Dr. Overman

Fall 2015

**Progression III: Argumentative Essay**

**Arguing through 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 studied the connections between language and identity as we examined how social and cultural factors influence communicative acts. In *Progression III,* we’ll build upon these topics as we analyze GB Tran’s *VIETNAMERICA* in its larger context.

This progression’s essay requirement asks you to make contributions to on-going ***conversations*** about topics, ideas, and questions that remain matters for investigation or debate. In the essay itself you will evaluate the themes in Tran’s text and put forth an argument in light of these questions:

* Why does this conversation matter? Who cares about it? Does it address a topic worth considering?
* What are some of the different positions that address this conversation?
* What is your own response to these viewpoints?
* What is your contribution to the conversation? Is your contribution ***an idea worth considering?***

For Essay III (Argumentative Essay), you should explore these questions to help deepen your own – and

your reader’s – understanding of the larger implications of GB Tran’s graphic memoir.

**EXERCISE 3.1: Collaborative Argumentative Proposal**

The purpose of this exercise is to enable you to plan the argument you will make in Essay III. Since your audience will be an academic one, you should create an academic structure for presenting your claims and your evidence.

**Task**: In groups of four, read our writing task for Essay III. Next, collaboratively choose an overall topic/concept for your paper and state your group’s position on it so far. After you’ve brainstormed a general direction, complete the following:

1. What question do you plan to investigate in this paper?

2. What makes this question worth pursuing?

3. How can you make your readers concerned about your topic?

4. Whose minds are you trying to change about what and why?

5. What kind of support and evidence will be persuasive to them?

6. What values or interests do you share with readers?

7. What differences in opinion or values might you need to try to overcome?

8. What kind of expert would be able to provide strong, researched answers or the current, most effective thinking about *finding* answers?

9. Where do you expect to find particularly strong information about the matter?

10. What individuals or interest groups have a major stake in answering your question in a particular way?

11. What kinds of bias do you need to be especially alert for on this particular question?

12. Finally, jot down some words or phrases that you might use to begin searching.

**Requirements:** Your group’s ***argumentative proposal*** should include completed answers to the above questions (two double-spaced or handwritten pages). Each group member should submit an individual copy of the group’s proposal.

**Due**: see weekly schedule

**EXERCISE 3.2:**

**The “Annotated Bibliography” Article Analysis**

In our second exercise, you’ll develop research strategies by focusing on the ***claims*** of other scholars in the form of an annotated bibliography. The purpose of the genre of an annotated bibliography is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

**Task**: Compose an annotated bibliography with at least one (1) source you might consider citing in the

context of your group’s collaborative argumentative proposal. Your annotation should include:

CITATION: a complete MLA citation for each work included.

DESCRIPTION: a few sentences summarizing the author’s main point.

EVALUATION: a statement about the type of source (e.g., a scholarly research article, an editorial from a professional magazine, a feature newspaper article, a chapter from a popular book, a U.S. government website) and a short evaluation of the authority of the author to write about the topic, quality of the source, objectivity, etc.

ANALYSIS: a brief analysis of the text’s primary thesis, argument, or focus.

YOUR NOTES: your own thoughts on why this is relevant for you in the context of your research paper, and how you will use this source.

**Requirements:** Your ***annotated bibliography*** should be in MLA format. (*Please bring to class on the due date in addition to submitting to Moodle prior to class).*

**Due:** see weekly schedule

**EXERCISE 3.3:**

**The “Works Cited” Dialogue**

The purpose of this exercise is to remind you that you are forming an argument within the context of an ongoing ***conversation*** about a given topic. Within this conversation, participants will inevitably touch upon certain common ideas, and very possibly they will develop ***claims*** that directly contrast with those of other participants.

**Task:** Create a “Works Cited” list which includes each group member’s source from Exercise 3.2. Next, put your sources in conversation with one another so it is clear how each article intersects. Complete the following:

What are the important ***claims*** in this ongoing conversation?

How do they compare? How do they contrast?

Why does this conversation matter? Who cares about it? Does it address a topic worth considering?

What is your group’s response to these viewpoints?

What is your ***claim*** in this conversation?

What might other scholars say about your ***claim***?

**Requirements**: Your group’s ***dialogue*** should include completed answers to the above questions as well

as a “Works Cited” list of texts. Each group member should submit an individual copy of the dialogue.

**Due**: see weekly schedule

**ESSAY III: Argumentative Essay**

For our third essay, we’ll consider the ways in which GB Tran’s *VIETNAMERICA* might be part of larger, ongoing conversations regarding cultural identity. To analyze a text's role in its larger context, you may need to do additional research to determine where the text was originally published, what else was happening or being discussed at the time the text was published or created, and whether or not the text might be a response to other ideas or arguments. Your primary objective for Essay III will be to

investigate the larger themes in Tran’s graphic memoir and put forth an argument using secondary research.

**Task**: Compose an *argumentative essay* in which you engage with one of the following questions: A. What does GB Tran come to understand about the experience of immigration? How might

*VIETNAMERICA* challenge the ways immigration is popularly perceived or thought about?

B. In which ways does Tran challenge assumptions about processes of Americanization? How does he go about suggesting the ways in which refugees, immigrants, and their U.S.-born offspring might shape their sense of self in places far from their presumed geographic home?

**Requirements:** Your ***argumentative essay*** should be five double-spaced pages (@1,500 words) and include MLA citations from at least two (2) secondary sources. Include an MLA “Works Cited” list of texts.

**Due:** see weekly schedule (rough draft & teacher draft)