

Rhetorical Analysis

ENGL 108: Rhetorics of Science and Medicine

A rhetorical analysis is pretty simple in practice: it's an analysis of the rhetorical choices made in a given document. This could be any document—we'll practice in class by looking at everything from emails to commercials. A rhetorical analysis asks you to look critically at a document and ask yourself "How is this document trying to persuade me?" Persuasion comes in many forms—you can persuade someone with facts or by appealing to their emotions. It's your job to think critically about what choices the original author has made and how they are working in their final product.

For this assignment, you will find an article related to science or medicine (broadly conceived) in your major field. This does not have to be an academic article—a newspaper or magazine article (be it in print or online) is also fine. You will read this article and provide an evaluation of how it makes its arguments. Make sure you consider all three sides of the rhetorical triangle. Consider the article's ethos: Who is the author? Do they publish in this field often? Consider the article's pathos: What type of language does the author use? Are there any particular words or phrases that seem to seek to elicit a certain reaction? Note that this doesn't have to be extreme! Consider the article's logos: What kind of data does the article use? Does it include visual aids (ex. pictures)? Visual representations of data (ex. graphs or tables)? Does it cite or quote other people? Also make sure to consider kairos: Is this article particularly timely? Does it appeal to a certain time or certain events that were current when it was published? Please note that these are not the only possible questions—and that some of these questions may not be relevant to your paper. Choose the most effective examples that you find!

Your job is to synthesize this information into a short paper where you explain *how* the article makes its argument, not *what* that argument is. As such, I suggest the following structure:

1. An introduction where you introduce and summarize (BRIEFLY!) your chosen article. Note: this should not be the bulk of your paper!
2. A body that analyzes specific rhetorical choices and arguments within the article.
3. A conclusion that argues for the overall effectiveness of the rhetorical choices (in other words, is this convincing? Why or why not?).

Requirements

Length: 750-1000 words (3-4 pages)

Format: Double spaced, size 12 Times New Roman font, 1" margins. You may choose what citation format (ex. MLA, APA, Chicago) you use for this paper as long as you are consistent.

Ingredients of a strong rhetorical analysis: A brief summary, several examples of rhetoric, analysis of those rhetorical moves, summative conclusion, attention to your audience and their knowledge of your field and article.

Due Dates

Peer review: In class on Monday 2/1, Wednesday 2/3, Friday 2/5, depending on your small group.

Final draft: Monday 2/8 by 11:59 pm. Late papers will be penalized as per the syllabus. After your rhetorical analyses are uploaded, I will grade them and give feedback on Brightspace. Your rhetorical analysis reflection will be due at the same time.

This project is worth 15% of your grade.

Reflection

It is important to reflect on your writing so you know what you did well, what you need to improve on, and how your writing process itself works. This is a form of metacognition—thinking about thinking—that helps you improve as a writer and as a learner. You'll also have to do self-evaluation in your careers in forms such as annual reviews, so it's good practice to think about how to write and reflect on your own work.

In 250-500 words, answer the following questions about the rhetorical analysis:

- How did you find your article? What made you pick it?
- What are you proud of in your analysis? If you had another week to work on the analysis, what would you change?
- Describe your writing and revision process as you completed this assignment. What did you revise and why? How did writing this assignment compare to writing assignments in other college classes or in high school? What did you do differently? Why?
- How might this assignment benefit you outside of this class? Outside of school?

This assignment is worth 10 points and will be graded as a microassignment.

Rubric

___/10 Article selection: You have selected an article.

___/10 Audience awareness: You write for an audience of your peers. You explain any jargon.

___/25 Analysis: You provide analysis for your evidence, explaining why it is relevant or how it is functioning. Your analyses go beyond surface-level observations.

___/25 Evidence: You reference specific material from your paper. You pick out evidence that is compelling and relates to the topic at hand.

___/5 Grammar, proofreading, and formatting: Your paper is proofread and is free of any grammatical errors that affect readability.

___/10 Organization and transitions: Your paper makes sense. It is easy to follow your claims through your paper.

___/15 Summary: Your summary is brief. It includes the author's/authors' name/s and the article title. You provide only necessary information.