**Essay 3: Causal Arguments**

**300 points**

Causal arguments explore the cause-and-effect relationships in daily and current events. These arguments come up daily in your personal life, as well as public policy. For this essay, you will find and enter the public discourse surrounding a causal argument, using all of the rhetorical techniques that you have learned to write an argument.

**Proposal**: Due on Blackboard by midnight on Monday, February 27

**Peer Review Draft**: Due in class on Monday, March 12

**Final Portfolio**: Due in class on Friday, March 16

*Your final draft should be submitted in a folder with the peer review draft, peer review worksheets, draft with my comments (if applicable), rubric, final draft, rhetorical analysis, and blue slips from the Writing Center (if any)*

**Steps:**

**Read chapter 11** on Causal Arguments in *EAR*. Reread it. Focus on developing an *argument of cause and/or effect*. Remember, there are four ways to do this:

* State a cause and then examine its effects (A leads to B, C, and D)
* State an effect and trace its causes (D results from A, B, and C)
* Move through a series of links (A causes B, which leads to C and perhaps to D)
* Question existing claims of causality as inaccurate

**Choose a Topic.** Your choice. For example, you could

* Explore the cause-and-effect relationships in a personal, public, or campus issue
* Look at a historical or political event already past, and explore its causes or effects
* Hypothesize future effects of a possible policy change
* Take on a themed reading chapter in *EAR* and enter that conversation, using it as a source
* Pick a topic in your major or discipline, and find the major speakers and stakeholders when the issue is translated into the public realm

**Choose an audience and publication**. Pick a specific newspaper, blog, or magazine where your editorial would appear and match their style – *New York Times* or *Barometer* are a couple of default choices, but consider your topic and its likely audience. This will affect your evidence, style, tone, and appeals.

**Formulate a tentative causal thesis and start researching.** Look at opinion pieces and blogs, as well as the Valley Library. Keep an open mind as you learn more – you may need to change your initial thesis to match the research that you find.

**Organize your research and arguments, and start writing.**

Your essay should include:

* 5-6 pages, plus Works Cited page (12 pt. Times New Roman font, double space, 1” margins, stapled)
* Strong and engaging **introduction** that hooks the reader
* Specific causal **thesis**, including a claim and reasons (see choices above)
* Clear explanation of the claim’s **significance** – so what? who cares? why is this important?
* Sufficient **evidence** to support each cause or effect
* Consideration of **alternative causes** and effects
* At least **6 outside sources**, including at least one book, one scholarly article, and four other credible sources (articles, reputable opinion blogs, editorials)
  + Four of these sources should be introduced in the body of your paper as speakers voicing opinions on the subject. The other two can be used as background information, if you prefer.

**Final Step: Rhetorical Analysis** (1/2 page)

In which publication would you publish this editorial? How did you adapt your style, word choice, evidence, and tone to match the publication and its audience? Give examples. How did you use logos, ethos, and pathos? Give examples. What do you like about your final product? What are you still thinking about?