

English 2010

Portfolio 3: A Collaborative Community Writing Campaign

Assignments and Schedule

For this assignment, you will work with one or more other writers to develop pieces of writing on a single topic, with a public aim. This set of pieces of writing will represent your collective rhetorical knowledge of a topic, will create knowledge resources for that topic, and will enter the public discussion of the topic in some substantive ways. Your work should be ambitious, commensurate with what you should know from having worked through the first two assignments.

Your work will take place on several fronts. I have detailed below various aspects of that work, starting with:

The Community Writing Campaign. For this part of the work, you and your partners will produce several pieces of writing on a particular topic. You should aim to produce writing in a variety of genres, making certain that your choice of genre for each individual piece is rhetorically appropriate, given what you hope that piece of writing will accomplish for a focused audience. In other words, the same criteria that have held for your writing up to this point still apply: these pieces must be *fully rhetorical* and *deeply knowledgeable* about the topic and about your audience(s).

In addition to the campaign itself, each group will be responsible for a *Genre Presentation*. You will choose one of the genres that you're using in your public writing campaign, and demonstrate its features within that setting. You will do this partly by showing your work-in-progress on that genre, and partly by showing one or more pieces of writing in that genre that you've found as you've done research on your campaign's topic. I will distribute criteria for this aspect of your work within the next week or so.

Each group will also be responsible to produce a *Rhetorical Analysis*. This piece of writing may be conceived of as an academic essay, although if you have other ideas about the genre of this piece that are more fitting for your project, please discuss them with me. In this piece of writing, you will choose several sources that you may end up using for the Group Community Writing Campaign and use them to analyze the issue. After completing the analysis you should have a better sense of the cultural context of the issue so you can determine how you will approach the issue, who you will write your documents for, genres of documents you might write, and for what purpose. In addition, writing the rhetorical analysis should help you think about the audience(s) for your group project.

You will produce a group *Annotated Bibliography*, one that includes all the sources you used in your work. You may, of course, frame this part of the work as the standard academic genre, but again, if you see other ways to fulfill the

same genre *activity* in another way more appropriate to your project, please discuss the possibilities with me.

Finally, each group will write a *Cover Letter* for the entire project. Since this letter will be collaborative, you should plan to consider together, near the end of the project, what aspects of the project on which you'd like me to focus as I evaluate your work.

You should feel free during the remaining weeks of the semester to consult with me regularly, either as groups or as individuals. As you can see from the schedule below, we will have some time set aside for instruction and for presentations, but by and large, much of our time during these last weeks will be yours to use for collaborative work.

I have asked for two *Progress Reports* (see due dates below, and attached criteria). In these reports, you should report on your accomplishments to date, your immediate challenges, and your plans for carrying out the remainder of your work.

Week 10 March 10-13

W Portfolio 2 due. Assignment for Portfolio 3. Getting started with selecting topics and sorting into collaborative groups. Group

orientation: negotiating ground rules and making a research proposal.

Week 11 March 24-27

M Read for today Ch. 13, "Working Together: Collaborative Writing Projects." The Rhetorical Analysis.

W Read for today Ch. 15, "Communicating Online" and Ch. 11, "Reviews."

Keeping your learning journal during the collaborative project

Week 12 March 31-April 3

M Read for today Ch. 6, "Public Documents." In-class time for collaborative work. *Draft of Rhetorical Analysis* due in class for instructor review.

W Read for today Ch. 7, "Profiles." Genre presentation sign-ups. In-class time for collaborative work.

Week 13 April 7-10

M Read for today Ch. 21, "Writing Portfolios." *Progress report #1* due in class to me. In-class time for collaborative work.

W Genre presentations.

Week 14 April 14-17

M Genre presentations.

W In-class time for collaborative work.

Week 15 April 21-24

M *Progress report #2 due in class to me.* Conference sign-ups. In-class time for collaborative work.

W Conferences. No class, although you may use the classroom to meet with one another if you would like.

Week 16 April 28-May 1

M Last day of class. Meet to assess the class and share collaborative work.

W No class—Final Exams.

All work, including collaborative portfolios and individual course portfolios, due on Friday, May 2, at noon, unless you and/or your group have made some other arrangement with me.

Criteria for Progress Reports

Progress reports are a genre typical in many settings. They are a means of communicating to a supervisor or other authority figure what work has already been accomplished on a long-range project, what work remains to be done, and to assess the obstacles, if any, to finishing the project as planned.

Your first progress report to me should be written collaboratively. It should be written as a memorandum. It should be typed. You should plan to explain to me each of the components: what you've accomplished; what remains to be accomplished; and your plans for finishing the remaining work. The progress report should be about a page long.

Your second progress report should be written individually—that is, each member of the group will write his or her own progress report. In it, you should again explain each of the above-mentioned components, but with special reference to your own work within the group setting. Again, the progress report should be typed and roughly about a page long.

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Rhetorical Analysis Guidelines

The objective of rhetorical analysis is to study the strategies behind examples of various pieces of writing. To read rhetorically is to read not only for what something says but also what strategies it uses to convey meaning. Rhetorical analysis is a way of developing a greater understanding for how we are being addressed.

After completing the analysis you should have a better sense of the cultural context of the issue so you can determine how you will approach the issue, for whom you will write your documents, genres of documents you might write and

for what purpose. In addition, the rhetorical analysis is a process that will help you begin thinking about the audience/s for your group project.

Rhetorical Analysis Assignment: Choose several sources (at least 6) that you may end up using for the Group Community Writing Campaign and use them to analyze the issue. Your analysis will depend upon everyone carefully reading and discussing the texts at hand. Use the following questions to guide your discussion:

- What is the context of issues? What do you know about the topic? What issues does the topic raise? Is there a larger debate, discussion, or controversy going on? What seems to be at stake?
- Who is the writer? What do you know about the writer's background, credibility, knowledge of the topic, beliefs, and social allegiances?
- What is the publication? What do you know about its intended readers' reputability, political slant, and the topics it covers?
- What is the call to write? Why is the writer addressing the issue and taking a position at this particular time? Is there some sense of urgency involved? How does the writer identify the significance of the issues involved?
- What is the writer's purpose? What is s/he trying to accomplish? Is his/her purpose stated explicitly or implicitly?
- Who is the intended audience? Is the writer addressing one group of readers or more than one? What kind of relationship is he trying to

establish with readers? What assumptions about readers does he seem to make?

- How does the writer use language? What is the writer's tone? What does her/his word choice show about his/her assumptions about readers? Does s/he use specialized terms or slang? Are there memorable figures of speech? Does the writer stereotype?
- What is your evaluation of the rhetorical effectiveness? Does the writer accomplish her/his purposes? What constraints, if any, qualify the writing's effectiveness?

Write an essay in which you analyze the writing you've chosen. For each piece, summarize the main line of reasoning. Use your group discussion of the above aspects to write an integrated analysis of each piece separately, and then the whole "field" of texts you've considered. Based on your pieces, what can you say about the issue as a whole, the people writing about it, the stakes of the matter, and possible rhetorical strategies for your own group's writing?

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Guidelines for the Genre Presentation

For this presentation, you will choose one of the genres that you're using in your public writing campaign, and demonstrate how it works within that public setting. You will do this partly by showing your work-in-progress on that genre, and partly

by showing one or more pieces of writing in that genre that you've found as you've done research on your campaign's topic.

As you plan your presentation, you should keep in mind the following:

For the piece or pieces you've found in your research:

- How does the piece demonstrate the features of the genre?
- What other genre activity seems to be going on in the piece?
- To whom does the piece seem to address itself?
- How does the genre shape the relationship between the writer and the author?
- How has the piece circulated in its public setting?
- What are the strengths and limitations of the piece in terms of its genre—that is, how does the genre help the piece achieve its communicative goals, and how, if at all, does the genre constrain the piece in achieving these goals?

For your work-in-progress:

- Why did you choose this genre for this piece?
- What are your communicative goals for the piece?
- What features of the genre seem to be consonant with your communicative goals?

- How much credibility or authority do you as a group have as writers within this genre? Within this public setting? What strategies do you have for negotiating a more credible, authoritative stance? How does the genre help or hurt?
- What opportunities does the genre allow you? What constraints?

You should plan for a ten to fifteen minute presentation. The group can decide how the presentation will go—whether everyone will have a formal part, or whether fewer than all of the members of the group have an active part in the presentation. Make sure that you can make the context of the documents clear: this means giving the class a strong sense of the topic, the audience, and the scope of the documents. If you would like any assistance in making copies, transparencies, or arranging for other forms of presentation such as Power Point, please let me know. I will ask you ahead of time if you need any help, but please feel free to consult me about any aspect of your presentations.

I will evaluate your presentation according to the following criteria:

1. Does the presentation follow the prescribed format, using a piece or pieces of writing found while doing research for the project, as well as a piece of writing-in-progress from the group's community writing campaign?
2. Does the presentation focus on the rhetorical and genre features of each document?
3. Does the presentation help the class understand the way that each document has or will function within a public setting?
4. Does the presentation deepen the class's understanding of the genre at hand?
5. Does the presentation make the context of each document clear?

Again, please feel free to consult with me as you prepare your presentation. I will be happy to give you feedback.