**Ch. 6 Rhetorical Analysis Notes**

--a close reading of a text to find how and whether it works to persuade

--what strategies the piece employs to move your heart, win your trust, and change your mind, and why it does or doesn’t do so

--digging DEEPER

*Goal: Try to show how key devices in an argument actually make it succeed or fail.*

**Writing a rhetorical analysis (main elements):**

* What is the purpose of the argument?
* Who is the audience?
* What strategies does the argument use—emotional (pathos), ethical (ethos), logical (logos)?
* How does the language or style of the argument work to persuade an audience?

**All elements:**

* What is the purpose of this argument? What does it hope to achieve?\*
* Who is the audience for this argument?\*
* What appeals or techniques does the argument use – emotional, logical, ethical?\*
* What genre of argument is it, and how does the genre affect the argument? (While you might well challenge an argument in an op-ed that lacked sufficient evidence, you wouldn’t make the same complaint about a bumper sticker.)
* Who is making the argument? What ethos does it create, and how does it do so? What values does the ethos evoke? How does it make the writer or creator seem trustworthy?
* What authorities does the argument rely on or appeal to?
* What facts, reasoning, and evidence (or lack thereof – think fallacies) are used in the argument? How are they presented?
* What claims does the argument make? What issues are raised – or ignored or evaded?
* What are the contexts – social, political, historical, cultural – for this argument? Whose interests does it serve? Who gains or loses by it?
* How is the argument organized or arranged? What media does the argument use?
* How does the language or style of the argument work to persuade an audience?\*

\*denotes main elements

**Specifics of Drafting a Rhetorical Analysis:**

1.     Summarize the text; include author’s name, publication name, date, etc.

2.     Write a working thesis (claim).

3.     Include purpose of argument; audience

4.     Examine strategies—which are stronger, weaker, missing

5.     Explain whether or not it fails or succeeds in persuading you

Notes:

***Sample Rhetorical Analysis Assignment Prompt***

Assignment Objective: Your purpose in this assignment is to explain to your audience (the class, your instructor) how the text persuades its readers, and to convince them of the persuasiveness of your own analysis and evaluation of the text.

Learning Goals: Analyzing and writing about a primary text will help you to develop your visual and written literacy and your skills as a rhetorician. As you explain how the text persuades its readers, you are also addressing your own audience and attempting to be persuasive yourself.  As you implement the methods of rhetorical analysis, you are developing expertise in rhetorical argumentation that you will need for research-based arguments.

**“It’s Not about You” by David Brooks**

* Political commentator
* New York Times columnist
* Argues that today’s college grads have been poorly prepared for life after college due to a radical excess of supervision

Notes on essay:

**Rhetorical analysis of “It’s Not about You”: “Understanding Brooks’s Binaries” by Rachel Kolb**

* Connects article to personal experience to create an ethical appeal
* Provides brief overview of Brooks’s argument
* States Brooks’s central claim
* Provides transitions between topics
* Comments critically on author’s use of evidence
* Analyzes author’s intended audience
* Closely analyzes Brooks’s style
* Analyzes author’s conclusion
* Cites original text

Notes on essay:

Writing a Rhetorical Analysis Guide: pp. 114-119 (*EAA*)