**Rhetorical Analysis**

- **Appropriate References/Works Cited/Bibliography (etc.) entry:** Find the appropriate format for the kind of publication you are using in the corresponding section of your handbook (if possible), and write a complete, correct reference page entry. If you don't yet know which citation style is appropriate for your essay, you may use APA or MLA (you choose at this point). The format of these references will change, of course, if you determine that another citation style is more appropriate for your essay.

- **Genre and Original Publication:** Identify the genre, type or form of the writing and its defining features. Is it a speech, letter, journal article, report, excerpt from a book, newspaper editorial, academic essay? Can you identify any typical purpose and kind of audience for this genre? Also, what is known or might be assumed about the original publication in which the speech or article appeared? Consider the publication’s genre, target audience, and authority in the field.

- **Situation or Occasion:** Identify the circumstances of the original speech or the author's motivation for writing and/or publishing the essay or article. Was it in response to another text or a specific historical event or social condition? What do you know about the context surrounding the appearance of this text?

- **Author's Status, Associations, and Ethos:** What do you know about the speaker's or author's identity, position, title, disciplinary association, and claim to expertise? With what social, political, professional, or religious groups is the speaker identified? In the text itself, what is the author's means of establishing credibility and ethos? What kind of ethos does he or she create? Fair-minded? Devoted to the audience’s best interests? Brutally honest? Morally superior? Scientific and factual? Experienced and wise? Rebellious against traditional ways of thinking? What textual evidence causes you to define the ethos as you do?

- **Audience:** What is known or might be assumed about the target audience(s)? What feelings, values, and beliefs about the topic do they share in common? What existing feelings, values and beliefs will the author have to change in order to persuade the audience to accept his or her ideas? What existing feelings, values and beliefs could the author reinforce or exploit?

- **Issue or Problem:** How would you define the issue? What problem does the author set up for solution?

- **Thesis and Purpose:** Quote the sentence(s) that best expresses the author's thesis or main claim and then paraphrase the primary argument in your own words. Now explain the author's or speaker's purpose in making this claim. What effect does he or she want this argument to have on the audience / reader? How is he or she trying to persuade the audience to change their actions or thinking? How do you know?

- **Style, Tone, and Language:** What kinds of diction and sentence patterns characterize the style? Give examples to illustrate whether it is formal and academic or informal and
colloquial. How does this style define the relationship between the author and the audience? Does the speaker seem to be talking down to the reader, speaking as an equal, or flattering the reader in some way? Identify some words that signal the predominant tone. Describe the author's attitude toward what he or she is writing or saying. Is the tone respectful, angry, condescending, ingratiating, threatening, sarcastic or ironic? Explain the textual evidence that leads you to draw your conclusions. Identify key images, metaphors, parables, connotations, analogies, allusions, use of repetition or other language strategies that seem central to the author's ability to make the argument possible or persuasive. Cite some examples to illustrate how these kinds of language operate as rhetorical elements. How might they influence the audience to accept the author's ideas? How do they attempt to change or reinforce the existing feelings, values and beliefs of the audience that you identified in #5?

- **Objectivity / Bias:**

  - **Kinds of Evidence / Credibility of Evidence:** Identify the significant type of evidence used to support the argument, including personal experience, observations, statistics, anecdotes, hypothetical examples, surveys or studies, allusions, etc.? Evaluate the credibility of this evidence. What sources and authorities does the speaker cite, and how credible are they? If the author cites statistics, how were the data gathered, who gathered the data, and are the data being presented fully? Can you identify evidence or factors that seem to be omitted or missing from the author's consideration of the issue?

  - **Acknowledgement / Characterization of Alternative Views:** How are the various arguments on the issue presented? Is the message one-sided, or does it include alternative points of view? Identify any obviously conflicting evidence or arguments that are ignored. How does the author characterize alternative views? Does the speaker seem to present alternative arguments fairly? Does the author present them in a relatively neutral manner, or use positive words and images to describe his/her point of view and negative words and images to describe other points of view? Does the author ascribe positive motivations to his/her point of view and negative motivations to alternative points of view? Cite an example to illustrate your answer.

- **Reasoning and Examples:** Is the argument based on deductive premises and assumptions or drawn from inductive evidence and data? Does the author use primarily hypothetical examples and suppositions or are the examples drawn from actual researched data? Is the argument more empirical or theoretical?

- **Appeals:** Identify the primary kinds of appeals the author uses to create desired responses in the reader. Is the argument primarily emotional or logical, or would it be better described as a mix of the two? When the author uses emotional appeals, what different kinds of emotions are elicited? Does the author rely more on positive or negative emotions? Does the author use appeals to authority, or specific kinds of examples that would appeal to the target audience? What are some examples?