REVISIONS ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE

Comic Strips, Ethics and the Choices we Make

ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE GOALS
This assignment encourages students to:
• carry out rhetorical analysis using written, visual and oral communication.
• understand how audience and purpose shape effective communication.
• work both alone and collaboratively.
• discuss and analyze the ethical implications of a communicator’s choices.

WHEN TO USE THIS ASSIGNMENT
This sequence of assignments is best as a second or third sequence of the semester. First, I would want the students to have worked on developing their sense of key concepts such as:
Rhetoric  Compose  Advocate  Design
Audience  Purpose  Context  Ethics v. morality
As well, we would have had discussions about the difference between a “debatable” subject and one that is “non-debatable” i.e., a topic so central to people’s worldviews that their opinions seem natural (and so unavailable for questioning).

WHAT STUDENTS MAKE
• A two/three page write up discussing Common Scents (p. 513-522).
• An original comic strip series of panels, supported by a minimum of three researched sources, exploring an ethical idea/issue.
• A 3-4 page write-up discussing the choices made in the creation and design of their comic strips.
• Option: A Rhetorical Analysis of another classmate’s comic strip.

THE ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE ITSELF

WEEK ONE

HOMEWORK
Students read pp. 510—523 of cda. [Instructor review p. 14-20 IM.]

IN-CLASS
Discussion: begin with class discussion p. 510-511, Leviathan. [Include considering audience, context, purpose, and how these affect all choices made within comic.]
Small groups: discuss Common Scents—list as many choices as you can find being made by author. Then discuss how these affect/reflect purpose/audience/context.

HOMEWORK
Draft 2-3 page write-up. What do you think Barry’s central point(s) were; discuss at least five choices she made in the overall composition and relate these to her purpose, audience, context, ethos, logos, and use of emotion (remember, these are overlapping considerations.)

IN-CLASS
Small groups: have members of group discuss what they each thought the main point(s) Barry was making in strip were. Each group choose one point to write on board. Groups be prepared to show the elements in the strip that help support this point.
Discussion: discuss support offered for points.
What are the ethical implications of the points being made? Does it matter if we judge people?
What is the difference between making judgments and being judgmental?
Write—Spend five minutes in-class writing about something you either have judged people for or have been judged for that in reflection you think was unfair.
Collect— student write-ups about Common Scents.
HOMEWORK

Bring a comic strip or editorial cartoon to class that deals with something you consider to be a controversial topic.

WEEK TWO

IN-CLASS

- Gallery—have students tape comic strips/editorials up around the walls in the classroom and then have everyone view gallery.
- Discussion—which caught your attention and why?
- Brainstorm—A) in three minutes, generate a list of as many interesting topics as you can. B) make a star by each idea that you think potentially contains an ethical component. C) Try and draw a stick/quick image for three of these star ideas.
- Partners—With a classmate, discuss one of your star ideas—what do you think makes it ethically interesting and what images would help represent the idea.

HOMEWORK

- Write one paragraph about the idea you have for a cartoon strip about an ethically interesting idea. Create one image that you could potentially use to help illustrate this idea.
- Partners—working with someone you didn’t work with last class, share your ideas/images. Each come up with: three questions you have about your partners topic and an image idea you have related to their topic.
- Discuss—Class discuss ideas you’re encountering. How do we support ideas that other people might not agree with? Can comics be too controversial? What is the difference between inviting discussion/thought and being inflammatory? How does this difference affect your audience, purpose, context when trying to communicate an ethical idea?

HOMEWORK

- Find a minimum of three sources that support the ethical point of view you wish to present in your comic strip. Type up these sources in MLA format.
- Due: Final draft of write up analyzing Common Scents.

WEEK THREE

IN-CLASS

- preview of artwork—students bring their art work/drafts to class to get feedback on their comic strips. Give students specific questions to respond to in reviewing each others work, i.e. Identify what ethical issue is being addressed, what stance the creator is taking, what support is being offered for this stance, what panel is strongest and why; is there a place or places where the communication is not clear and why?
- Discuss—what did you see working well for other people? Did anyone pick up an idea for their own strip? What have you been reminded to be careful of?

HOMEWORK

- Write a draft discussing the choices you have made in designing your comic strip. Discuss how your audience, message, context, purpose, medium shaped the choices you made.

*TEACHER’S CHOICE*

- Spend the remainder of the week finalizing comic strips, self-analysis of each student’s comic strip and work-shop drafts OR include as a “short write-up” (one to two pages, less formal) an analysis of another student’s comic strip.
- Either option allows for students to spend one day viewing class-mates’ strips and commenting about the ethical issues being addressed: how do your fellow students get you to think about a topic in a new way? What was most successful and why? Did you see something that changed your mind or introduced a topic you weren’t familiar with? If a topic failed to engage you, can you pinpoint why?