Welcome to English 30: Honors Introduction to Rhetoric and Composition
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Office: 59C Burrowes, W 2:30-3:30, F 1:30-3:30

Rhetoric is the process by which we identify the available means of persuasion in given situations, then utilize these means effectively. The importance of persuasion extends beyond our abilities to win clearly defined debates. Anytime we wish to write anything interesting, we hope that readers will take us seriously and engage our ideas. We attempt to persuade them to adopt our point of view, to seriously consider our ideas, or at least to keep reading. In this course we will develop these persuasive abilities through several avenues. In addition to learning to express our ideas clearly and in compelling style, we will try to understand the ways that our words contribute to larger conversations taking place in the communities around us. We will work to identify interesting conversations and compelling contributions that we might make.

Most of the assignments are constructed to invite you to pursue your own interests and introduce them to me and to your classmates. You will generally be given flexibility in topic choice for all assignments. We will, however, also pursue a particular theme as a class, and each assignment will include an option that focuses on this topic. A description of this semester’s theme follows:

Sentient Beings -- The Rhetoric of Animals and Nature in Modern Culture

In 1872, Charles Darwin argued that animals experienced the same emotions as humans, and further suggested that human beings are simply one particular type of animal among others. With this proposition, he challenged centuries of dualistic, Cartesian philosophy. Darwin postulated that animals and people; nature and civilization, in binary opposition. Since then, scientists, philosophers, and novelists, among others, have incorporated Darwin’s new understanding of the relationship between human beings and other animals into their own articulations of the connection between humans and nature, not only of other creatures and nature, but also of ourselves.

In this class, we will examine the roles of animals as beloved pets, famous entertainers, workers, food sources, friends, and subjects of study in our lives and in the narratives and stories that we tell. Animals fit into important cultural definitions of terms like “nature,” “civilization,” “consciousness,” and “rights.” The arguments that have been constructed to articulate the rights of animals, critique their treatment in our communities, and espouse our moral obligations towards them are finely tuned examples of persuasive rhetoric. By examining these rhetorical propositions as a class, we will learn to interpret, judge, and formulate persuasive arguments about ethics, social construction, and fairness. By recognizing that there is a direct correlation between the ways that we discuss our connection to animals and how we understand our relationships and obligations to each other, we will extend our analysis of the interactions between humans and animals to explorations of how human beings treat each other in modern communities as well.

Booker:
Cheryl Glenn, Making Sense.
Yann Martel, The Life of Pi.
Marjorie Spiegel, The Dreaded Comparison.
Jeffrey Masson, When Elephants Weep.

Course Policies:
The most important thing to remember in our English 30 classroom is to remain engaged in the course. This is a class about the formation and expression of ideas. We practice these skills in our daily discussions and activities, as well as in our graded assignments. We spend significant time working together in small groups. Therefore, an enthusiastic, positive level of engagement from each student is crucial to the success of your learning experiences. Your grade can rise or fall a complete letter grade based upon your contributions and attitude in classroom discussions and activities.

Late Papers are accepted if you have a legitimate emergency, such as illness, family emergencies, violent crimes perpetrated against you, the theft of your work, fire in your residence, invasion of extraterrestrials, etc. Otherwise, you will be docked one half-step (ie. From an A- to a B+, or a C to a C-) for the original lateness and an additional half-step for every two days that pass before you hand it in, and your participation grade will be influenced. Email late papers to me as soon as they are done, then bring hard copies to class. Like late papers, absences are excused in cases of emergency. In these cases you should inform me of your legitimate reasons for absence as soon as possible. Everyone is also given 2 “personal days” that will not affect their grade. In extreme cases, students who fail to hand in assignments or stop coming to class on a regular basis can have their grades lowered to an F.

There are seven components to your grade:
Participation in class activities and discussion 10%
Reading Journal 15%
Formative Experience Narrative 15%
Rhetorical Analysis 15%
Persuasive Group Project 15%
Exposé 15%
Cultural Analysis 15%

Reading Journal
We will be learning about Rhetoric and Argument in two different ways: by constructing our own essays, and by analyzing the work of others. The purpose of the reading journal is for you to identify the main theses and rhetorical strategies of the various examples that we will read throughout the semester. Each week you should identify the major arguments that you encountered in your reading, and assess the rhetorical effectiveness. You should also note any questions or ideas that piqued your interest. These journals
serve a dual purpose – they indicate to me that you have been doing the reading and they also provide a place for you to practice writing in an unstructured format. Journals will not be graded on style or format, but rather on the extent to which they demonstrate that you have done the reading, and the degree to which they illustrate that you are thinking and experimenting with new ideas about rhetoric and composition. You may also include personal anecdotes or experiences. You should write approximately 3/4 to 1 double spaced page in your journal each week.

**Occasionally I will assign a specific topic or question for you to address in your journal. By the end of the semester, when I collect them, journals should be between 12-15 pages long. Most entries should be typed, unless done as part of an in-class activity.

Academic Honesty
It is important to avoid plagiarism and other forms of cheating. Do not buy papers off of the internet, do not use your older friends' essays, do not make-up sources, do not copy word for word out of journals and books. Doing so may cause you to fail the assignment or the class, or face university imposed penalties.

Note: Penn State University encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in our programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell me as soon as possible.

Tentative Schedule of Readings and Activities:
**please be aware that I will make adjustments to this schedule that will be announced in class and through the email. An Updated Syllabus, along with journal prompts and assignments will also be emailed and available at www.aned.psu.edu**

Week 1
Mon., Aug. 27: Welcome and Course Introduction

Wed., Aug. 29: The Rhetorical Situation
Read Armstrong, "General Introduction"

Fri., Aug. 31
Read: "Animals in the History of Western Thought," pp. 1-22 (on e-reserve)

Week 2
Mon., Sept. 3: Labor Day@

Wed. Sept. 5: "Animals in the History of Western Thought," pp. 22-37 (on e-reserve)

Fri., Sept. 7: Video: Conversation with Koko

Week 3
Mon. Sept. 10: Conclude video, discussion


Fri., Sept. 14: Grammar Review

Week 4
Mon., Sept. 17: First Draft Workshop


Fri. Sept. 21: Read Life Of Pi (Part I, exclude chs. 15-31)

Week 5
Mon. Sept. 24: Video: Witness Read Life of Pi (Complete the book, exclude chs. 7-92, except read ch. 86)

Wed. Sept. 26: Read Life Of Pi (Part I, exclude chs. 15-31) Read Life of Pi (Complete the book, exclude chs. 74-92, except read ch. 86)

Fri., Sept. 28: Read Life of Pi (Complete the book, exclude chs. 74-92, except read ch. 86)

Week 6
Mon. Oct. 1: Armstrong, "General Introduction" and pp. 75-78, 100-101, 104-105, 144

Wed., Oct. 3: First Draft Workshop

Fri., Oct. 5: Formative Narrative Due. Introduce Persuasive Project

Week 7
Mon. Oct. 8: Library Presentation, Meet in room W311A West Patee, 2nd floor

Wed., Oct. 10: Farm Sanctuary Case Study

Organize Groups for Projects

Week 8
Mon., Oct. 15: Video: The Elephant Sanctuary
Assign dates for Presentation
Fri., Oct. 19: Final Rehearsals and Review

Week 9
Mon., Oct. 22: Group 1, Presentation and essays due
Wed., Oct. 24: Group 2, Presentation and essays due
Fri., Oct. 26: Group 3, presentations and essays due

Week 10
Mon., Oct. 29: Group 4, group presentations
Wed., Oct. 31: Introduce Exposé assignment
Fri., Nov. 2: Read Glenn, ch. 7, "Process Analysis," "Embalming Mr. Jones," Ch. 8, "Cause and Consequence Analysis," "Leg Waxing and Life Everlasting"

Week 11
Wed., Nov. 7: Armstrong essays, chs. 55, 62, 64, 68; Grammar review

Week 12
Mon., Nov. 12: Alternative Consciousness reading
Wed., Nov. 14: Supersize Me

Fri., Nov. 16: Palmer Museum Field Trip
Happy Thanksgiving®

Week 13
Mon., Nov. 26: First Draft Workshop
Wed., Nov. 28: Expose Due, Introduce Cultural Analysis "American Pie" activity
Fri., Nov. 30: Read Glenn, ch. 10, "Argument," and essays on College Athletics

Week 14
Mon., Dec. 3: Rhetorical Fallacies
Wed., Dec. 5: Read Speigel, Part 1
Fri., Dec. 7: Read Speigel, part 2, On Angel, "Eternal Treblinka."

Week 15
Mon., Dec. 10: Armstrong, chs. 71, 84, 85, 86.
Wed., Dec. 12: First Draft Workshop
Fri. Dec. 14: Cultural Analysis Assignment Due, Have a Terrific Break!