

PROJECT #1: RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Background: The purpose of this assignment is to analyze the rhetorical choices and strategies used by professional writers in your discipline. This project will better familiarize you with the various journals in your field, and help you better understand technical writing as a whole.

Directions: Find two articles—one from a professional journal in your discipline, and another from a less scholarly source—that address the same topic. For example, a Computer Science major might want to analyze how computer security is discussed in *Issues in Science and Technology* and *Newsweek*.

Note: A less scholarly source does not necessarily mean unsophisticated. You don't want to choose two articles that are so radically different the rhetorical similarities and differences are painfully obvious. A substantive article or essay from the popular press (a national magazine like *Time*, *National Review*, etc.) should provide you with plenty of good material for a comparative rhetorical analysis.

Compare and contrast the two articles, considering the following question: *How is the rhetoric of each article determined by its audience?* If the question seems confusing, think of it this way: the two articles you have chosen, even though they deal with the same topic, are not identical. Therefore, each writer must have made certain (different) choices that resulted in a published product. What and why did the writers choose differently? What assumptions did they make about their readers' needs, attitudes, and knowledge? What information do the authors emphasize, deemphasize, or omit? How is the information structured and presented visually? Why is each article the way it is instead of some other way?

Your final draft should be concise (between 4 and 6 pages) and answer the question satisfactorily. Papers that receive a high grade will be organized, informative, well-written, and persuasive. I am your audience.

Objectives: Applying rhetorical theory to actual texts; using library resources and fine tuning research techniques; argument construction and organization.

This assignment constitutes 15% of your final grade.