

# Media Translations Project: English 110 (Au 05)

For this project, you will compose a variety of texts (alphabetic, visual, and auditory) in order to make a particular argument for an audience of your choice. Along the way, you will critically consider the benefits and limitations of composing with words, images and sounds. You may work individually or collaboratively in groups of 2-4 people. If you work collaboratively, each group member must play (and must document playing) an active role in planning, creating, and/or revising each of the aspects of the project. In addition, each person in the group must turn in his or her own reflective essay (which will count for 40% of the grade).

## Defining Your Rhetorical Purpose

Before mounting a persuasive campaign, you must learn as much as possible about all perspectives on the issue. After doing this research, you will be better able to refute opponents' arguments; you also might find that your own position on the issue has evolved, becoming more complex.

If you are parodying or subverting an existing campaign, you must learn as much about this campaign (and the people/organizations behind it) as possible. You also must have clear social / political point to make through parody; in other words, you shouldn't be striving for "laughs" alone.

In addition to researching, you also have to reflect about your audience(s). One audience is our classroom community, but you may also specify additional public audiences as well. When analyzing your audience(s), you should consider the following questions:

- 1) What are my audiences' fundamental assumptions about the world and how can I build my argument from these assumptions? (enthymeme)
- 2) What kind of evidence are my audiences likely to believe? What kind of preferences do they have to particular media and styles of composing? (discourse communities, logos, access)
- 3) How can I establish credibility and authority about this topic? How can I get my audience to see my interests as joined with their interests? (ethos, identification)
- 4) How can I appeal to my audience's emotions? (pathos)
- 5) What is my ethical stance as a persuasive agent? What kinds of manipulations are acceptable and unacceptable in my view?

## Composing Across Modalities

Your persuasive campaign will entail the creation of three different kinds of essays: an alphabetic (word-based) essay, an audio essay, a visual essay (photo or video).

*Alphabetic Essay:*

Your alphabetic essay can be a great place to provide contextual background for your argument, to consider and refute other positions, and to lay out detailed, complex evidence and examples. The alphabetic essay should be at least 750 words.

*Audio Essay:*

In your audio essay, you will have the challenge of making an argument entirely in sound. You can record interviews (or quote snippets of public speeches / interviews) and add your own commentary. You can layer music with speech to heighten emotional impact. You can heighten your appeals to ethos and pathos by carefully crafting your performance / delivery of your words (or you could even have someone else read them following a script you write). I imagine that your audio essay will be at least a minute in final form.

*Visual Essay (Photo or Video):*

Visuals can be particularly good for making emotional appeals that move people to action. They can also be a way to translate “hard evidence” into a quickly understandable, engaging format. And, visuals can be a form of evidence themselves. (For example, if you wanted to argue that campus should be more accessible for people in wheelchairs, you could take pictures of places that aren't accessible.) If you incorporate pieces of other people's images into your work, remember to attribute them (and try to use creative commons work if possible). Your visual project might be presented as a brief PowerPoint slideshow, a collage, or a brief (less than a minute) video.

## Reflecting on your Composing

In addition to composing the alphabetic, visual, and audio texts, you will also write a reflective essay outlining why you made the choices that you did and what you learned from the process of composing in different media. In this essay, you should actively reference rhetorical concepts from your textbook and/or from in-class lectures and activities. Your reflective essay should be at least 750 words and it should address the following questions:

- 1) What rhetorical goals were your best able (and/or least able) to accomplish with words? Why?
- 2) What rhetorical goals were you best able (and/or least able) to accomplish with sounds? Why?
- 3) What rhetorical goals were you best able (and/or least able) to accomplish with images? Why?
- 4) What aspects of your issue did you focus on? What did you leave out? Why?
- 5) Who did you imagine as your audience for your texts? How did you compose/design your texts with your audience in mind? How did you (or why didn't you) incorporate advice from your instructor, peers, and readings? (Note: it's perfectly fine—encouraged even—for you to explain why you didn't take advice)
- 6) Did you use any copyrighted visuals and sounds? If so, how can you demonstrate that you

used them sparingly for the purposes of analysis or critique?

7) What would you fix or change if you had more time and resources?

(Remember: Even if you choose to work collaboratively on this project, you must each turn in a separate reflective essay.)

### **Getting Feedback (and turning it in)**

For this project, you will complete three versions: the alpha version (a rough unfinished prototype), the beta version (a more complete prototype), and the release version (the final published composition). Only the final version will receive a grade; however, you must turn each version in order to receive full credit.

For the alpha version (Due 10/17), you must have a rough start on two of three primary texts: audio essay, visual essay, alphabetic essay. You also must turn in about 200 words of rough reflection on the choices you have made so far in composing and the choices you have left to make. For the beta version (Due 10/31), you must have a rough start on all three primary texts: audio essay, visual essay, and alphabetic essay. You also must turn in about 400 words of reflection about the composing choices you have made so far and the choices you still have left to make (building on the reflections you made last time). For the release version (Due 11/9), everything should be complete.