

Major Assignment #2: Rhetorical Analysis of a TED Talk

Rationale:

One learning outcome in this class is that you write a textual analysis. One way to really understand how composition works is to spend time closely analyzing a text to determine its rhetorical effectiveness. This analysis involves identifying significant details in a text in order to explain how they work together to impact the text, subject, and audience.

The Basic Assignment:

You will analyze a brief TED talk (0-6mins in length). Your analysis should identify the talk's central purpose, rhetorical strategies used in the talk, and evaluate the effectiveness of its argument.

Course Learning Outcomes Met with this Assignment:

Departmental SLOs	University WI SLOs
1. employ effective writing strategies for various rhetorical situations, purposes, and audiences 2. compose a critical, written analysis of a text, situating its features in a larger context of its genre conventions 7. synthesize primary and secondary sources in writing 8. demonstrate proficiency in using formal MLA documentation rules and incorporating others' ideas responsibly	2. Students will write effectively for a context and purpose, including the use of appropriate grammar and mechanics.
4. demonstrate effective research skills, such as finding and evaluating sources critically 5. demonstrate evidence of writing as a recursive, collaborative process 6. compose in various electronic environments	1. Students will apply a guided writing process.

Assignment Process (see course schedule for deadlines):

1. Choose a TED talk [from their website](#) that is 0-6 mins in length and in which the speaker is making an argument. If possible, choose a TED talk that is related to your Inquiry Portfolio, helping you develop your ideas about your topic.
2. Watch the TED talk carefully, making notes as you watch. Create [a double-entry journal](#) response to the TED talk, reflecting what aspects of argument you see present in the talk. [Tip: Download the transcript, so you have time markers for your citations and reference. Often the transcript can be easier to review than re-watching the video.]
3. Complete Pre-Writing questions (included below) to begin analyzing the talk.

4. Submit a draft of your analysis paper (that provides a link to the TED talk you're analyzing with at least a couple of paragraphs that identify the argument of that talk and strategies used in the talk. You will receive feedback on this draft in order to help you as you revise your paper.
5. Revise draft based on feedback and resubmit final analysis to Turnitin.com via Bb by 11:59 PM on Friday, October 19.

Additional Guidelines:

- **Purpose:** You are analyzing the argument presented in a text, drawing from specific details in the text to support an analysis you provide about its significance. In an analysis like this, you do more than point out features that are present; you should also argue for their value/significance to the overall message of the text / the audience. Note: you will not have the space to analyze every detail of the text, so you will make choices as a writer about which to highlight that best support your argument.
 - **Audience:** Consider that your professor and peers are your audience. They have studied this text, so you will not need to summarize the entire text; instead, you can identify key components that you see relevant to your analysis. Provide details as your audience would not know / need them in order to understand your analysis.
 - **Genre:** Follow conventions of formal essay writing (e.g. paragraphing, providing examples/evidence, introducing and concluding your argument), but *do not feel the need to present your ideas in a conventional* (i.e. predictable) way.
 - **Formatting:** Use MLA Documentation 8th ed style, including internal citations and a separate works cited page for any references to the text or other sources.
 - Include specific references to the text to support your analysis.
 - Reference specifics in the TED talk by crediting the speaker's last name + time stamp in the video (see below).
 - Example: He explains that "these are the basic elements of all creativity. I think everything is a remix, and I think this is a better way to conceive of creativity" (Ferguson 1.06).
 - **Outside Research:** Your analysis should reflect *your* understanding of this text. You do not need outside research.
 - **Length:** Your analysis should be 3-4 pages in length, not including your works cited page.
 - **Grammar and Mechanics:** Proofread carefully (tip: read the draft aloud before submitting to Blackboard).
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Prewriting Questions: Understanding the Argument & its Rhetorical Situation¹

Use these questions as you review your article to guide your analysis. You WILL NOT simply answer all of these questions in your analysis. Instead, you will build an argument about your chosen text's effectiveness and impact based on patterns of features that you synthesize after "unraveling" details in the text.

Who:

Who is the author of the text? What might readers know about the author that might influence his/her authority on the topic? Why did this problem or question matter to the writer?

¹ From *So What? The Writer's Argument* by Schick and Schubert

Who is the intended audience? Their background? What assumptions or biases might they have on the topic?

Ethos—Does the author seem credible? Who produced this page? What kind of authority/knowledge does he/she have? Why, or why not?

What and How:

What gap, problem, or unanswered question prompted the writer's attention?

Does the argument have an implicit or explicit thesis? What IS the claim?

How much background does the author present?

How are the arguments and evidence organized?

What do different sections suggest about the purpose of the text?

What kinds of evidence / examples does the argument rely on? Are there any outside sources quoted or cited? How does the author use these sources? To build credibility? To corroborate findings? To dispute ideas or discount other arguments? Is the evidence sufficient?

How does the text determine the author's credibility?

What kind of tone do you notice?

Pathos—What is your gut reaction to the text? What emotions does it evoke?

What words stick out?

What design elements are used?

How does the argument use charts, images, or other visual elements?

What kind of citation style does the author use? Are there footnotes or endnotes? What purpose do they serve?

How do the features of the text match with the genre of a scholarly article?

Note: While your rhetorical analysis should address these key components, you should NOT structure your essay as a response to this bulleted list (booooooring!). You will make rhetorical choices as you decide what rhetorical elements are most important, how to arrange them your analysis, putting certain points together into paragraphs, ordering paragraphs to make the strongest argument, and presenting your argument as authoritatively as possible through your use of detailed analysis.

Grading Rubric (because no one likes a mystery when it comes to grades!)

	<i>Exceeds Expectations (A)</i>	<i>Above Expectations (B)</i>	<i>Meets Expectations (C)</i>	<i>Below Expectations (D)</i>	<i>Fails to meet Expectations (F)</i>
Rhetorical Knowledge (Purpose)	Working draft presents a sophisticated analysis of details of a text and clearly uses this to support a synthesized argument about the significance/value of these features to the overall text.	Working draft presents a strong analysis of textual details and clearly uses this as support a synthesized argument about the significance/value of these features to the overall text.	Working draft presents an analysis of textual details and addresses how they contribute to the significance/value of the overall text. Some details may seem less relevant or tied to the significance OR the overall significance may not be thoroughly explored.	Working draft presents some analysis of details of the text and/or exploration of the significance of the overall text. Some details may seem less relevant or tied to the significance and the overall significance may not be thoroughly explored.	Working draft fails to present a clear argument, has a lack of focus.
Rhetorical Knowledge (Audience)	Working draft reflects a mature use of language to directly/indirectly communicate its purpose to its intended audience. Draft provides the right balance of information for its audience to engage with the argument.	Working draft reflects a strong use of language to directly/indirectly communicate its purpose to its intended audience.	Working draft reflects awareness of audience but may have a minor lapse(s), missing information-distracting shift in tone-false assumptions about audience- that distract from message of the argument.	Working draft reflects many lapses in awareness of audience, missing information-distracting shift in tone-false assumptions about audience- that distract from message of the argument.	Working draft reflects little sense of audience expectations.
Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing	Draft reflects exceptional critical thought, especially in the use of writing as a means for synthesizing others' ideas with the writer's and communicating those ideas to the reader(s) in a clear manner.	Draft reflects critical thought in its synthesis of others' ideas with the writer's as communicated in the draft.	Draft reflects several key moments of critical thought, perhaps not sustained throughout the draft.	Draft reflects efforts towards critical thought. It might exhibit issues integrating others' ideas with the writer's OR gaps in explaining the synthesis to the reader.	Draft reflects little to no critical thinking, reading, and writing. It may be little more than a report/summary of others' ideas.
Writing Development	Composes a well-developed analysis that is clear, cohesive, and concise, identifying details from the scholarly source and explaining the significance of those features to the larger text.	Composes a well-developed analysis that is mostly clear, cohesive, and concise, identifying details from the scholarly source and explaining the significance of those features to the larger text.	Composes an analysis that , identifies some details from the source and explains the significance of those features to the larger text. May be general.	Composes an analysis may not be clear, cohesive, or concise, making some references to the source and explaining the significance of some features to the larger text.	Fails to compose an analysis

Knowledge of Conventions	Working draft reflects a mastery of analytical essay conventions, such as genre features, MLA documentation style and grammar and mechanics.	Draft reflects a strong understanding of analytical essay conventions, such as genre features, MLA documentation and grammar. The draft may exhibit some errors though not terribly distracting.	Draft reflects an understanding of analytical essay conventions, such as genre features, MLA documentation and grammar/mechanics. The draft has some errors that are distracting.	Draft does not reflect an understanding of analytical essay as a genre. OR Draft may exhibit patterns of errors with MLA documentation and grammar/mechanics.	Draft reflects little to no knowledge of conventions of argumentative writing.
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