ENGL 1020: Composition/Analysis

**University of Memphis**

**Rhetorical Analysis Essay Assignment**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of your rhetorical analysis is to analyze another writer's argument. Of course, your essay should address *what* the writer has written, **but the emphasis of your rhetorical analysis essay should be a close examination of *how* the writer has presented an argument***.* ***Your purpose is not to argue with (or state your agreement with) the writer's position.*** Your primary purpose is to analyze the strategies and features another writer has used to be persuasive. Do not be diverted from your primary task: to demonstrate that you have uncovered interesting, important things about the way the author's argument has been presented.

**Process:**

First, you need to choose an article to analyze. You should choose one of the following options from *Writing Memphis* or found in ecourseware:

* “The Education of Dasmine Cathey” by Brad Wolverton, pp 117-135
* “Memphis: A Tale of Two Cities” by Troy L. Wiggins
* “Letter to my City” Troy L. Wiggins
* “Invest in Yourself, Memphis” by John Kirkscey

You may also find an argument about Memphis from another source, but if you choose this route then you must get the article approved by me before you begin writing.

You do not need to agree with the argument to analyze it, but you should be careful to choose an argument that you can approach objectively, as you will not be critiquing the argument; you will be analyzing it. **Your analysis should be no less than four pages long.**

***What Should Be Analyzed?***

Listed below are the sorts of things your rhetorical analysis should consider. This list is neither a checklist nor an outline, and not every question will apply to every article.

• Purpose (What is the writer trying to accomplish with the essay?)

• Audience (To whom does the writer try to appeal? How does the writer try to

connect with that audience?)

• Organization (How has the writer structured and presented the argument?)

• Nods to the Opposition (How does the writer anticipate and address arguments

that might be made against his/her position?)

• Definition (How does the writer define key terms used in the argument?)

• Examples (What sort of examples/analogies does the writer use as evidence?)

• Appeals to Authority (How does the writer use other sources, experts, statistics, etc.?)

• *Ethos* (How does the writer present him/herself to the reader?)

• *Logos* (How does the writer appeal to the reader's sense of logical reasoning?)

• *Pathos* (How does the writer appeal to the reader's emotions, beliefs, and values?)

• *Kairos* (How has the author made use of an opportune moment or place?)

• Tone (What is the writer's attitude towards the subject?)

• Diction and Imagery (What are the effects of the writer's word choices?)

**Submission:** You will submit your paper **in print on the due date**, as well as digitally, via ecourseware. MLA citation and format are required. For specifics about format please see the course syllabus.

**Requirements:**

* Four full pages (not including works cited page)
* MLA citation and format
* Submitted digitally to the Dropbox in ecourseware
* Avoid summary (beyond a brief introductory summary of your source)

**Writers Workshop: Thursday, Feb. 8**

**Due Date: Tuesday, Feb. 13**