ISP)—including Bing, Yahoo, Buzzle or similar sites—to find sources. Students should refer to the JSCC Libraries for access to the databases (Opposing Viewpoints and Points of View) to locate sources. For more information, please check the Course Weblinks section of our class shell. Students will cite
sources from the databases as they would electronic journal articles.
Please keep this in mind.

Students should LIMIT first-person (I, ME, MY, WE, OUR) and second person (YOU, YOUR, YOURS) in an effort to develop a more formal writing style. In other words, please DO NOT plan to start each sentence with “I think” or “You should.” For example, if you disagree with the author, do not state “I disagree with the author.” Instead, state something like “The author is incorrect because... and finish with a SPECIFIC REASON and EVIDENCE as to why the author is incorrect. On the other hand, if you agree with the author, state something like “The author is correct because...” and then finish the point with a SPECIFIC REASON and EVIDENCE as to why the author is incorrect.

Due Dates For Rhetorical Analysis Assignments

*Please note that ALL assignments that pertain to any major essay in this course MUST be typed, double-spaced, and contain an appropriate MLA heading and documentation. For more information, please consult the MLA material on the Purdue OWL weblink under the Course Weblinks module, or check out your Sample Paper Submission Handout under the Class Handouts module.

Please check the class syllabus for due dates and submission guidelines regarding the assignments for this unit. Feel free to let me know if you have any questions by sending an e-mail to hwoodard@jeffstateonline.com, or preferably by sending questions to me under the Course Messages link in our Blackboard course shell.