Prof.Overman

Fall 2015

**Progression II: Rhetorical Analysis**

**Seeing and Hearing Texts**

In *Progression I,* we explored the ways in which our literacy is influenced by family, culture, and education. We also discussed how varying visions and definitions of literacy can involve both harmony and conflict. In *Progression II*, we’ll continue to explore connections between language and identity as we examine how social and cultural factors influence communicative acts.

This progression’s essay requirement asks you to create an idea of your own with the aid of a visual object, an image of experience, and a written text. In the essay itself you will analyze the genre of the graphic memoir as you develop your idea in light of these questions:

o **What are the larger implications of your idea?**

o **What do the various pieces of evidence you have collected tell us about your idea?**

o **Why should a general reader care *about* your idea?**

For Essay II (Rhetorical Analysis), you should explore these questions to help deepen your own – and

your reader’s – understanding of diverse literacies, rhetorics and modes of expression.

**EXERCISE 2.1:**

**The “Word-Picture”**

In this next writing sequence, you will extend the active reading process to a different kind of text – one which is either visual or aural.

**Task**: Create a ***word-picture*** of a visual or aural text so that readers can see the object through your words. First, select a text that interests you or triggers a strong response within you (your text can be in the form of any medium: website, television show, magazine cover, advertisement, song, etc.). Describe *only* what you perceive so that others who do not have access to the text can see it too; that is, do not reveal names and historical dates.

**Requirements:** Try to keep your ***word-picture*** as short as possible (100 words) without sacrificing precision.

**Due:** review weekly schedule

**EXERCISE 2.2:**

**The “Discourse Community” Ethnography**

Your second exercise asks that you produce ***ethnography*** to explore how discourse communities influence language. Ethnography is a genre of writing that uses fieldwork to provide a descriptive study

of human societies. For this exercise, you’ll gather your own data and analyze it in the context of Swales’ “The Concept of Discourse Communities.” Swales outlines the characteristics of a discourse community

as having:

a. common goals

b. participatory mechanisms c. communication exchange

d. community specific genres

e. specialized terminology

f. generalized expertise

**Task**: Write an ***ethnography*** of a discourse community of your choice based on personal observation, investigation, and analysis.

*1. Observe*

a. Try to be objective as possible, recording their activities, language, and texts produced. Set up your methods of study and data collection: when and where you

observed, observation notes, interviews, where you did your research, etc.

*2. Analyze*

a. What are the characteristics of your group according to Swales’ six criteria? What

particularly interesting features did you observe?

b. What are their mechanisms for communication, genres, and specialized languages? Is there a balance between experts and novices?

c. Based on your results, what are the implications of your observations?

**Requirements:** Your ***ethnography*** should be no more than three double-spaced pages (950 words). The first part of your ethnography will be observation and the second half will be analysis. Follow *MLA documentation* for the analysis section and include a “Works Cited” list of texts.

**Due**: review weekly schedule

**EXERCISE 2.3:**

**The “Rhetorical Situation” Scene**

Your third exercise in this progression is to collaboratively write and perform a ***scene*** involving elements of the rhetorical situation. As we learned in *Progression I,* the rhetorical situation is the context within which writing or other communication takes place. Whenever we write, whether it's an email to a friend

or a toast for a wedding, an English essay or a résumé, we face some kind of rhetorical situation. We have a **PURPOSE**, a certain **AUDIENCE**, a particular **STANCE**, a **GENRE**, and a **MEDIUM** to consider.

**Task:** In groups, compose a ***scene*** which illustrates the above elements of the rhetorical situation.

**Requirements:** Your group’s ***scene*** should be 5-7 minutes. Submit a brief outline of your scene (one per group) and be prepared to perform your scene in class on the due date.

**Due:** review weekly schedule

**ESSAY II: Rhetorical Analysis**

GB Tran’s *VIETNAMERICA* is a story told simultaneously with images and text; each of these aspects of the work is necessary for its comprehension. For Essay II, you’ll interpret a small section of Tran’s graphic memoir and analyze it through a rhetorical lens.

**Task:** In a ***rhetorical analysis*** we examine how authors attempt to persuade their audiences by looking at the various components that make up the art of persuasion. In GB Tran’s *VIETNAMERICA,* choose a two- page spread that you find particularly striking and write a ***rhetorical analysis*** where you explore the message or meaning of the text through the rhetorical strategies the author of the text uses.

**Requirements:** Your ***rhetorical analysis*** essay should be five double-spaced pages (@1,500 words) and calls for *MLA documentation*; you must include a “Works Cited” list at the end of your essay. When you quote key phrases or visuals from your text, provide parenthetical documentation (page number and/or frame).

**Due**: review weekly schedule (two drafts)