REVISIONS ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE

Local Advocacy

ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE GOALS
This assignment encourages students to:

- Learn a rhetorical process for analyzing and producing texts
- Understand how audience and purpose shape effective communication
- Learn how processes of reflection and invention are useful in developing communication
- Acquire extensive practice in revising written, visual, and oral communication
- Work both alone and collaboratively in learning and communicating
- Discuss and analyze the ethical implications of a communicator’s choices in a text
- Recognize that our communication choices are effective only when we understand how different audiences interpret texts, whether those audiences are local or global

WHEN TO USE THIS ASSIGNMENT
This is designed for the beginning of the semester, right after the course provides its first introduction to rhetorical concepts.

This assignment takes about 3 weeks to develop and carry out.

WHAT STUDENTS MAKE
- A 4-5 page rhetorical analysis of Common Scents (p. 513-522) and an Eddie Murphy clip that also argues whether these are more “successful” in achieving purpose than “normal” things that are more widespread
- A re-design of an existing composition into logos-, ethos-, and pathos-centered renditions
- An original composition meant to have impact either in the local community or at the university (students would generate billboard/poster ads, written press releases/letters to editors, anything needed for project)
- A reflection that covers the design and ethical choices made in the composition, assesses its effectiveness, provides the basis for research if any, and argues what else (if anything) needs to be done to effect the changes the student seeks.
- Oral presentation to class and others that explains project and attempts to get others to engage in projected cause

This assignment sequence lays the groundwork for many of the key concepts and the elusive nature of persuasion that will be addressed more deeply later in the course. Students will cover the main terms being used and get comfortable with collaboration in small group settings. The goal of the assignment is for the student to tackle something close to them and realize they can have an impact on the situation with their communication skills.

THE ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE ITSELF

WEEK ONE

IN-CLASS
Brainstorm a list of local and university problems from the class’s perspective. Discuss how these problems could be addressed and whether they currently are being addressed. Use problems to ground audience, purpose, and context.

HOMEWORK
Read pp. 510-523 of cda, “Common Scents.”

IN-CLASS
Discussion: Go over “Common Scents” and show Eddie Murphy clip. How does keeping an audience off-balance work in persuasion? What happens as audience members when our expectations are met, exceeded, surprised, and disappointed? Listen/see Montana anti-meth
campaign. In small groups, look at successful local and small campaigns. Go over assignment and rhetorical analysis.

HOMEWORK
Write up 4-5 page rhetorical analysis of the comic strip and other clips we saw in class. Read and discuss Chapter 1 of cda.

WEEK 2
IN-CLASS
Look at various documents and further practice rhetorical analysis in class. Start getting students accustomed to being critical of visual images and strategies. Focus on ethos, pathos, and logos as means of persuasion. Workshop with new and old documents and notice the effect context has on composition. Let each group focus on one particular genre and topic then have groups switch.

HOMEWORK
Develop a re-design of one of the documents for a modern audience and produce a sketch of various versions. Write up an analysis to go along with the reflection and re-design each into logos-, ethos-, and pathos-centered forms.

IN-CLASS
Discussion: Why do certain genres embrace certain strategies? Is the power in the hands of the designer, the audience, or is there a mutual choreography at work?

HOMEWORK
Read Chapters 2 and 5 of cda and hand in design plan for local advocacy project. Discussion of going from design plan to production. A deeper look at argument and its impacts (ala 113). The ethical implications of what is (and what isn’t) argued. Peer review of composition.

WEEK 3
IN-CLASS
What barriers are there to various models of communication? How will these factor into the advocacy project? Key on oral communication. Listen/watch speeches and such in class.

HOMEWORK
Read pp. 223-263 of cda and develop lists of what you see as negative and positive traits when public speaking.

DUE IN-CLASS
Revised version of composition, rhetorical reflection outlining design and ethical choices. Brief speech to class and affected members of project’s audience about design choices and reasons for doing the project.