English 103: Critical Reasoning & Writing
Prof. Chiang-Schultheiss
Rhetorical Analysis of an Argument

Writing Situation/Prompt: For this first essay, you'll be writing a rhetorical analysis of an argument. In particular, your paper will need to analyze the use of ethos, pathos, and logos and evaluate effectiveness of 2 **editorials** or **opinion** articles located in **mainstream** U.S. newspapers.

Purpose/Objectives: The purpose of this assignment is to disassemble the two editorials and examine how they work or function as arguments. Your goal also is to demonstrate your understanding of ethos, pathos, and logos as rhetorical strategies. **Your overall objective is to identify which piece is more convincing and why (and your THESIS needs to clarify this early on)**.

Evaluation Criteria: You'll be evaluated on your originality, the quality/precision of your thesis statement, your paragraph development and organization principle, audience awareness, thoroughness, depth and insightfulness of analysis, and use of sources.

Requirements

- **Page length:** Your essay must be 4-5 typed, double-spaced pages (min. 4 fully-typed pages).

- **Sources:** 2 editorials from a newspaper or serious magazine of your choice (e.g.: *Los Angeles Times*, *Orange County Register*, *Washington Post*, *Time*, or *Newsweek*. (If you're unsure about the source, email Prof. CS.)

- **Manuscript Conventions:** use the required MLA essay template located on the course website. You must customize this and get it approved by Prof. CS.

- **Audience**: college-level students; rationally minded-readers; non-hostile thinkers.

- **SAWE:** Remember, your paper must follow the basic conventions of standard American written English (correct mechanics, usage, grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and so forth).

- **MLA**: in-text-parenthetical notes and a Works Cited page are required to document your source material.

- **Due Dates**: Rough Draft_____ Final:_____

Preparing the Essay:

- In *EA*, Read David Brooks' article on page 108, and study Rachel Kolb's rhetorical analysis essay on page 111 as an example.

- Browse for 2 opinion pieces that interest you. They may be on the same topic so that your essay is more coherent, but this is not a requirement.

- Focus on the questions on pages 92-93 of your *EA* textbook.

- Use the "Guide to writing a rhetorical analysis" on pages 114-19 in *EA*.

- Make an **informal general outline** that you will bring to class, review it with a classmate, and use it to guide to draft the main body of your essay.

- Next, make a **micro outline**. Focus on the smaller details. The more precise you are, the better your readers will be able to understand your analysis.

- Start **drafting** your main body section of the essay. Visit the Writing Center.

Writing the Introduction:
Aim to grab the audience's attention; identify each primary source and briefly summarize it; clearly establish the essay's purpose. Assert a strong thesis at the end of your introductory paragraph.

Writing the Main Body Paragraphs:
Depending on the needs of your audience, **organize** your essay using an appropriate method. Each paragraph should begin with a **topic sentence** that identifies a new point you will discuss.

Remember to focus on a **single main idea** or point per paragraph, and develop that sub-claim of your thesis with specific, well-chosen **evidence/examples** from the editorials.

Cite when appropriate, quote sparingly, and carefully document these citations in correct MLA format.

Writing the Conclusion:
In this rhetorical analysis essay, your goal in writing the conclusion is not to summarize what you already have written but in general to bring closure to the essay. You might comment on the value of analyzing a text for its rhetorical effectiveness.

Final Reminders and Tips:

- Budget 8-10 total hours to work on this assignment.
- You must write your essay in the third person, *avoiding the use of "I" and "you"*.
- Keep your audience's needs in focus.
- Repeatedly read aloud your essay to catch obvious errors or awkward phrases. (This technique really *does* work, if used.)