**Analyzing What You Read (Textual Rhetorical Analysis)**

**Purpose, audience, and genre:** For your first major writing project in this course, you analyzed the rhetorical strategies of two different advertisements to see how they persuaded their audiences. For your second major project, you will analyze the rhetorical strategies of a single piece of writing or speech to see how it works. We’ll discuss several texts together as a class, and then you’ll choose one to analyze on your own. One of the major goals of this course is learning how to read in a more critical way–as opposed to reading for information or to understand where the author is coming from–and this can be a more difficult mode of reading to master. This project will help you to practice this mode of reading, also known as **reading with and against the grain**. This assignment will also reinforce the main rhetorical concepts that you learned from the visual analysis, such as **ethos, pathos, logos,** and **angle of vision**. These concepts will be useful to you not only as a reader, but also as a writer trying to persuade your own readers.

Since every reader interprets a text differently, your goal here is to give your classmates and your instructors your own unique analysis of one of the primary texts. After reading your rhetorical analysis, your readers should come away with a new and better understanding of how the author tried to persuade his or her audience. Like the visual analysis, this essay will be a closed-form, thesis-driven essay.

**Choose one of the following primary texts to analyze:**

* “Txtng is killing language. JK!!!” by John McWhorter
* “The Right To Understand” by Sandra Fisher-Martins
* American 'multilingualism': A national tragedy" by Franklin Raff
* “Why this bilingual education ban should have repealed long ago” by Phillip M. Carter
* “Reading Like A Writer” by Mike Bunn

**Analysis vs. Argument:** Remember that evaluating a text's rhetorical strategies does **NOT** mean saying whether or not you agree with the author’s position. Instead, it means paying careful attention to **what** the author is saying to his or her audience, **how** he or she is saying it, **who** that audience is, what rhetorical strategies the author is using, and whether or not you think the author’s rhetorical choices are effective in this particular case. To break the text down that way, you’ll have to analyze **rhetorical concepts** such as purpose, audience, and genre; pathos, logos, and ethos; and angle of vision. You’ll also have to **support your points with examples from the text** and **summarize the piece you’re writing about at the beginning of your paper.** As with the visual analysis essay, you should assume that your audience hasn’t read the primary text that you’re analyzing.

**Grading Criteria:**

-Does your introduction attempt to grab the reader’s attention and set up the direction or focus of the essay? (5%)

-Does your thesis clearly address the text’s rhetorical strategies? Is the thesis arguable and original? Does it give the reader clues about what to look for in the body of your paper? (20%)

-Have you summarized your primary text in a thorough and unbiased way? Have you proven that you understand the text you’re writing about? (10%)

-Have you considered the relevant rhetorical concepts? For example, have you taken into account purpose, audience, and genre, and have you demonstrated an understanding of how the piece makes its appeals to pathos, ethos, and logos? (You get to decide which rhetorical strategies to focus on.) (20%)

-Do you use details of the primary text effectively as evidence to support your thesis? Have you explained what makes those details important to your analysis? (10%)

-Are you incorporating examples from the primary text effectively by quoting, summarizing, or paraphrasing? (10%)

-Does your essay’s conclusion reinforce the thesis and bring closure to the analysis? (5%)

-Is your essay clear and well organized? Is it unified and coherent? (10%)

-Does the essay show evidence of proofreading for spelling, grammar, punctuation and MLA formatting? (10%) (Keep in mind that this essay should include a works cited page, even though the primary text will likely be the only source you'll cite.)

**FORMAT**: Drafts should be typed, **double-spaced**, and formatted according to MLA standards. The only source you’ll need to cite is the essay you choose to write about, but **make sure to cite it properly in the text and in a works cited page.** (See *The Everyday Writer*’s MLA section for a sample student essay with correct headings and citations.)

**Deadlines:**

05/08: Rough draft (750 words) due for conferences

05/10: Revised draft (at least 1250 words) due for peer review

05/11: Final draft due (1500 words)

**Word Count:** Minimum 1500 words

**Value:** 15% of final grade