

## Syllabus: English 15—Rhetoric and Composition

Instructor: Phillip Zapkin

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Office Hours: M 3:30-4:30, TH 1:30-3:30

Section	Time	Location
017	MWF 10:10-11:00AM	Chambers Bldg. 208
055	MWF 2:30-3:20PM	Borland Bldg. 118

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will learn about rhetoric. Rhetoric is the art and science of persuading people to listen to and accept, or at least consider, your ideas. Central to rhetoric are the strategies we use to shape our writing, speaking, creating, etc. *for* other people. A big part of our focus this semester will be how we engage with others: writing about others, responding to what they've written/said, and using their work to support our own rhetoric.

Our other big consideration will be making rhetorical choices. In any rhetorical situation and for any audience, we have many possible techniques and options to persuade readers, and part of developing rhetorical awareness is getting a feel for which strategies will work best.

### REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND SOFTWARE

Glenn, Cheryl. *The New Harbrace Guide to Writing: Genres for Composing*. 3rd edition, Cengage Learning, 2018. ISBN: 978-1305956780

Morales-Reyes, Javiera, ed. *Penn Statements*. Volume 41, 2022.

- These textbooks can be purchased from the [Penn State Bookstore](#). *Penn Statements* can only be purchased electronically.
  - You must have in-class access to daily readings posted to Canvas, either electronically (on a laptop or tablet, preferably not a phone) or printed.
  - You are required to know the material in *all* assigned readings, even if we don't discuss a particular piece in class. Please read carefully.
- This course requires you to use Microsoft Word for your formal assignments. Unless otherwise specified, files should be submitted as either .docx or .doc file types.
- If you do not have Microsoft Word, Penn State makes the full Microsoft Office suite, which includes Word, available to Penn State students for free. To get this free version of Microsoft Office, simply login to <https://office365.psu.edu/> using your Penn State credentials.

### ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Graded Assignment	Percentage
Profile Project	15%
Group Rhetorical Evaluation Project	15%
Response Video Project	15%
Researched Argument Project	20%
Exploratory Writing	10%
Peer Reviews	15%
Participation	10%

\*\*\*To pass this course you *must* submit all four major projects. Failure to submit a project will result in an automatic failing grade for the course.\*\*\*

- Assignment sheets for each project, Peer Reviews, and Cover Letters are available at the end of this syllabus and on Canvas. Assignments sheets for Exploratory Writings are on Canvas. These sheets give you specific details about what the assignments require. We will also go over each assignment sheet in class.
  - If you're unsure about what an assignment requires/allows, please ask me in class, during office hours, or over email.
- For every project you must get a *proposal approved* and have the draft *peer reviewed* by a classmate in this course section. Not doing so before the project deadline will cost one full letter grade from the project for each requirement not met.
- Each major project requires a Cover Letter. A missing Cover Letter will cost one full letter grade from the project.
- All assignments must be submitted by *11:59PM Eastern Time* on the date assigned. Submitting a project after the deadline will cost one full letter grade per late day.

#### PARTICIPATION

Participation is crucial to our classroom community—this is an interactive class where, in large part, what you get out of the course depends on what you put in. The participation grade is a holistic and comprehensive grade evaluating your contributions over the semester to full class discussions, group work/discussions, writing conferences, and attendance.

- Writing Conferences: Coming to discuss your work, writing, or ideas with me during office hours will add  $\frac{1}{3}$  letter grade toward your participation grade per visit. Especially if you're nervous about talking in class, this can be a great way to simultaneously get useful feedback and boost your participation score.

#### GRADING SCALE

This class uses the LionPATH standard grading scale to determine final course grades:

Letter Grade	Point Range
A	94-100
A-	90-93.99
B+	87-89.99
B	84-86.99
B-	80-83.99
C+	77-79.99
C	70-76.99
D	60-69.99
F	0-59.99

#### INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT GRADES

Projects will receive letter grades based on the PWR Grading Standards (see “PWR Grading Standards” in *PS* pp. 9-11) and the grading criteria for that individual project.

Proposals, Exploratory Writings, and Peer Reviews will all be graded Complete/Incomplete.

## POLICIES

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### ATTENDANCE

You are allowed to miss three classes with *no penalty* to your grade. *Each class missed beyond those three will cost 1/3 letter from your overall course grade.*

- Excused absences do not count against you. In order for an absence to be excused you must discuss it with me as early as possible beforehand (at least 24 hours). Reasons for excused absences include: religious holidays, military service, university required activities (i.e., participation in a university sports team), or severe illness or injury.
  - Quarantining for Covid-19 will count as excused absences.
- If you miss class, *it is your responsibility to make up the missed material.* Ask a classmate to take notes for you, and then come to office hours and/or email me as soon as possible.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.

### ACCESSIBILITY: DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

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 ([equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/disability-coordinator](http://equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/disability-coordinator)). For further information, please visit the Student Disability Resources website at [equity.psu.edu/sdr](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 ([equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/applying-for-services](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.

### EDUCATION EQUITY: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or

veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the [Report Bias webpage](http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/) ([equity.psu.edu/reportbias/](http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/)).

### COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 814-863-0395, [studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/](http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/)  
Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400  
Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

### STANDARDS OF CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

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 ([studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct/Procedures.shtml](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 Director of the Program in Writing and Rhetoric.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

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This schedule is subject to change by me. I will notify you ahead of time by email and/or Canvas announcement of any changes.

Readings Key: *NHG*=*New Harbrace Guide*, *PS*=*Penn Statements*, *CA*=*Canvas*, *SY*=*Syllabus*

#### WEEK 1

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❖ Mon. 22 Aug.: Introduce the Class; Get to Know One Another; What Do We Want Out of a Rhetoric Class?

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - Read *SY*
  - Read “Program Outcomes” in *PS* p. 12-13
  - Read “WPA Outcomes Statement” on *CA*

❖ Wed. 24 Aug.: Discuss the Syllabus; What is Rhetoric?

- Homework for Next Class:
  - Read “Understanding the Rhetorical Situation” in *NHG* pp. 3-14
  - Read “Profile Assignment Sheet,” “John Lewis, US Civil Rights Champion,” and “Meet the Man Behind a Third of What’s on Wikipedia” on *CA*
  - Watch “Profile” and “The Adorable Bear that Served in WWII” on *CA*

❖ Fri. 26 Aug.: Introduce the Profile; Traditional Profiles

- Homework for Next Class:
  - Read “Profiles” in *NHG* pp. 92-102
  - Read “Narrative Essays: Introduction and Common Issues” in *PS* pp. 127-130
  - Read “About – Shara McCallum,” “Shara McCallum,” “Shara McCallum, Liberal Arts Professor of English, Named Penn State Poet Laureate,” “Both Poet and Laureate,” and “Penn State 2021-22 Laureate Shara McCallum shares her poetic journey from Jamaica to State College” on *CA*

WEEK 2

❖ Mon. 29 Aug.: Introduce Proposals; Comparing Profiling Strategies

- Homework for Next Class:
  - Read “Writing a Persuasive Profile” in *NHG* pp. 103-106
  - Watch “Miley Cyrus Performance VMA 2013” on *CA*
  - Read “The 2013 VMAs Were Dominated by Miley’s Minstrel Show” and “Don’t You Dare Call Miley Cyrus a ‘Slut’” on *CA*

❖ Wed. 31 Aug.: Analyzing Profiles that Praise or Criticize

- Homework for Next Class:
  - Profile Proposal
  - Read “On Beginnings and Endings” on *CA*

❖ Fri. 2 Sept.: Introduce Profile Introduction; Introductory Strategies

- *Due Today: Profile Proposal*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - Read “PWR Grading Standards” in *PS* pp. 9-11
  - Read “The Writing Instructor’s Approach to Grading” and “Thesis Statements” on *CA*
  - Read “Making Claims” in *NHG* pp. 20-21 and “Crafting a Working Thesis Statement” in *NHG* pp. 246-247
  - Watch “Thesis Statements” and “Grading Standards” on *CA*

WEEK 3

❖ Mon. 5 Sept.: *Labor Day, No Class*

❖ Wed. 7 Sept.: PWR Grading; Thesis Statements

- Homework for Next Class:

- Profile Introduction
- Read “The Myth of the Kindly General Lee” on CA

❖ Fri. 9 Sept.: Profiles that Confront Misconceptions

- *Due Today: Profile Introduction*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - Read “Taylor Swift: A Fearless Defender of Artists’ Rights,” “THON Podcast,” and “Deafness is Not a Disability” in *PS* pp. 153-157 (the last two are multimedia pieces that will need to be viewed/heard electronically)

WEEK 4

❖ Mon. 12 Sept.: Profile Grade Norming

- Homework for Next Class:
  - Profile Peer Review draft
  - Profile draft brought to class
  - Read “Cover Letter Assignment Sheet” on CA
  - Read “Peer Evaluation” in *NHG* pp. 250-253
  - Watch “Peer Reviewing” on CA

❖ Wed. 14 Sept.: Introduce Cover Letters; Practice Peer Review

- *Due Today: Profile Peer Review Draft*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - Profile draft brought to class
  - Read “Revision Strategies” and “Essay Formatting” on CA
  - Read “Revising a Response” in *NHG* p. 250

❖ Fri. 16 Sept.: Profile Revision Activities

- *Due Today: Profile Peer Review*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - **Profile Final Draft**
  - Read “Group Rhetorical Evaluation Assignment Sheet” on CA
  - Read “Reading Rhetorically” in *NHG* pp. 198-206
  - Read “Analysis Essays: Introduction and Common Issues” in *PS* pp. 14-17
  - Watch “Analysis” on CA

WEEK 5

❖ Mon. 19 Sept.: Introduce Group Rhetorical Evaluation; Rhetorical Situation; Basics of Analysis; Sign Up for Groups

- *Due Today: Profile Final Draft*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - Read “Evaluations” in *NHG* pp. 174-186 and “Writing a Persuasive Critical Analysis” in *NHG* pp. 207-210
  - Watch “Evaluation” on CA

❖ Wed. 21 Sept.: Setting and Applying Evaluative Standards; Collaborative Writing

- Homework for Next Class:
  - Group Rhetorical Evaluation Proposal
  - Read “Rhetorical Methods of Development” in *NHG* pp. 262-278

- Watch “Rhetorical Methods of Development” and “NuWave Oven Infomercial” on CA

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❖ Fri. 23 Sept.: Rhetorical Methods of Development

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- *Due Today: Group Rhetorical Evaluation Proposal*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - Read “Ain’t I a Woman” in *NHG* pp. 24-26 and “Writing a Persuasive Evaluation” in *NHG* pp. 187-189
  - Read “From Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*,” “Crash Course in Rhetorical Appeals,” “Traditional Outline Template,” and “Two Outlines for Rhetorical Evaluation” on CA
  - Watch “Rhetorical Appeals” and “Outlines” on CA

WEEK 6

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❖ Mon. 26 Sept.: Introduce Two Outlines; Logos; Outlining

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - Watch “Audience Awareness,” “PA Lottery Hibachi 2020,” “CDC: Tips From Former Smokers—Michael P’s ‘COPD and Smoking’ Tips Commercial,” and “Coca-Cola Australia – Ladybird” on CA

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❖ Wed. 28 Sept.: Pathos; Audience Values

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - Two Outlines
  - Read “Nikole Hannah-Jones’ Full Statement About Declining to Come to UNC-Chapel Hill” on CA
  - Read “The Available Means Include the Rhetorical Elements of the Message Itself” in *NHG* pp. 23-24

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❖ Fri. 30 Sept.: Ethos; The Rhetorical Triangle

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- *Due Today: Two Outlines*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - Read “President Bush’s 9/11 Address,” “Ransomware: What It Is and How to Stop It,” “An Exercise in Love,” and “Becoming a Free Child” in *PS* pp. 19-31

WEEK 7

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❖ Mon. 3 Oct.: Grade Norming Rhetorical Evaluations

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - Group Rhetorical Evaluation Peer Review draft
  - Read “The Hamburger Method for Clear, Logical Paragraphs” and “CEI Paragraph” on CA
  - Review “From Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*” on CA
  - Watch “Claim, Evidence, Interpretation” and “Political, Forensic, and Ceremonial Rhetoric” on CA

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❖ Wed. 5 Oct.: Paragraph Structure; Political, Forensic, and Ceremonial Rhetoric

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- *Due Today: Group Rhetorical Evaluation Peer Review Draft*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - Rhetorical Evaluation draft in class

- Reread “Revision Strategies” on CA

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❖ Fri. 7 Oct.: Rhetorical Evaluation Revision Strategies

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- *Due Today: Group Rhetorical Evaluation Peer Review*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - **Group Rhetorical Evaluation Final Draft**
  - Read “Response Video Assignment Sheet” and “How to Actually Change Someone’s Mind” on CA

WEEK 8

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❖ Mon. 10 Oct.: Introduce Response Video; Finding and Identifying Arguments

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- *Due Today: Group Rhetorical Evaluation Final Draft*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - Read “Summary” in *NHG* pp. 42-43
  - Read “A Letter on Justice and Open Debate” and “‘Cancel Culture’ Doesn’t Stifle Debate, But It Does Challenge the Old Order” on CA
  - Watch “Summary” and “Distinguishing Between Argumentative and Informational Texts” on CA

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❖ Wed. 12 Oct.: Summarizing an Argument; Distinguishing Fact and Opinion

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - Response Video Proposal
  - Watch “Writing for Digital Spaces,” “Creationism in Science Class?” and “Violent Video Games Cause Mass Shootings” on CA
  - Read “Rhetorical Success in a Digital World” in *NHG* pp. 51-61 and “A Rhetorical Approach to YouTube as a Medium of Delivery” in *NHG* pp. 66-68

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❖ Fri. 14 Oct.: *Phillip Out of Town: Meet in Media Commons, Pattee Library W140*

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- *Due Today: Response Video Proposal*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - Watch “Rebuttal” and “The Kalam Cosmological Argument is the Worst” on CA
  - Read “Out of the Kitchen, Onto the Couch” and “Why We Should Ditch the Slow Food Movement” in *NHG* pp. 407-410

WEEK 9

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❖ Mon. 17 Oct.: Introduce Rebuttal Script; Rebuttal Strategies

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - Read “Rogerian and Invitational Arguments” and “An Argument Against Veganism...From A Vegetarian” on CA
  - Watch “Rogerian Argument,” “Brian Foerster Clueless on Maya Buildings,” and “Bad Film Theories” on CA

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❖ Wed. 19 Oct.: Rogerian Argument; Identifying Common Values and Goals

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - Rebuttal Script

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❖ Fri. 21 Oct.: *Phillip Out of Town; Meet in Media Commons, Pattee Library W140*

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- *Due Today: Rebuttal Script*

- Homework for Next Class:
  - Read “Summarizing Sources,” “Paraphrasing Sources,” and “Quoting Sources” in *NHG* pp. 324-337
  - Watch “Quotation, Paraphrase, and Summary” on *CA*

## WEEK 10

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### ❖ Mon. 24 Oct.: Quotation, Paraphrase, and Summary

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - Response Video Peer Review draft
  - Read “Letter to Tay,” “Education Engenders Excellence,” and “Should Big Name College Basketball Players Be Paid?” in *PS* pp. 62-70

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### ❖ Wed. 26 Oct.: Grade Norming Counterarguments

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- *Due Today: Response Video Peer Review Draft*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - Response Video draft in class

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### ❖ Fri. 28 Oct.: Rhetorical Analysis of Your Response Video

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- *Due Today: Response Video Peer Review*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - **Response Video Final Draft**
  - Read “Researched Argument Assignment Sheet” on *CA*
  - Read “Position Arguments” in *NHG* pp. 132-148

## WEEK 11

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### ❖ Mon. 31 Oct.: Introduce Researched Argument; Brainstorming Topics

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- *Due Today: Response Video Final Draft*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - Read “Sources for Research” in *NHG* pp. 293-304
  - Watch “Database Searching” on *CA*

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### ❖ Wed. 2 Nov.: Meet in Pattee Library W13

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - Researched Argument Proposal
  - Read “Toulmin Argument” on *CA*
  - Watch “Toulmin Model” on *CA*
  - Read “Why It’s Crucial to Get More Women into Science” in *NHG* pp. 482-492
  - Read “Argument Essays: Introduction and Common Issues” in *PS* pp. 42-45

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### ❖ Fri. 4 Nov.: Toulmin Model Argument; Examining an Academic Argument

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- *Due Today: Researched Argument Proposal*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - Read “Writing a Persuasive Position Argument” in *NHG* pp. 149-151, “Avoiding Plagiarism” in *NHG* pp. 322-324
  - Skim “Acknowledging Sources in MLA Style” in *NHG* pp. 338-363
  - Watch “8<sup>th</sup> Edition MLA Works Cited Pages” on *CA*

## WEEK 12

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❖ Mon. 7 Nov.: Introduce Annotated Bibliography; Crash Course on MLA Bibliographic Citations

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - Read “Evaluating Sources” in *NHG* pp. 311-320 and “How Much Do Americans Know about Science?” in *NHG* pp. 469-475
    - Watch “Assessing Researched Sources” on *CA*
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❖ Wed. 9 Nov.: Assessing Sources

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - Read “Preparing A Working Bibliography” in *NHG* pp. 309-310
    - Watch “Citing and Attributing Quotes in MLA Format” on *CA*
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❖ Fri. 11 Nov.: Practicing MLA Bibliographic Citations

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - Read “Incorporating Sources” on *CA*
    - Read “Preparing an Annotated Bibliography” in *NHG* pp. 320-321
    - Read “Mending the Leaky Pipes,” “Feral Cat Management,” and “Dear Penn State Council of Sustainable Leaders” in *PS* pp. 109-121
    - Watch “Annotated Bibliographies” on *CA*
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WEEK 13

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❖ Mon. 14 Nov.: Incorporating and Interpreting Sources

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - Bring three researched sources to class
    - Read “Analysis and Synthesis” in *NHG* pp. 45-49
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❖ Wed. 16 Nov.: Synthesizing Source Material

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - Annotated Bibliography
    - Watch “Varying Sentence Length and Complexity” on *CA*
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❖ Fri. 18 Nov.: Sentence Variation Workshop

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- *Due Today: Annotated Bibliography*
  - Homework for Next Class:
    - Read “The Cancerous Side of THON” in *PS* pp. 32-35, “Global Warming and Its Impact on Disease,” “Greyhound Racing,” “Religion,” and “Is Voting a Right” in *PS* pp. 47-60
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WEEK 14

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❖ Mon. 21 Nov.: *Thanksgiving Recess, No Class*

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❖ Wed. 23 Nov.: *Thanksgiving Recess, No Class*

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❖ Fri. 25 Nov.: *Thanksgiving Recess, No Class*

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WEEK 15

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❖ Mon. 28 Nov.: Grade Norming Researched Arguments

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - Read “Most Millennials Resist the ‘Millennial’ Label” in *NHG* pp. 421-426 and “How Smart Phones Are Turning Our Public Places into Private Ones” in *NHG* pp. 442-443
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❖ Wed. 30 Nov.: Incorporating a Counterargument

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - Read “A Rhetorical Approach to Oral Presentations as a Medium of Delivery” in *NHG* pp. 68-72
    - Watch “Academic Presentations” on *CA*
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❖ Fri. 2 Dec.: Crash Course in Presenting Academic Arguments

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- Homework for Next Class:
  - Researched Argument draft in class
  - Read “The Believing Game” on *CA*

WEEK 16

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❖ Mon. 5 Dec.: Researched Argument Revisions; SRTEs

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- Homework for Next Class:
    - Researched Argument Peer Review draft
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❖ Wed. 7 Dec.: *Optional Class*, Researched Argument Writing Conferences

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- *Due Today: Researched Argument Peer Review Draft*
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❖ Fri. 9 Dec.: Extra Credit In-Class Presentations

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- *Due Today: Researched Argument Peer Review*
- Homework for Next Class:
  - **Researched Argument Final Draft**

WEEK 17

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❖ Mon. 12 Dec.: Researched Argument Due

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- *Due Today: Researched Argument Final Draft*

## ASSIGNMENT SHEETS

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### PROPOSALS

**Prompt:** The first stage in the writing process for this course is to propose a topic for each major paper. Write a 1 full page proposal *explaining the subject* you want to write about, *identifying the audience and purpose* for the project, and *setting the stakes* for why the topic matters. This will help you develop your idea and allows me to ensure your topic fits the assignment.

Each proposal will either be approved or rejected. A rejected proposal will receive a grade of incomplete through Canvas and will have feedback explaining the problem. If rejected, you need to email me a revised proposal as soon as possible. If the second proposal is rejected, you need to come see me for a writing conference to determine a feasible topic.

For the Group Rhetorical Evaluation and Video Response projects, include a link to or copy of the text you're assessing.

If you don't have a proposal approved by the day we get to peer review, you will not earn credit for peer review, though you will still be required to participate. If you do not have a proposal approved by the project deadline the project will lose one full letter grade.

**Grading Criteria:** Your proposal should:

- I. summarize the subject/argument/research question you intend to write about
- II. clearly identify your intended audience and purpose
- III. establish why the topic matters to you and the audience

### COVER LETTERS

**Prompt:** For each project you will compose a Cover Letter *explaining your rhetorical choices*. These letters will help you *reflect* on your own writing and writing process. The letter should be 1 full page, consisting of three paragraphs. The paragraphs should:

1. *summarize the rhetorical situation*—identifying your purpose and intended audience,
2. *identify two rhetorical choices you made*—describe two appeals, techniques, strategies, etc. you used to achieve your purpose with your audience. Refer to specific places in the project as evidence,
3. and *evaluate the effectiveness of your rhetoric*—for your audience, how well did you shape your rhetoric to achieve your purpose?

The final paragraph may also explain any successes or difficulties you want to draw my attention to in the grading process. You may also raise questions or concerns about the class in this final paragraph.

Format the cover letter as a letter, with date and salutation addressing me at the top (e.g., Dear Phillip) and a signature line at the bottom (e.g., Sincerely, Your Name).

Not including a cover letter will cost one full letter grade from the project.

## PROFILE

Proposal Due: Fri. 2 Sept.

Peer Review: Fri. 16 Sept.

Final Draft Due: Mon. 19 Sept.

**Prompt:** A profile is an argument driven biography. For this 2-3 full page paper, choose a single person (or place, organization, etc.) and *make an argument* based on details of their life. We will discuss three different profile strategies you can use: straight/biographic profile, the profile that praises or critiques, and the profile that confronts a misconception. Your profile should have a *thesis statement* presenting your main claim, and that claim should be supported by *detailed biographical evidence*.

In addition to the 2-3 full pages of the Profile, you will write both a Proposal and a Cover Letter. See the assignment sheets for each on page 12 of the syllabus.

This is not a research-based assignment, but if you do use research, cite your sources using MLA format (see “Acknowledging Sources in MLA Style” in *NHG* pp. 338-363). Works Cited pages and Cover Letters do not count toward the assignment page count.

**Grading Criteria:** Your essay should

1. tell a unified, focused story about a single subject/person,
2. include a thesis making a specific argument about that subject/person,
3. provide and interpret evidence supporting the thesis,
4. and explain your rhetorical choices in a Cover Letter.

## GROUP RHETORICAL EVALUATION

Proposal Due: Fri. 23 Sept.

Peer Review: Fri. 7 Oct.

Final Draft Due: Mon. 10 Oct.

**Prompt:** Rhetoric is basically the art of persuasion, and, as we all know, sometimes persuasion is effective and sometimes it isn't. In this 3-4 full page paper, you will work with a small group (3-4 people) to *analyze* the rhetorical techniques in a persuasive text created within the past three years, and *evaluate* how effectively that text would convince its intended audience.

Alternatively, you may compare the rhetorical effectiveness of two texts. The *rhetorical situation*, including audience awareness, should be a major factor in your evaluation. Your essay will need a thesis statement making a focused evaluative claim about the rhetoric.

In addition to the 3-4 full pages of the Rhetorical Evaluation, you will write both a Proposal and a Cover Letter. See the assignment sheets for each on page 12 of the syllabus. Your group will only turn in one Proposal and one final draft, but you will each write an individual Cover Letter.

Create a Works Cited page in MLA format listing the text(s) that you're evaluating (see “Acknowledging Sources in MLA Style” in *NHG* pp. 338-363). Works Cited pages and Cover Letters do not count toward the assignment page count.

**Grading Criteria:** Your essay should:

1. analyze the rhetorical techniques used by 1-2 texts,
2. evaluate how likely the text(s) is/are to effectively persuade the intended audience(s),
3. include a thesis making a focused evaluative claim,
4. and explain your rhetorical choices in a Cover Letter.

VIDEO RESPONSE

Proposal Due: Fri. 14 Oct.

Peer Review: Fri. 28 Oct.

Final Draft Due: Mon. 31 Oct.

**Prompt:** We often disagree with what others have written or said, and it is important to engage with those arguments if we want to persuade others. In this roughly 5-minute video, you will respond to an argument that you disagree with (in whole or in part), while considering that argument's ideas fairly. You will *summarize* and *analyze* the argument, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and develop a *counterargument using evidence* to support your critiques of the original argument. While I don't expect your video to be professional quality, you should use elements of visual/video rhetoric we'll discuss in class to engage directly with the other argument. You can take either a Rogerian approach (identifying common values or goals to build a compromise) or write a rebuttal (arguing that the other author is wrong).

In addition to the 5 minutes of the Video Response, you will write both a Proposal and a Cover Letter. See the assignment sheets for each on page 12 of the syllabus.

Create a Works Cited page in MLA format listing the text that you're responding to and any other researched sources (see "Acknowledging Sources in MLA Style" in *NHG* pp. 338-363). The Works Cited page can either be included as a final shot of the video or uploaded as a separate .docx or .doc file.

**Grading Criteria:** Your essay should:

1. summarize a source's argument accurately and honestly,
2. identify and analyze weaknesses or shortcomings in the source's arguments,
3. make a counterargument that actively engages with the source's arguments,
4. utilize the rhetorical techniques of visual rhetoric effectively,
5. and explain your rhetorical choices in a Cover Letter.

RESEARCHED ARGUMENT

Proposal Due: Fri. 4 Nov.

Peer Review: Fri. 9 Dec.

Final Draft Due: Mon. 12 Dec.

**Prompt:** Most of the work we do as scholars involves entering critical conversations, which we do by researching issues and building on or critiquing what other scholars have said. For this 4-5 full page paper, you will *answer a research question* of your own choosing. The question must be about a topic within your major. Use *scholarly research methods* to gather and analyze

evidence, then develop your answer using the best info available. Answer your question in a *thesis statement* and carefully structure your essay to support your claim.

In addition to the 4-5 full pages of the Researched Argument, you will write both a Proposal and a Cover Letter. See the assignment sheets for each on page 12 of the syllabus.

Create a Works Cited page in MLA format listing all researched sources (see “Acknowledging Sources in MLA Style” in *NHG* pp. 338-363). Works Cited pages and Cover Letters do not count toward the assignment page count.

**Grading Criteria:** Your essay should:

1. analyze and utilize scholarly, researched evidence,
2. include a thesis making a specific argumentative claim,
3. use a well-structured argument to answer your research question,
4. correctly cite your sources using MLA format, both in-text and on a Works Cited page,
5. and explain your rhetorical choices in a Cover Letter.