

Essay 3: Comparative Rhetorical Analysis

The Basics

- **Due Date 1:** Tuesday, March 3 Bring 2 printed copies to class for draft workshop.
- **Due Date 2:** Thursday, March 19 Upload revised draft to Blackboard to be graded.
- **Length:** 900 to 1,200 words
- **Format:** Use MLA style for document formatting, in-text citations, and a Works Cited page
- **Value:** 20% of your final grade
- **Choice of Texts:** Any 2 essays from “Whitewashing on the Small Screen” or “Are Some Buildings Too Ugly to Survive?” in *Bridging the Difference*. The essays must *both* be from the same collection. *Do not* pick one essay from one collection and one essay from the other.

Description

The rhetorical analysis assignment is an essay analyzing two texts, using rhetoric as a framework. The thesis of this essay is your answer to this question: “Which of the 2 texts you have chosen makes better use of the rhetorical appeals for an audience of USC Upstate students?”

In this assignment, you will analyze 2 different works of persuasive writing using the three rhetorical appeals as a framework, and then argue which one would be more persuasive to an audience of USC Upstate students. *Note:* you are not arguing which one is more persuasive to *you*; instead, you are acting as the *observer* and analyst of these attempts at persuasion.

For this essay, you will take the following steps:

1. Choose your 2 texts to analyze.
2. Read the 2 texts.
3. Evaluate them each of them in terms of the three rhetorical appeals: ethos, pathos, and logos.
4. Decide which essay is more persuasive to an audience of USC Upstate students.
5. Write an essay that analyzes both essays in rhetorical terms and argues in favor of the more persuasive one. *Don't forget to put a thesis in your introductory paragraph!*

Purpose

There is a threefold purpose to this assignment:

1. The experience you gain in identifying the rhetorical appeals in this assignment will be of great benefit to you when you write persuasive arguments of your own. Not only will you be able to analyze how another writer makes an argument, but you'll be able to use these features in your own writing.
2. This assignment is also intended to give you practice in one of the essential types of college writing: the comparison of similarities and differences. At many points in your academic career you will be asked to reach judgments based on comparisons and contrasts.

3. Finally, this assignment allows you to practice using another essential skill: writing an extended analysis of two or more texts. You have to support your argument by summarizing, paraphrasing, and occasionally quoting from the arguments you analyze. Learning to talk about another text in your own text, without losing control of your own voice, requires practice.

Organization

There are at least 3 ways to organize your essay

1. **By rhetorical appeal:** devote one paragraph each to ethos, pathos, logos in the two essays. Then write a paragraph in which you argue for the more persuasive essay.
2. **By essay:** Go through all the appeals in one essay, and then go through all of the appeals in the other essay. Then write a paragraph in which you argue for the more persuasive one.
3. **By your own strategy:** You may come up with your own strategy of organization, but I advise you to discuss it with me first.

Necessary skills

In order to complete this assignment successfully, you'll make use of the following 3 skills that we've discussed in class:

- Quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing effectively.
- Intro-Quote-Relate-Restate incorporation of source material.
- Effective use of thesis statement
- Correct MLA-style formatting and citation.
- Textual analysis using the three rhetorical appeals.

MLA Format

Be sure to format your paper according to MLA guidelines: 1-inch margins, the font Times New Roman, 12-point type, double spaced text, indented first lines for every paragraph. In the upper lefthand corner of your first page, type your name, my name, the name of the course, and the date of the draft. In the header of each page, in the upper righthand corner, include your last name and the page number.