WRT 205

Spring 2012—Unit 4 Assignment

**Argument Trailer**

In this final unit of the course you’re going to put your rhetorical knowledge and skill, and your facility with argument, to use in composing and designing a multimedia “trailer” for your unit 3 argument essay.

I’m using the term trailer literally: you will design a brief, visual trailer for your argument that does the same kind of things a movie trailer does for a film—

**Learning Outcome #6**

Students will understand the ways in which digital media shape all stages of the research and writing process—invention, composing, revision, delivery—and will understand how the effects of digital media vary according to audience, genre, context, and purpose.

* it prepares an audience for what is to come: that is, it establishes expectation and exigency;
* it packages a much longer, more complex text into a concise, abbreviated framework;
* it hits only the key, the seminal plot (or in your case, argument) points;
* it captures an audience’s attention and imagination through various visual strategies and rhetorical appeals.

We all recognize that some trailers are intentionally misleading for the purpose of selling a film in as many ways and to as many audiences as possible, and I’ll ask that you avoid that marketing maneuver; I want you to be true to your original argument, to accurately represent its claims, its agenda.

That said, I’m freeing you up to experiment with genre and to re-imagine your audience. If you want to use the trailer to address more directly or explicitly things you were not able to highlight in the original—like implications, outcomes, etc.— feel free to do so. You could, for example, create a trailer that borrows from the conventions of horror or suspense films to accentuate the direness of topic you argued about, the repercussions of continued behavior or of ignoring consequences. Alternatively, you could turn a serious argument into a lighthearted or comedic trailer—using humor to make your point.

You may want to target an audience that is more specific than, or is additional to, the audience you had in mind for your Unit 3 essay. There are, of course, other rhetorical approaches and options for you to consider and adopt, and we will spend class time brainstorming them.

Although I am using the trope of the film trailer for this final project, I am not requiring, nor will I expect you to create a digital film. You can use just about any multi-media format you are comfortable with to create and present your trailer—powerpoint, pecha kucha, prezi, etc. I do expect you, however, to continue researching in the unit to select the best visuals possible to highlight your argument and to reflect your rhetorical awareness and choices. Your trailer should exhibit a blend of visuals and written text, and while you might continue to research for secondary sources that make claims related to your topic, it’s perfectly acceptable to work exclusively with the sources and claims that appear in your unit 3 argument essay.

**Reflecting on your trailer**

You will write a 3 page rhetorical reflection on the trailer, in which you account for your choice of genre, your audience address, and your visual/rhetorical appeals. In your reflection I’d like you to make explicit the considerations that dictated what you highlighted and emphasized in your trailer. I would also like you to include a Works Cited page in which you represent the written sources you cite, as well as *the original* location of the visuals you use. Both texts are due on **April 30**.

**Learning Outcome #5**

Students will understand the role of genres, sources, styles and media in communicating with particular audiences and for specific purposes.