

## **WRTG 3030: Writing on Science & Society**

### **Leading Discussion on a Reading: How to Prepare**

As we move through our class readings, I would like each of you to lead discussion on one day's reading. Once you've read the article or chapter, what should you talk about, how should you present your ideas? See below for more guidance. For whatever presentation you give, wherever or whenever, **keep your eyes on your audience as you speak, not on the screen.** Zoom makes eye contact difficult, but for those of you who will give your presentation in person, please remember the importance of eye contact. Good eye contact is good rhetoric and is part of your grade. When giving your presentation in person, make sure to cue from your laptop, not the screen. This will help you keep your eyes on your audience.

#### **Requirements for your presentation:**

- There must be a digital component as you lead discussion on a reading: PowerPoint, Google Slides, Prezi, etc.
- Do look at your audience! You will lose points if you do not. Eye contact is key to performing well while speaking to an audience. So cue from a laptop, not the screen. When on Zoom, eye contact is difficult, so is there some way you can involve your audience in your presentation? Feel free to call on students arbitrarily as I do.
- Give some biographical information on the writer. Is this person credible? What does the writer do for a living? Journalist, writer? Activist? Scientist? Academic?
- Make your own observations about the writing/content—don't depend on just asking questions. Your own analysis of the article is part of your presentation grade.
- Ask questions that prompt discussion (after making your own observations).
- Did this writer successfully convey complex information to his/her audience?
- Plan on talking for 5-7 minutes, then open up to general discussion and Q&A .

#### **What you might talk about:**

- Summarize the author's main point and make relevant points about it.
- What is the writer's rhetorical situation? The writer's purpose? Who is the audience?
- When was the article published? This matters. It affects the nature of the writing, its relevance, etc.
- Does this writer communicate effectively? Are the points easy to follow and understand? How might you rate their rhetorical performance? Are they persuasive?
- Why do you think an editor found this writing worth publishing?
- What is the writer's general approach/appeal to his/her audience? How does he/she use pathos, logos, ethos? Is the article friendly? Distant? Cold? Angry? Neutral? Amusing?
- What is the writer's evidence? How does he/she back up the central claim? Do you agree with the writer? Why so or why not?
- Is there a counter-argument? Does the writer address this counter-argument well?

**Note:** You cannot address all of the questions above in a single presentation.

**This assignment is worth 5 points.**