PROJECT 2: RHETORICAL ANALYSIS
ENGLISH 102 (SECTIONS A, E, G) / SPRING 2012

BASIC SPECIFICATIONS

Presentations of Research: Feb 20 and 22 (Section A); February 21 and 23 (Section E); February 22 (Section G)
Completed Draft Due: February 27 (Section A)/February 28 (Sections E and G)
Draft to Teacher Due: March 3, submit online (eDocs) no later than 3 hours after lab begins
Reflection Due: March 21 (Section A)/March 22 (Sections E and G)

Length: 1,100-1,600 words
Genre: Academic Essay
Disciplines: Education, history
Research requirement: At least two academic sources that provide background and/or historical information for the text you analyze. Researched material should take up no more than 15% of your essay.
Relevant Reading: Chapters 4 and 7, Writing: A Manual for the Digital Age
Submission Requirements: Submit to your folder in your instructor’s eDocs account. See your e-mail for the link to this folder, and then bookmark that link WITHIN eDocs, not within the browser. Always keep an electronic copy of all materials within your own eDocs account (and on a flash drive). If you are really concerned, you should also have a hard copy of your most important files. Label the file: “LAST NAME Draft for Comment.” Label the reflection file: “LAST NAME Project 1 Reflection.”

ASSIGNMENT, AUDIENCE, SITUATION/PURPOSE

Assignment: Analyze an argument that has been published and/or performed in order to argue for its inclusion in an advanced high school or lower-division college course. Most importantly, explain how the writer/speaker uses rhetorical devices in order to accomplish his or her goal. Discuss the effectiveness of the argument on its intended audience and provide appropriate historical context. Of course, you should assume that students benefit from studying rhetorical strategies.

Audience: Academic. Imagine you are writing this to both high school teachers and college professors. Professors, in particular, care that you sound reasonable, provide evidence for your assertions, and write clearly. They care about complete and unbiased analyses. High school teachers are under a great deal of pressure to provide a quality education, so you will need to show how this text will benefit students by providing rich opportunities to examine rhetorical devices.

Situation/Purpose: The main point of this essay is to show off your brain, to show that you can dissect an argument and determine with confidence whether or not it is effective for its intended audience.
Graphics: Because this text you are analyzing may appear in a textbook, provide appropriate examples of graphics that could accompany the argument or speech. All graphics, including anything you produce yourself, must be cited on your Works Cited page.

Questions to consider:

How is the study of primary texts valuable to high school and college students?

How has the understanding of this speech and its context changed since its original delivery?

What impact did this speech have during the time of the speaker?

How does a speech differ from a text intended only for reading?
**Writing Processes: Drafting**
(Optional assignments; some of these may be completed in class)

**Inventing and Focusing Ideas:** Answer bulleted questions in the first and second section on page 56 of *WMDA*. Since you are examining a speech, substitute “listener” for “reader.” Under the first question in the third set, the word “illustrations” does not refer to actual drawings but rather to the way the speaker uses words to help an audience visualize a point.

Identify clearly (quote it, if possible) the major claim of the essay/speech you are writing about. Think about how the author has/not connected the evidence to the claim. Think about how s/he has framed the argument and how s/he has used language to appeal to the audience. Most importantly, analyze the reasoning of the argument. Is it logical in all of its aspects? Does it assume something about its audience that is not true, or, at least, not totally true?

**Developing Ideas:** Most important in this essay is that you use examples from the text itself (no outside sources) to support your assertions in each paragraph and for each topic. Use and integrate quotations. Explain each one and explicitly connect it back to your main point of the essay, which demonstrates the relative effectiveness of the argument you are analyzing.

Within your essay, anticipate what the author might say to you or what someone who disagrees with your assertions might say. Argue against them.

**Organizational Strategies:** Organize topically according to the directions in your thesis statement.

**Voice:** You achieve voice in this essay through the authority of your language. You will need to use the terms of rhetoric that you know from ENG 101 (particularly the image analysis assignment) and from your reading for this assignment to demonstrate your authority to analyze the essay/speech. Choose quotations well and offer context for them. If you don’t, you seem like you are trying to be sneaky. If you do, you gain authority and a reputation for thoroughness. Professors admire that ability.

**Vitality:** Create vital prose that anyone would want to read. Combine sentences when they need it. Repeat structures for rhetorical effect, for emphasis. Use the appropriate diction, but vary the language. Thus, you might say of the argument’s author that she “asserts” instead of “writes.”
**WRITING PROCESSES: REFLECTION AND REVISION**

After peer review: analyze what your peers have said. How do you think you could better enthral them? Impress them? Revise your draft before submitting the essay to your instructor for review.

*Before* teacher review: All “Drafts for Comment” must include a self-assessment that answers these questions fully:

1. How did you incorporate feedback from your peers?
2. How much knowledge did you assume your readers had about the speech? What did you find most important about the context of the speech and the life of the speaker?
3. What have your contributed to an ongoing dialogue about this speech?
4. What strengths of your essay do you want me to notice? On what aspects of your writing do you want me to provide feedback?

After teacher review: analyze the instructor’s commentary. If he or she missed the point, have you stated it emphatically enough? Did you bury it? How can you address the concerns of your instructor and/or enhance the positives that he or she noted?

Reflect critically upon all your commentary, make plans, and create new versions WITHIN your reflection. Then you’ll be ready to revise. Answer ALL of these questions within your reflection and USE QUOTATIONS from instructor comments, peer comments, and your own project for evidence. Remember, this portion of your project will be graded and should consist of at least two single-spaced pages.

1) How do you assess your strengths and weaknesses as a writer at this point in the course? What from your project and your instructor’s comments help you make this assessment? In what ways does this current assessment differ from your earlier ideas about your writing?

2) What are your initial reactions to the instructor’s comments and assessment? Which points seem the most helpful in revising your text? What comments do you not fully understand?

3) Using your own self-assessment and your instructor’s comments as a guide, construct a strategy for revising this text. How might you make it more effective? Be very specific. Quote your instructor and write out your planned text. [i.e., Will you change sentence x to sentence y? Can you write a different introduction or conclusion? How might you incorporate visuals into your text?] Regardless of instructor commentary, have you determined other ways that you might revise your writing to make it more effective for the audience? What else can you do to capture their attention and keep it? How might you better impress them with your intellect?
4) Choose one grammatical or stylistic issue that your instructor pointed out and show that you have looked it up, know why it was an error, and can fix it. Explain what purpose fixing such a surface-level writing issue can have, particularly for the audience reading your essay.