Engl 2Spring 2017

**Rhetorical Analysis Project: Films as Arguments**

**Overview**: This assignment will allow you to practice your newly honed rhetorical analysis skills on a movie, showing how even a regular feature film can do more than just entertain.

Choosing a film from a list of those that have a **“Do the Right Thing” theme**, you will write an analysis that explains what your film has to say on some issue of **current public interest** and show how the filmmaker is trying to enlighten, persuade, and emotionally engage the audience.

Just to clarify, you will make some **arguable point** (your thesis) for a **specific audience** based on what this film has to say. **This will be supported by research** (at least two sources, cited).

**Length/format:** Rough draft 1200, final draft 1400 words, typed, MLA format

**Audience/forum:** Write for a specific audience who would be interested in the topic you’re focusing on. Feel free to be creative in choosing a specific audience. For instance, if you are interested in history and politics from a Latino perspective, you might write about *Walkout* and post it on a relevant blog, such as <http://latinopoliticsblog.com/>. Or if you are interested in how religion can motivate political action, you could write about *Amazing Grace* for a Christian blog or a forum for modern abolitionists.

**Content:**

**Specific context**: Tell us what timely issues the film addresses. For example, *Sweet Land* tells the story of a German girl who comes to America as a sort of mail order bride for a Minnesota farmer in the wake of WWI, which wiped out her family. She faces resistance in the community for her nationality, her language, and her politics (socialism), but she tries hard to fit in. This relates both to the current crisis of refugees from Syria (and elsewhere) and to our current strife over the role of immigrants in our society.

**Background on the filmmaker/ film’s history:** Part of your task is to report on the filmmaker’s ideas and intentions, which you will find through research. If it’s relevant, you can also tell something of how the film project came together, often a collaboration among writer, director, and producer(s).

**Analysis/Interpretation/Response:** This is the key task: here’s where you get to make your own point, the main reason you chose this film to comment on for this audience. Choose **a central theme of the work** and articulate what the film demonstrates about that theme. Explain what insights the film offers on some concern of interest to your **specific audience**.

**Procedure**:

1. **Select a title** from the **film list posted on the course site** based on your own interests. However, don’t choose one you have already studied in another class. Expand your horizons!
2. **Write a topic proposal**: briefly identify **which film** you chose, **why**, your **audience,** and **forum**.
3. **Watch the film**, ideally on a DVD so you can get the special features (director’s comments, etc.)
4. **Read what others have said about it**, especially professional critics. It is especially good to read what the filmmaker/writer/director has to say about it. Random unprofessional comments from viewers are less useful. **Cite *at least two* good sources in your paper** and respond to them.
5. **Write a full rough draft** in proper MLA format, clearly citing your sources, print out two copies, and bring them to the peer review on the assigned day. (You can earn 15 points *only* for 2 printed copies of the full draft.) **Rough draft DUE: M 2/27**
6. **Print** out the paper, after **submitting your final draft to Canvas.com**. Staple the final draft to the peer review sheet and the rough draft you got comments on. **Submit the stapled bundle** at the beginning of class on the day it is due  **Final Draft DUE: Wed 3/1**