

**WRITING FOR SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY**  
**WRIT 566-001**  
**SPRING 2016**

**Rhetoric of Science Essay**

**Due**

- Peer-review draft: Feb. 5, 10:00 PM
- Peer review: Feb. 9, 10:00 PM
- Revised draft: Feb. 15, 10:00 PM

**General Assignment and Objective**

Drawing from and synthesizing the readings for the first few weeks of the course, your goal is to write well-supported, thesis-driven short argument (three- to five-page) designed to persuade other science and engineering undergraduates of the importance of rhetoric to the practices of science and engineering.

**General Requirements**

Keeping in mind that this is a 500-level writing-intensive course, your essay should reflect the conventions of good academic writing, including the appropriate use of summary, paraphrase, quotation, and citation of sources. Your essay should:

- Be 3-5 pages in length,
- be thesis-driven, making use of the enthymeme as an organizing principle,
- fairly and accurately present and synthesize the readings in such a way that distinguished the other writers' ideas from your own, and
- include specific examples supporting your argument, both from readings as well as original examples from your own experiences.

**Format**

Your essay should adhere to the general guidelines for the citation system of your choice.

*Peer-review Draft*

Your peer-review draft should be a complete, revised, and edited draft of your project.

*Instructor-review Draft*

Based upon your peer-review, revise your project at least once.

**Peer Review Guidelines**

Each of you has been assigned to a three-person peer-review group within Blackboard. Within your group section. Please use the following guidelines to offer feedback, and using the group's discussion forum to share your feedback with your group members.

*Part I*

Re-read the assignment guidelines above, keeping in mind both the intended audience and the author's goal, then read through the essay without worrying about offering feedback.

## *Part II*

Your goal in Part II is to summarize the essay both in a descriptive sentence and as an enthymeme. To do this please re-read the essay and do the following:

1. Offer a one- or two-sentence summary of the essay that explains what the essay seeks to do and how, broadly speaking, it tries to achieve its goal. For example, a short summary of Gopen and Swan's "The Science of Scientific Writing" might be "Starting with the assumption that the purpose of scientific writing is to communicate ideas, Gopen and Swan draw upon reader expectations to identify five common problems that hinder reader comprehension, and using examples from authentic scientific writing they offer seven principles for good writing and demonstrate how to apply those principles to revise problem passages."
2. State the argument of the essay as an enthymeme. For example, an enthymeme of Gopen and Swan's article might be "Readers expect to find certain types of information located in specific places within sentences, therefore writing that is shaped to meet reader expectations can improve reader comprehension."
3. Explain your summaries. Identify specific passages within the essay that lead you to offer the summary and enthymeme that you do; that is, explain to the author why you interpret their essay in the way that you do.
4. Comment on Purpose and goals. Based on your summaries of the essay and the goals and purpose of the assignment, comment as to whether or not there seems to be a disconnect between the what the essay does and what the assignment asks the essay to do. Again, please refer to specific passages within the essay to support your observations.

## *Part III*

Your goal in this final stage is to offer specific feedback, both identifying areas of strength as well as areas that can be improved. While you don't want to rewrite anyone's essay for them, it is perfectly fine to offer ideas on how to further develop or revise a section or issue. For example, if you think a particular point might be improved by referring to an example from Campbell's discussion of how Darwin tailored his argument based on the values of his audience, by all means let the author know. Likewise, if you see a great way to strengthen the ethos or pathos of the essay, share your idea.

Some specific questions and issues you should address:

- Organization and structure: Do you think the essay might work better if it were organized differently? If so, offer some suggestions. Or, if you think the organization works well, what about it works for you?
- Uses of ethos, pathos, and logos: Identify places where the author makes use of these three forms of evidence, and also indicate areas where you believe they could be further developed.
- Support and examples: Are there sections where claims could be further supported or where examples don't seem to be particularly strong? If so, let the author know where and try to explain why. Likewise, identify areas where the author makes good use of supporting details and examples to bolster their claims.
- Use of sources: Are there sections in which you're not sure where the borders between the use of a source and the author's own commentary and ideas start and end? Likewise, are there areas where you think the author makes particularly good use of a source? Please

identify those sections and try to offer an explanation about why or why not you find the use of sources there effective.

- Readability and comprehension: Are there sections that you stumbled over and/or had to reread a few times in order to understand what was being said? Or are there sections where you're not really sure what the author is trying to do? Identify those sections and try to explain what the problem is. Likewise, identify sections that seem particularly clear and try to explain to the author why the writing seems clear.
- Keeping in mind reader expectations and the seven principles identified by Gopen and Swan in "The Science of Science Writing," are there any sentences that you would recommend revising for clarity?

#### *Part IV*

Please answer the following two questions:

What do you think is the essay's strongest feature?

What one or two changes do you think would most improve the draft during revision?