English 1B Fall 2015 **Rhetorical Analysis** **of an Argument**

**Overview**: This assignment will allow you to practice your rhetorical analysis skills by writing an analysis of an argument. This will also be a chance to learn more about the Pathways themes, as the arguments you can choose among are organized into those categories: Global Citizenship, Sustainability, and Creativity.

* **Audience**: classmates and instructor
* **Criteria**: clarity and persuasiveness of your interpretation, thoroughness of your discussion, organization, command of language, editing and format.
* **Length/format:** 1400 words, typed in MLA format

**Due Dates**: Topic Proposal **Th 9/3** Rough drafts for peer review **Th 9/17** Final Draft **Th 9/24**

**Directions:**

1. **Choose an argument** from the list below and read it thoughtfully. (You might want to read a few before deciding on the one that interests you the most.)
2. **Write a brief topic proposal:** On a half-sheet of paper (share the other half with a classmate), write down the name of the argument you will analyze, plus your name and section number. Also briefly tell me why you are choosing that one.
3. **Draft a full analysis** with all of the sections specified in “Content and Organization.” Bring 2 copies to the **peer review workshop**. And be prepared to give someone a good review of theirs. **If you don’t get a peer review and revise I will not grade your paper. You will get a zero.**
4. Consider the advice you get on the rough draft, seek more advice from me if you want, and **revise the rough draft.**
5. Submit final draft to **Turnitin.com** then **print** one copy to turn in. Staple it to the rough draft and peer review sheet from the peer review workshop. **Turn this in** at the **beginning of class** **9/24**

**Content and Organization:** Normally I will urge you to develop your essay’s content and organization based on what will work for the particular audience, topic, and context, but this assignment has pretty specific requirements, which I’ve spelled out below.

* **Required Content:** You’ll identify the audience, forum, and context of the argument you are analyzing and explain how the 3 rhetorical appeals (ethos, logos, pathos) are operating.
* **Optional content:** If you want to analyze some additional features of the argument’s strategies, you could also (briefly) discuss stylistic elements, that is, qualities like the word choice, sentence patterns, metaphors and symbolism. But don’t let this detract from your coverage of the required rhetorical elements (above).

**Organization:** Draft an essay that includes the following sections.

**Introductory paragraph:**

* Who seems to be the intended audience and how can you tell?
* What is the original forum (when and where was the argument published)?
* What is the context for the argument (issues in the contemporary world that relate to the argument)? This might deserve its own short paragraph, depending on how closely the argument is tied to its *kairos* (the writer’s answer to “Why should this audience care about this topic now?”)

**The Body of your paper** should have **three sections** (though there might be more than one paragraph per section), one section for each appeal: **ethos, logos,** and **pathos**. Consult your handout “The Appeals and the Modes” for details about each. **Find examples** from the argument **for each of the appeals** and **discuss** how they would likely operate on the audience.

Example from *Working in the Shadows*: For his logos appeal, Gabriel Thompson brings in specific evidence of working conditions in the factory that he observed while he worked there himself, such as the vending machine stocked with pain-killers and testimonies from other workers about the physical pain they suffer on the job, to support his claim that this is a terrible place to work. This evidence is likely to be effective with this audience because he is writing for people who have probably never set foot in a factory, so they would be inclined to be both surprised by these details and impressed by the fact that Thompson was able to do this extremely difficult work himself, even for a short time.

**Conclusion:** This should be short, just a sentence or two to make an overall comment on the writer’s strategies. Here you can *briefly* state whether you think it was an effective argument or not and why.

**Tips:** You will find that a lot of **being “right” here depends on** **how you explain your examples**. The passage above could be easily adjusted to make a comment on Thompson’s ethos appeal (because he gains credibility by risking his own body to get the story) or his pathos appeal (since many of his descriptions of the workers’ suffering are likely to affect the readers’ emotions). Just be sure you choose examples for each kind of appeal and explain them appropriately. **Resist the impulse to respond** to the argument. That’s a different kind of assignment. The goal here is to show you understand how to analyze an argument’s rhetorical strategies in its context.

**Arguments you can use: (pick just one)**

* [People for Sale](http://www.utne.com/print.aspx?id=%7b28AA0AE2-6525-462B-BAB3-EA1F8FBE37D5%7d) (essay for The Utne Reader)
* [Angelina Jolie on the Refugee Crisis](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/28/opinion/angelina-jolie-on-the-syrians-and-iraqis-who-cant-go-home.html?_r=0) (Op-ed NYTimes)
* [Why I became a teacher: to show students how the world really works](http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2012/nov/11/global-awareness-economics-teaching-students) (Op-ed for The Guardian)
* [The young must lead on climate change](http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/2860293-155/op-ed-the-young-must-lead-on) (Op-ed, Salt Lake Tribune)
* [On Solving Environmental Racism in West Oakland](http://oucampus.sjsu.edu/people/julie.sparks/courses/engl-1b-fall2015/Environmental%20racism%20in%20West%20Oakland.docx) (Op-ed in SF Chronicle)
* [The Case for Divestment [in Fossil Fuels] at Cornell](http://www.sustainablecampus.cornell.edu/blogs/news/posts/op-ed-the-case-for-divestment) (Op-ed, Cornell website)
* “[Why young people are key to tackling climate change](http://www.eco-business.com/opinion/why-young-people-are-key-tackling-climate-change/)” (Op-ed in American Prospect)
* [Putting Art in STEM](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/02/education/edlife/putting-art-in-stem.html) (Op-ed NYTimes)
* [Why America’s obsession with STEM education is dangerous](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-stem-wont-make-us-successful/2015/03/26/5f4604f2-d2a5-11e4-ab77-9646eea6a4c7_story.html) (Op-ed, Washington Post)
* [Why Right-Brain People will Rule the World](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amber-kane-/why-right-brain-thinkers-will-rule-the-world_b_7907856.html) (Op-ed, Huffington Post)
* “[Why Business Leaders Should Trumpet the Arts](http://www.pacbiztimes.com/2015/01/30/oped-why-business-leaders-should-trumpet-the-arts/#sthash.GQnWjkmS.dpuf)” (Op-ed for *The Pacific Coast Business Times*)