English 1B Fall 2011 **Rhetorical Analysis of a Company Web Site**

**Overview**: We have been doing rhetorical analysis of arguments; now you will apply those analytical skills to a more complex kind of argument: the Web site a company uses to describe and sell its product.

**Content:** You will **describe** (tell us what’s there), **analyze,** (tell us why the words/visuals/audio bits are there, what effect they are intended to have) and **evaluate** (discuss strengths & weaknesses) of the site. Questions your paper will answer include the following:

* Who seems to be the intended audience and how can you tell? What do they value?
* How are the three appeals (ethos, pathos, logos) being used?
* What is the context for the argument (issues in the world that relate to the product and/or company history)?
* What criteria are emphasized to sell this product (ethical/legal, pragmatic, aesthetic)?
* How are visuals/audio used?
* Where does it discuss its virtues—how “green,” ethical, and responsible it is--and what does that statement emphasize?
* If it defends itself from charges of wrong-doing, where and how does it do that?
* What do you think are the site’s strengths and weaknesses as an argument that says, basically, “Buy our product and tell your friends!”

**Topics**: We will focus a company (NOT a charity) that either emphasizes an earth-friendly, enlightened, socially responsible ethos or responds to charges that it is a “corporate villain.” If you want to target a Web site not on this list, let me know and I might approve it.

“Good Guys” TOMS shoes, Ben & Jerry’s, Edun, Global Girlfriend, American Apparel, Tesla Motors, One Laptop Per Child, Credo Phone Company, Patagonia, Endangered Species Chocolate, Divine Chocolate, Aveda, Burt’s Bees, Organic Valley Dairy, Newman’s Own, Brilliant Earth gems, Ember Jewelry, Honest Tea, Clif Bar, Café Direct, Green Mountain Coffee

On the Defensive Monsanto, BP Oil, PG&E, Solyndra, Chevron-Texaco, Wal-Mart, Nestle, Hershey, Tyson Foods, Kraft, General Motors, LA Gear, Nike, Wells Fargo, McDonalds

**Specifications**

* **Length/format** 1200 words, typed in MLA format
* **Content** should include BOTH of the following: **Describe** what is there, both in terms of visuals and text, and **Analyze** the effect it is supposed to have on the audience, and **evaluate** (discuss strengths & weaknesses) of the site.
* **Audience:** your classmates and professor in 1B. This means you can use jargon.
* **Topic Proposal** just tell me what Web site you will do and include the URL
* **Due Dates**: Topic Proposal T 11/15 Rough Draft Th12/6 Final Draft Th 12/8