

## Resources for Comparative Rhetorical Analysis Assignment

*What makes something persuasive? What strategies do writers and composers use to persuade audiences? What makes texts effective within a context for a particular audience?*

Effective analysis relies on the ability to think critically and process information in a manner that is both thorough and revelatory—an ability possessed by some of humanity’s greatest philosophers, inventors, entrepreneurs, and writers. Therefore, in this unit students will write a comparative analysis, exploring the rhetorical choices made in two different texts so as to better understand how and why texts are produced, what makes them effective within a context for a particular audience, and how they persuade (or don’t persuade) their audience.

### Core Readings:

- Keith Grant-Davie, “Rhetorical Situations and Their Constituents.” <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07350199709359219>. (I assign at least one scholarly reading per unit to work with students on reading, annotating, and navigating difficult texts.)
- Deborah Tannen Three texts on Argumentation: Though Tannen is not an unproblematic figure in Linguistics, I find that her adaptation of this piece for three different venues and audiences can be a great way to extend teachings of genre and introduce rhetorical analysis. I assign students to read the Washington Post OpEd only but to have the other two pieces ready to look at the next day in class. I have an activity that I do with my students that I am happy to share/model.
  - "Agonism in Academic Discourse." *Journal of Pragmatics* 34:10-11 (2002):1651-1669.
  - "Agonism in the Academy: Surviving Higher Learning's Argument Culture." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 46:30 (March 31, 2000): B7, B8.
  - "For Argument's Sake." *Washington Post*.  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/03/15/for-arguments-sake/04636e38-6298-4c2c-90d3-db0726e60b28/?utm\\_term=.d2378c90fb80](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/03/15/for-arguments-sake/04636e38-6298-4c2c-90d3-db0726e60b28/?utm_term=.d2378c90fb80)

### Instructor Tips For Teaching Unit 2: Writing Influences

- Guide the students through the core readings.
- Introduce the basic rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos, kairos);
- Consider how you would like for students to organize the essay and adapt these expectations into tangible lessons. For example, if you want the students to approach the assignment in a standard academic, uniform way (intro combining the texts, separate analyses of both texts led by subtitles, a discussion of the two texts, and then a conclusion, walk them through this process; if you want to leave the organization more open, include lessons and discussions about alternate approaches).
- Discuss with students strategies for revision (consider bringing in Sommers or other readings);
- I introduce MLA paper formatting in Unit 1, but I introduce MLA documentation in this unit. Since students will only have two sources to cite, it can be a great way to ease them into citing sources.

### Other texts you might consider including in the unit:

- Peter Elbow, “Three Levels of Revision,” [https://web.kamihq.com/web/viewer.html?source=extension\\_pdfhandler&file=https%3A%2F%2Fdrapes92.files.wordpress.com%2F2011%2F04%2Fbook.pdf](https://web.kamihq.com/web/viewer.html?source=extension_pdfhandler&file=https%3A%2F%2Fdrapes92.files.wordpress.com%2F2011%2F04%2Fbook.pdf).
- Bitzer, Lloyd F. “The Rhetorical Situation” [http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~raha/309CWeb/Bitzer\(1968\).pdf](http://www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~raha/309CWeb/Bitzer(1968).pdf)
- Joseph Harris, “Coming to Terms” (from *Rewriting: How to Do Things with Texts*)

- Nancy Sommers, “Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers” <http://www.jstor.org/stable/356588>
- “Tea Consent (Clean)” (2015) video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGoWLWS4-kU> (the video has been really well received by students, but I still hope you will consider adding a trigger warning)
- Richard Straub, “Responding—Really Responding—to Other Students’ Writing”
- “Rhetorical Analysis: In Introduction.” [https://youtu.be/3Qw3z8\\_ed4A](https://youtu.be/3Qw3z8_ed4A)
- Here is a handout from the University of Louisville Writing Center that defines ethos, pathos, logos, and kairos (<https://louisville.edu/writingcenter/for-students-1/handouts-and-resources/handouts-1/logos-ethos-pathos-kairos>) and a similar resource from Purdue OWL (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/625/03/>).

#### Texts you may want to bring in to analyze with the students:

- “Heln’s First Year.” <http://time.com/finding-home/>.
- “This Is America.” Childish Gambino. <https://youtu.be/VYOjWnS4cMY>. Video includes violence and strong language. (This video too has been really well received by students, but I still hope you will consider adding a trigger warning)
- David Bartholomae, “Inventing the University” excerpt.
- Infographic on Infographics. <http://www.ivan.cash/infographic-of-infographics/>.
- ‘Thought Leader’ gives talk that will inspire your thoughts | CBC Radio (Comedy/Satire Skit). Conventions of TED Talks. [https://youtu.be/\\_ZBKX-6Gz6A](https://youtu.be/_ZBKX-6Gz6A).
- BBC Four, NewsWipe. Conventions of Newscasts. <https://youtu.be/aHun58mz3vI>.

#### Sample Comparative Analysis Texts

- Charles Blow on Sanders and the “Deep South”
  - NYT article: <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/18/opinion/sanders-dismisses-the-deep-south.html?partner=IFTTT&r=0>
  - Video: <https://www.facebook.com/CharlesMBlow/videos/10154695129079989/>
- “The 40(ish) Most Powerful People in Comedy.” <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/lists/40ish-powerful-people-comedy-1118017/item/comedy-power-list-amy-poehler-1118027>.
  - Have students analyze Amy Poehler’s responses in relation to the rhetorical situation and in comparison with another celebrity of their choice. How are their responses similar, different? Do you think they had the same purpose and audience in mind? Why were Poehler’s responses newsworthy? How did they attempt to subvert the genre? Were they effective?

#### Resources for faculty:

- Brian Jackson’s “Teaching The Analytical Life.” *Composition Studies* 38.2 (2010): 9-27. <https://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/journals/composition-studies/docs/backissues/38-2/38.2%20Jackson.pdf>.
- Martin, Brian. “Plagiarism: A Misplaced Emphasis,” <https://www.uow.edu.au/~bmartin/pubs/94jie.html>
- Teach Argument YouTube Channel