

# English 15: Rhetoric and Composition

Fall 2017, MWF

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Instructor:

Office Location:

Section:

Office Hours:

Classroom/Time:

Contact:

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## Course Goals

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English 15 is an intensive, rhetorically-based experience in reading and writing that will prepare you to understand the communications that surround you and to succeed in your own communication efforts. Thus, in this course, we will focus specifically on analyzing verbal and visual texts (our reading) as well as on producing such texts (our writing)—always in terms of rhetorical principles.

Even if the term *rhetoric* isn't familiar to you, you bring a good deal of rhetorical skill to this class: you already know how to gauge the way you perceive and produce language according to the speaker, the intended audience, and the purpose. You may not always gauge perfectly, your perception may not always be accurate, and your production may not always be successful—but you often consider ways to interpret and choose language that are appropriate to the rhetorical situation. And when you do not succeed, you often try again to communicate and to make knowledge.

The goal of English 15, then, is to help you build on what you already know how to do as you become a more confident and resourceful reader and writer. You will become more attuned to your goals as a writer, more aware of the ongoing conversation surrounding the topic, and more resourceful in terms of the appropriate delivery of your information, the rhetorical appeals at your disposal, and the needs and expectations of your audience. In other words, we hope you'll come to write with skill, conviction, sophistication, and grace—if not immediately, then soon. In the process, you'll learn how to read more critically as well.

## Required and Recommended Texts

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1. *The New Harbrace Guide: Genres for Composing* by Cheryl Glenn, 3rd edition, with English 15 MindTap bundle (*required*)

You *must* purchase your textbook *with the MindTap bundle* from the PSU Bookstore or online here: [www.cengagebrain.com/course/2018825](http://www.cengagebrain.com/course/2018825)

**ISBN-13:** 9781337582766

2. *Penn Statements*, 2017 edition (*required*)
3. The Penn State Libraries' Course Guide for English 15, found at <http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/UPEng1015> (*recommended for research*)

## Requirements

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To pass this course you must complete all the major assignments, submit all process work, fulfill all the weekly reading and writing assignments, and submit assignments on time. You are expected to attend all class meetings and to participate in draft workshops, in-class exercises, and classroom discussions. All proposals, drafts, peer review work, papers, and revisions must be handed in on time; failing to turn in a proposal on time or appearing at a draft workshop without a draft is equivalent to turning in an assignment late (i.e., normally a penalty of one grade per late day). Final drafts of an assignment will NOT be accepted until a written proposal has been approved *and* a draft has been completed and peer reviewed. Please keep all graded assignments until the end of the semester.

## Grading

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<b>GRADED WORK</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>Assignment 1: Rhetorical Analysis</b>	10%
<b>Assignment 2: Profile Podcast</b>	10%
<b>Assignment 3: Productive Counterargument</b>	15%
<b>Assignment 4: Proposal Argument</b>	20%
<b>Assignment 5: Multimedia Rhetorical Narrative</b>	15%
<b>MindTap Activities</b>	15%
<b>Participation (see attendance policy)</b>	15%

All course assignments will be graded using the specific grading criteria established in the attached assignment sheets and the general **Program in Writing and Rhetoric Grading Standards** found at <http://pwr.la.psu.edu/about/grading-standards> and on pages 7-8 of *Penn Statements*.

## Paper Format

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Choosing a format is a rhetorical decision—it's all about delivery. So keep in mind that your papers should typically be typed (in 12-point, Times New Roman font), printed in dark ink, and double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Place your name, the class's name, the date, and the instructor's name in the upper left-hand corner of the first page. Number all of the pages in the upper right-hand corner. For paper copies, you should fasten the pages with a paper clip or staple and place the paper in a folder along with earlier drafts and peer review activities. For electronic copies, you should ensure the file is in a format your instructor can open labeled with your name, and you should always check that your submitted file successfully uploaded. Your instructor may have additional instructions, and requirements may change depending on your composition medium. Always check with your instructor well in advance of an assignment deadline if you are unsure.

## Participation and Attendance

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Participation includes being attentive during class, completing in-class writing and group work, and contributing to discussions. Your success and the success of this course depend on your active participation; therefore, your regular attendance is required. Excused absences are certainly appropriate, and of course you should communicate with your instructor about your absences as much as possible. Be aware, though, that University policy (*Policies and Rules*, 42-27) states that a student whose absences are excessive “may run the risk of receiving a lower grade or a failing grade,”

regardless of his or her performance in the class. *You run that risk if you exceed three unexcused absences in this course.* If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the assignments, class notes, and course changes from a classmate. In addition, if you miss class on a day that written work is due, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to submit that work to your instructor. In-class work cannot be made up.

## **Writing Conferences**

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Plan to have *at least* two conferences with me this semester to discuss your written work (at any stage of the process) and your progress in the course. At least one of these meetings *must* take place in the first four weeks of the term. In addition, I encourage you to take your ideas and your written work to **Penn State Learning** for writing support (220 Boucke, 814-863-3240), where trained peer tutors will consult with writers about any piece of writing at any stage of the writing process, from rough idea to final draft. For more information, use the following link: <http://pennstatelearning.psu.edu>.

## **MindTap Support**

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If you experience technical difficulties with Cengage's MindTap, contact their Customer Support. There are two ways to get in touch with Customer Support: by phone (1-800-354-9706) or online. To contact the support staff online, go to <http://support.cengage.com/magellanweb/techsupport/login.aspx>. You will need to create an account. Once you are logged in, fill out the required fields, and then submit your helpdesk ticket. You should hear back from Cengage staff shortly. In the meantime, alert your instructor to the problem and inform her or him of the steps you took to resolve it with Cengage.

## **Plagiarism**

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Plagiarism is a breach of academic integrity that includes but is not limited to the act of presenting another person's words or ideas as your own without attribution; the act of piecing together multiple unattributed sources to create the illusion of originality; or the act of resubmitting without acknowledgment and permission from the current course instructor significant passages of previously submitted work, even if the work is your own. The College of the Liberal Arts policy on plagiarism is available online at: <http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/student-services/academic-integrity>. If you have any questions about plagiarism and its consequences (or about any other feature of academic integrity) please ask. Plagiarism indicates disregard for ethical standards, your instructor, and your peers. If plagiarism is discovered in your work, you risk failing the assignment and possibly the course. You will also be referred to the College Committee for Academic Integrity, and may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct, which could result in probation, suspension, or expulsion.

## **Statement on Nondiscrimination**

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The University is committed to equal access to programs, facilities, admission and employment for all persons. It is the policy of the University to maintain an environment free of harassment and free of discrimination against any person because of age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, marital or family status, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, physical or mental disability, gender, perceived gender, gender identity, genetic information or political ideas. Discriminatory conduct and harassment, as well as sexual misconduct and relationship violence, violates the dignity of individuals, impedes the realization of the University's educational mission, and

will not be tolerated. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Office, 328 Boucke Building, <http://www.psu.edu/dept/aaoffice/>.

### **Statement on Accessibility**

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Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. The Student Disability Resources Web site provides contact information for every Penn State campus (<http://equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/disability-coordinator>). For further information, please visit the Student Disability Resources website at <http://equity.psu.edu/sdr>. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation (<http://equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/applying-for-services>). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

### **Standards of Classroom Behavior**

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Classroom behavior should always reflect the essential Penn State values of civility, integrity, and respect for the dignity and rights of others. As such, the classroom space should be safe, orderly, and positive—free from disruptions, disorderly conduct, and harassment as defined in the University Code of Conduct (<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct/Procedures.shtml>). The University Code of Conduct defines disruption “as an action or combination of actions by one or more individuals that unreasonably interferes with, hinders, obstructs, or prevents the operation of the University or infringes on the rights of others to freely participate in its programs and services;” disorderly conduct includes but is not limited to “creating unreasonable noise; pushing and shoving; creating a physically hazardous or physically offensive condition;” and harassment may include “directing physical or verbal conduct at an individual ...; subjecting a person or group of persons to unwanted physical contact or threat of such; or engaging in a course of conduct, including following the person without proper authority (e.g., stalking), under circumstances which would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others or to suffer emotional distress” (Section IV, B). The course instructor has the authority to request that any disruptive students leave the class for the class period. If disruptive behavior continues in subsequent class periods, a complaint may be filed with the Office of Student Conduct, which may result in the student being dismissed from class until University procedures have been completed. Any student with concerns or questions as to this policy should contact the course administrator.

### **Submissions to *Penn Statements***

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The editors of *Penn Statements* encourage students to submit essays and other projects for possible publication in this student journal. Submissions are accepted on a rolling basis and can be sent electronically to [pennstatementseditor@gmail.com](mailto:pennstatementseditor@gmail.com). Please include the title of the essay, the assignment it satisfied, and a release statement along these lines: “I, <name>, give permission to *Penn Statements* to publish my <genre of assignment> ‘<assignment title>.’”



## Course Schedule

**Key:** *PS*—Penn Statements, *NHG*—The New Harbrace Guide to Writing, *MT*—MindTap

### Week 1

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
8/21	M	Course Introduction		
8/23	W	Rhetorical Situation: Why Write?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>NHG</i> Ch. 1 (Understanding the Rhetorical Situation: 3-17)</li><li>▪ <i>PS</i> (Preface to Students &amp; Instructors: 6)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Use your Access Code to sign up for MindTap</li></ul>
8/25	F	Responding to the Rhetorical Situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>NHG</i> Ch. 2 (Responding to the Rhetorical Situation: 18-34)</li></ul>	

### Week 2

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
8/28	M	Analyzing a Fitting Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (Canvas)</li></ul>	
8/30	W	Analyzing Multimedia Arguments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>NHG</i> Ch. 4 (Rhetorical Success in a Digital World: 51-74)</li></ul>	
9/1	F	Proposal Workshop		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Proposal: Rhetorical Analysis</li></ul>

### Week 3

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
9/4	M		<i>Labor Day</i>	
9/6	W	Introduction to the Writing Process: Drafting a Rhetorical Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>NHG</i> Ch. 13 (From Tentative Idea to Finished Project: 238-249)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ MT #1: The Writing Process</li></ul>
9/8	F	Understanding the Grading Criteria with Sample Essays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>PS</i> (Grading Standards: 7-8; Rhetorical Analysis: 9-22)</li></ul>	

### Week 4

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
9/11	M	Peer Review Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>NHG</i> Ch. 13 (From Tentative Idea to Finished Project: 250-261)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Rough Draft: Rhetorical Analysis</li></ul>
9/13	W	Responding to Reviews and Mini Style Lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>MT</i> Part SIX, Ch. 29 (Punctuation, Mechanics, and Rhetorical Effects)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Bring draft and peer review feedback</li><li>▪ MT #2: Thesis Statements, Topic Sentences, and Supporting Ideas</li></ul>
9/15	F	Introduction to the Profile Podcast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>NHG</i> Chapter 6 (Profiles: 92-111)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Final Draft: Rhetorical Analysis</li></ul>

**Week 5**

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
9/18	M	Resources and Constraints of Podcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revisit <i>NHG</i> Ch. 4 (Rhetorical Success in a Digital World: 51-74)</li> <li>Profile Readings (Canvas)</li> </ul>	
9/20	W	Analyzing Profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>NHG</i> “Millennials: The Me Me Me Generation” 418-419 &amp; “A Tale of Two Profiles” 454-457</li> </ul>	
9/22	F	Field Research and Podcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>NHG</i> Ch. 16 (Identifying Sources: 304-310)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposal: Profile Podcast</li> </ul>

**Week 6**

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
9/25	M	The Rhetorical Methods of Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>NHG</i> Ch. 14 (Rhetorical Methods of Development: 262-279)</li> </ul>	
9/27	W	Using the Media Commons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Media Commons Resources: <a href="http://mediacommons.psu.edu/category/podcasting/">http://mediacommons.psu.edu/category/podcasting/</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MT #3: Essay Structure</li> </ul>
9/29	F	Peer Review Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revisit <i>NHG</i> Ch. 13 (From Tentative Idea to Finished Project: 250-252) &amp; Ch. 6 (Profiles: 107)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rough Draft: Profile Podcast</li> </ul>

**Week 7**

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
10/2	M	Writing the Cover Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>PS</i> (Sample Cover Letters: 45-49)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring current draft to class with cover letter</li> </ul>
10/4	W	Introduction to Productive Counterargument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>NHG</i> Ch. 8 (Position Arguments: 132-156)</li> <li><i>PS</i> (Introduction to Argument Essays: 70-72)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final Draft: Profile Podcast</li> </ul>
10/6	F	Argument as a Fitting Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Productive Counterargument Readings (Canvas)</li> </ul>	

**Week 8**

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
10/9	M	Evaluating Productive Counterarguments and Mini Style Lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>PS</i> (Productive Counterargument: 76-82)</li> <li><i>MT</i> Part SIX, Ch. 27 (Sentence Structure and Rhetorical Effects)</li> </ul>	
10/11	W	Researching an Issue from Multiple Sides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>NHG</i> Ch. 15 (Thinking Rhetorically about Research: 279-291)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposal: Productive Counterargument</li> </ul>
10/13	F	Doing Research and Using the Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>NHG</i> Ch. 16 (Identifying Sources: 292-304)</li> </ul>	

**Week 9**

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
10/16	M	Using Sources Responsibly	▪ <i>NHG</i> Ch. 17 (Evaluating Sources: 311-322)	
10/18	W	Integrating Source Material and Academic Citation	▪ <i>NHG</i> Ch. 18 (Synthesizing Sources: Summary, Paraphrase, and Quotation: 322-335)	▪ Bring two pages of essay with cited research ▪ MT #4: Research and Documentation
10/20	F	Peer Review Workshop	▪ Revisit <i>NHG</i> Ch. 13 (From Tentative Idea to Finished Project: 250-252)	▪ Rough Draft: Productive Counterargument

**Week 10**

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
10/23	M	Introduction to the Proposal Argument	▪ <i>NHG</i> Ch. 9 (Proposals: 156-173)	▪ Final Draft: Productive Counterargument
10/25	W	Defining the Problem	▪ Proposal Argument Readings (Canvas)	
10/27	F	Matching Solution to Problem	▪ <i>PS</i> (Cause and Consequence: 61-65; Paradigm Shift: 66-69)	

**Week 11**

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
10/30	M	Annotated Bibliographies; Mini Style Lesson	▪ Penn Statements (Annotated Bibliography: 71 and 104-106) ▪ <i>MT</i> Part SIX, Ch. 28 (Editing for Clarity and Style)	
11/1	W	Practice Refining a Proposal	▪ <i>NHG</i> “From Manspreading to Mansplaining” 444-447 & “STEM vs. STEAM” 475-478	▪ Proposal: Proposal Argument
11/3	F	Establishing Feasibility		

**Week 12**

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
11/6	M	Researching and Addressing Acceptability; Mini Style Lesson	▪ <i>MT</i> Part SIX, Ch. 29 (Punctuation, Mechanics, and Rhetorical Effects)	
11/8	W	Analyzing Example Proposals	▪ <i>PS</i> (Proposal Argument: 83-95)	▪ MT #5: Writing Coherent Paragraphs
11/10	F	Peer Review Workshop	▪ Revisit <i>NHG</i> Ch. 13 (From Tentative Idea to Finished Project 250-252)	▪ Rough Draft: Proposal Argument

**Week 13**

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
11/13	M	Introduction to the Multimedia Rhetorical Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>NHG</i> Ch. 5 (Memoirs: 75-91)</li> <li>▪ <i>PS</i> (Multimedia Narratives: 115-121)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Final Draft: Proposal Argument</li> </ul>
11/15	W	Composing Narratives with Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rhetorical Narrative Readings (Canvas)</li> </ul>	
11/17	F	Analyzing Example Narratives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>PS</i> (Literacy Narrative Essays: 128-130)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Proposal: Multimedia Rhetorical Narrative</li> </ul>

Date	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
11/20-11/24	No Class—Thanksgiving Break		

**Week 14**

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
11/27	M	Medium and Narrative		
11/29	W	Plotting a Story with Words and Images	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Storyboard Readings (Canvas)</li> </ul>	
12/1	F	Focusing your Sequence of Events		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Storyboard: Multimedia Rhetorical Narrative</li> </ul>

**Week 15**

Date	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Writing Due
12/4	M	Peer Review Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revisit <i>NHG</i> Ch. 13 (From Tentative Idea to Finished Project: 250-252)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rough Draft: Multimedia Rhetorical Narrative</li> </ul>
12/6	W	Cover Letter Workshop and Mini Style Lesson		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bring current draft to class</li> </ul>
12/8	F	Course Wrap Up		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Final Draft: Multimedia Rhetorical Narrative</li> </ul>

**Finals Week**

Date	Day	Topic	Writing Due
12/10	Sun	<i>Complete course SRTE before 11:59 p.m., Sunday, 12/10. There are no class meetings or exams during Finals Week.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SRTEs (online)</li> </ul>

## MindTap Activities

Due throughout the semester

Throughout the semester, you'll be asked to complete five assignments using the textbook companion website MindTap. These online activities will ask you to review some of the fundamentals of writing, including how to structure an essay, strategies for writing introductions and conclusions, research and documentation practices, and so on:

**MT #1:** The Writing Process (*due September 6<sup>th</sup>*)

**MT #2:** Thesis Statements, Topic Sentences, and Supporting Ideas (*due September 13<sup>th</sup>*)

**MT #3:** Essay Structure (*due September 27<sup>th</sup>*)

**MT #4:** Research and Documentation (*due October 18<sup>th</sup>*)

**MT #5:** Writing Coherent Paragraphs (*due November 8<sup>th</sup>*)

The goal of these MindTap activities is to help you review strategies that you can make use of in your essay assignments.

Each MindTap assignment will be evaluated according to the following standards:

**Check plus (3 points):** A grade of an 85%-100% via MindTap.

**Check (2 points):** A grade of a 70%-84.9% via MindTap

**Check minus (1 point):** A grade of 69.9% or lower via MindTap

**No check (0 points):** Failure to complete assignment on time

At the end of the semester, these individual scores will be tabulated into a letter grade that counts for 15% of your overall course grade, according to the following scale.

### MindTap Final Grading Scale:

POINTS	GRADE
15-14	A
13	A-
12	B+
11-10	B
9	B-
8	C+
7-6	C
5-4	D
3-0	F

## Assignment 1: Rhetorical Analysis

Proposal Due: Friday, September 1<sup>st</sup>

Rough Draft Due: Monday, September 11<sup>th</sup>

Final Draft Due: Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup>

**Prompt:** A rhetorical analysis evaluates how an author (or artist) attempts to reach, maybe even influence, an audience. Locate a visual/oral/verbal text that you deem interesting and analyze it according to the way the text uses rhetorical effects and strategies to make its argument. Use specific textual evidence to establish a general argument (i.e., thesis) about how the text “works.” You should not simply paraphrase or summarize what the rhetor says or composes; rather, your goal is to provide a way of understanding the measure of persuasive effect by analyzing the rhetorical situation.

To do this, first identify the rhetor, intended audience, message, and intended purpose of the text. This information will set the foundation for the rest of your analysis. Next, explain *how* (and how effectively) the text

- appeals to its intended audience;
- employs the available means (the rhetorical appeals of ethos, logos, pathos; the rhetorical methods of development; and visual and/or aural elements, if applicable)

You should go beyond description of the rhetorical elements of the text to look at *how* those elements work to achieve the text’s purpose. Your ideas should be developed through textual evidence and analysis of that evidence. Finally, evaluate the measure of persuasive effect—decide whether or not the text constitutes a fitting response (of informing, explaining, motivating, identifying, etc.). Make an argument regarding the aspect of the text’s rhetoric that is most interesting, revealing, and/or important.

**Process:** As part of your *proposal*, submit a copy of your text for your instructor’s review and explain what makes this text an interesting subject (i.e., what is not rhetorically obvious) for rhetorical analysis.

As you are *drafting*, consider how you are supporting your claims about the text. Refer to specific moments in the text (using quotes and other concrete details) as evidence for your explanation of how the rhetor uses rhetorical strategies. At the same time, consider the balance between description and analysis in your writing. Describe moments in the text in order to make your argument, but remember that your job is not to summarize the text for your readers. Your job is to evaluate the text by analyzing these details and making an argument about their rhetorical effect. After drafting, *revise and edit*. Consider carefully the organization and coherence of your piece. Develop clear paragraphs that support your thesis organized around a definite topic.

**Format:** Your final draft should be 3-4 pages (double-spaced, TNR font, 1” margins). When citing your outside source(s), follow MLA format (see *NHG* Ch. 19 and/or the PSU Libraries’ Citation Research Guide: <http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/mlcitation>).

**Grading Criteria:** Your essay should

- (1) make a claim (a thesis) about an interesting, potentially persuasive text;
- (2) identify the rhetor, intended audience, message, and intended purpose of the text;
- (3) assess the text’s employment of available means; and
- (4) evaluate the text as a fitting response through sufficient textual evidence and analysis.



## Assignment 2: Profile Podcast

Proposal Due: Friday, September 22<sup>th</sup>

Rough Draft Due: Friday, September 29<sup>th</sup>

Final Draft Due: Wednesday, October 4<sup>th</sup>

**Prompt:** A profile is the story of a person, place, or event. A profile gives a reader a new understanding of its subject by sharing interesting details and information. In this assignment, you will compose a profile with a clear purpose in mind: correct a misconception. Use the rhetorical methods of development—especially narration, description, exemplification, and argument—and the rhetorical appeals to characterize your subject. You will deliver your profile in a podcast, so you will need to consider how to convey your profile through verbal and sonic available means.

**Process:** Your *brainstorming* should be thorough. Remember, your project should have a rhetorical audience and purpose—the subject of your profile should warrant attention and be appropriate in scope. For those reasons, very famous people or places may not be the best choice for this assignment. There will simply be too much information to cover and you might end up with only a vague biographical sketch. Instead, a lesser-known figure who you think merits attention may be a better choice. As you plan your project, consider the resources and constraints of podcast. You will certainly want to draft a script for your podcast, but you'll also want to consider how you will deliver that script, how you might integrate recordings of your subject speaking or others speaking about your subject, and how you best make use of an aural medium. The Media Commons and your instructor have a wealth of resources to assist and support you in working with this new medium, but it is your responsibility to be proactive in seeking help when you need it.

For your *proposal*, you will need to explain the following: (1) your chosen profile subject, audience, and reason (exigence) for profiling this person—why it matters and how it is new and interesting; and (2) the resources and constraints for delivering your profile as a podcast.

In addition, you will spend some time composing a cover letter to support your instructor in evaluating your podcast. In one page or less, the cover letter should explain the rhetorical choices that went into making your podcast by (1) directly addressing how you balanced the resources and constraints of your rhetorical situation and (2) providing several examples with analysis that support your explanation.

**Format:** Your final project should be a 5-7 minute podcast. You will submit your file (.mp3) with a cover letter (1 page) through Canvas, unless otherwise instructed.

**Grading Criteria:** Your assignment should

- (1) clearly and fully profile a single subject;
- (2) identify the misconception you are working to correct (your exigence);
- (3) address and appeal to an audience who will benefit from this profile;
- (4) support this profile by using the rhetorical methods of development and appeals;
- (5) effectively tap the available means of a podcast to reach the audience; and
- (6) explain and defend these rhetorical choices in a cover letter.

### Assignment 3: Productive Counterargument

Proposal Due: Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>

Rough Draft Due: Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup>

Final Draft Due: Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>

**Prompt:** The Productive Counterargument is your chance to engage in civic deliberation that is mutually productive and creative and influence your readers to understand your position on an issue. Identify an interesting problem or issue that affects a community that you are a part of and that merits your taking a stand. Next, research the positions others have taken on the issue, and identify one published position that differs from your own. Finally, demonstrate why you disagree with that position and put forth your own argument. *Do more than just respond* to an already existing position, *advance* a position of your own. To accomplish this, decide (1) what points you are responding to that need to be refuted and (2) where you need to present your own *new* arguments and information to give a fuller picture of the issue to your audience. Your goal is to actively listen to other positions, civilly engage with a larger conversation, and create understanding and new insights that build community.

**Process:** For *brainstorming*, think about a local issue that is debatable. You are more likely to make a strong, insightful, and fresh argument about issues affecting your hometown, university, or academic organization than about national or global issues like hunger, gun control, or the drinking age. After you have explored various positions about this topic, select one existing argument with which you disagree. This argument provides your exigence: respond directly to it. As part of your *proposal*, provide a copy (or link) of the existing argument you would like to refute. Explain your exigence and purpose for addressing this topic, and identify an audience you can address, with your common ground.

As you are *drafting*, consider the character of your audience—friendly? hostile? mixed?—and how best to address them. How might you establish common ground and build consensus with the opposition, even as you refute and rebut to distinguish your own position? Consider what persuasive arguments, examples, reasoning, and rhetorical appeals will best achieve your purpose and avoid fallacies. To support your position, you should have sufficient evidence (from credible sources) that is properly integrated, cited, and developed through your own reasoning. As you *revise and edit*, consider tone.

The 1-page cover letter should explain your rhetorical decision-making, and specifically for this paper, it should include: (1) an explanation of your rhetorical purpose, its relation to the issue and your audience, and (2) several examples of rhetorical choices you made to achieve your purpose with an analysis of the outcome.

**Format:** Your final draft should be 4-5 pages (double-spaced, TNR font, 1" margins). When citing your outside source(s), follow MLA format (see *NHG* Ch. 19 and/or the PSU Libraries' Citation Research Guide: <http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/mlacitation>).

**Grading Criteria:** Your essay should

- (1) define a debatable issue clearly;
- (2) address and influence a specific audience;
- (3) identify, summarize, and engage with an existing position;
- (4) respond to an existing argument with a convincing, rhetorically effective counterargument;
- (5) support your claims with examples, details, and reasoning;
- (6) use research that is credible, appropriate, and properly cited following MLA guidelines;
- (7) demonstrate the potential to influence your audience toward your purpose; and
- (8) explain and defend these rhetorical choices in a cover letter.

#### Assignment 4: Proposal Argument

Proposal Due: Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>

Rough Draft Due: Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup>

Final Draft Due: Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup>

**Prompt:** In the Productive Counterargument, you engaged with a larger conversation and clearly expressed your position on an issue. In this Proposal Argument, you will build from those skills as you identify a problem and advocate for a way to address, solve, or resolve that problem. Identify an audience who can benefit from and participate in the solution your proposal addresses. You may need to convince your audience that a problem does, indeed, exist, if that is not obvious. Your starting point, then, is to identify something you feel, with good reason, should be changed. Next, argue that a certain action should be taken to respond to or resolve that problem. Your proposed plan of action should be both possible and desirable. Explore the costs and benefits of your solution. Most of the paper should be devoted to advocating your plan for addressing/resolving the problem.

**Process:** As you are *brainstorming*, explore your local communities, practices, and investments (national or international problems may be tough to address in the space of this essay.) What real-life problem might benefit from a concrete solution you can identify?

As a part of your *proposal*, include an annotated list of five sources you might consult for information about your topic. Your list of sources can be specific articles or books, titles of relevant publications, or names of individuals you could interview.

As you are *drafting*, carefully consider issues of feasibility and audience acceptability. Think about how you are explaining the time, money, labor, resources, etc., that would be necessary to put your solution into action. Describe your plan to show that it is feasible. Consider how you might establish common ground and build consensus to make it acceptable. Understanding that not everyone will agree that your plan is best, address competing solutions and consider any concessions your audience might need to make. Do your best to convince them that your solution is the most effective option available to them. After drafting, *revise and edit*. Consider the tone you should establish and pay careful attention to precision and punctuation.

The 1-page cover letter should explain your rhetorical decision-making, and specifically for this paper, it should include: (1) a brief overview of your audience, their values, and their relation to your proposal and (2) several supporting examples of how you successfully influenced your audience with analysis.

**Format:** Your final draft should be 4-6 pages (double-spaced, TNR font, 1" margins). When citing your outside source(s), follow MLA format (see *NHG* Ch. 19 and/or the PSU Libraries' Citation Research Guide: <http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/mlacitation>).

**Grading Criteria:** Your essay should

- (1) identify and describe the problem clearly;
- (2) address a limited audience who can help you achieve and/or benefit from your solution;
- (3) present a concrete proposal for change that is feasible and acceptable;
- (4) explain how and why your solution will address the problem you have identified;
- (5) fairly assess and fully explore the possible costs and benefits of your proposed solution;
- (6) use research that is credible, appropriate, and properly cited following MLA guidelines; and
- (7) explain and defend these rhetorical choices in a cover letter.

## Assignment 5: Multimedia Rhetorical Narrative

Proposal Due: Friday, November 17<sup>th</sup>

Rough Draft Due: Monday, December 4<sup>th</sup>

Final Draft Due: Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup>

**Prompt:** In this assignment, you will have a chance to apply your new understanding of rhetoric to your life by identifying and then narrating a moment where you demonstrated rhetorical awareness or linguistic prowess. With this assignment, you will narrate a memorable moment to an audience with a clear rhetorical purpose through a carefully selected sequence of events, vivid sensory details, characters, scenery, dialogue, and personal reflection. You will choose an appropriate medium to deliver this story that considers the best available means for your rhetorical situation and combines any two or more media, including text, images, audio, and, if you choose, video. This means that your final multimedia narrative might be an audiovisual production (like a video, slideshow, or scripted podcast), but it just as easily could be a composition that combines images and text (like a magazine article, blog post, or photo essay with extensive captions and an introduction). You will also submit a cover letter that explains the thinking that guided both your rhetorical choices and your use of multimedia.

**Process:** As you *brainstorm*, you will think of a variety of significant—or *insignificant*—experiences in your life as a rhetor. You should analyze each of these options for your rhetorical purpose, their value to a particular audience, and how they can be delivered through a specific medium to fit that audience and purpose. While there isn't an expectation for your project to be ready for network TV, you do need to demonstrate an effort to make thoughtful and rhetorically-minded production choices that will help you influence your audience. As you write your *proposal*, you will articulate your exigence, audience, mode of delivery, and the carefully chosen sequence of events that support your purpose. In your proposal, you may also indicate important details, scenes, characters, or dialogue you plan to include.

The process of *drafting* will involve a storyboard and rough draft delivered within the chosen medium. Be sure to leave plenty of time for *editing* and *revision*. Multimedia editing can be time-consuming. In addition to checking for smooth and effective use of your chosen media, you will also need to pay attention to language and style, demonstrating purposeful use of sentence variety for emphasis.

Additionally, you will spend some time composing a final cover letter. In one page or less, the cover letter should explain how your project constitutes a fitting response to your chosen rhetorical situation and include the following: (1) a brief overview of your rhetorical situation; (2) a discussion of how your multimedia delivery suits the audience and purpose; and (3) several supporting examples of how you employed rhetorical decision-making, with analysis of the outcomes of those rhetorical choices.

**Format:** Length and format are determined by the task you set for yourself. Your instructor will discuss requirement details for your multimedia project in more detail. Your explanatory cover letter should be 1 page (double-spaced, TNR font, 1" margins). All copyrighted content should be properly cited.

**Grading Criteria:** Your assignment should

- (1) narrate a specific memorable moment that demonstrates your efficacy as a rhetor;
- (2) develop a clear narrative purpose with a selection of supporting details, characters, scenery, and reflection;
- (3) address a distinct audience who will respond to that purpose;
- (4) deliver your narrative clearly through purposeful use of your medium's available means; and
- (5) explain and defend these rhetorical choices in a cover letter.