ENGLISH 1323 ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment Sequence

- Commonplace blog (ongoing) → Digital Progymnasmata exercises → Digital Form
  Revision Exercises → Research-Based Hybrid Project

1) Commonplace blog (see ARCS 324)

- The commonplace blog is a space for students to take an active and focused interest in the commonplace values, beliefs, forms, and dominant strategies that they see in the culture around them. In order to create their commonplace blog, students will keep a blog either through Blackboard (not public) or through a popular Blog site (such as “Blogger.com”—public). On the blog, they will track a running list of quotations, snippets, summaries, links and observations about topics related to the secondary text they are studying in the course. For each entry, students will jot down their thoughts about the artifact or link under consideration, amplifying any observations about the audience, purpose, and form that seem relevant. Ultimately, the commonplace blog will serve as the grounds for students’ justification of the audience, purpose, and forms of their final project. The commonplace blog is also a useful tool for getting students to expand the copia of examples, values, strategies, and data that they will need to draw on when arguing or explaining.

- For the Digital Lab course, the commonplace blog should focus specifically on larger topics and issues generated by discussion of the secondary digital text used in the course. Students should also be encouraged to look at commonplace values and forms particular to their disciplinary interests (these can be defined broadly: medicine, social sciences, art, etc.). Attention should be made to the boundaries between “digital” and “academic” spaces.

2) Digital Progymnasmata Exercises

- The Progymnasmata exercises are designed to draw students into increasingly complex ways of understanding and using textual strategies in order to affect an audience. For the Digital Lab courses, it is essential that students track how textual strategies affect audiences differently in various digital and traditional academic spaces. Each Progymnasmata exercise in the Digital Lab course should lead students to ask how the rhetorical strategies under consideration change as they are used in traditional essays versus more kairotic digital forms. Thus, students should be led to ask, how do the textual strategies and forms of the Progymnasmata work? What are the limits of their usefulness? Each exercise should emphasize the following three rhetorical moves:
  — First, analysis: students will focus on examples of the Progymnasmata strategy (i.e. “Invective,” “Confirmation,” etc.) that they find particularly convincing circulating both within the academic community and within the larger culture. Examples may be drawn from the students’ own experiences and observations, as well as from the secondary text used in the course. Students will break down the strategy, asking how it works for a specific purpose and a specific audience. What does this strategy make possible in its unique context? What does this strategy prevent from being seen or heard?
  — Second, invention: students will re-redeploy the Progymnasmata strategy for their own purpose and audience. Focusing on their own topic of interest, students will attempt to use the Progymnasmata strategy in ways that an audience interested in their topic would find convincing. The goal here is to isolate a particular rhetorical strategy for students to explore and experiment with in the context of the project they are developing.
Third, revision: students will track how the Progymnasmata strategy changes and alters as they apply it to a new purpose, audience and situation. The goal here is for students to be able to think about the significant work it takes to adapt a rhetorical strategy to a different context. Questions of “how” the strategy works are particularly important to ask. How does this strategy make it easier to write about some aspects of the topic and not others? What is difficult to convey using this strategy?

- The Progymnasmata sequence for this course moves through:
  - Confirmation and Refutation (ARCS 113): exercises skill with stasis theory; anticipating alternative positions/arguments
  - Encomium and Invective (ARCS 186): exercises skill with making strong logical claims
  - Introduction of Law (ARCS 287): exercises skill with using data and other extrinsic proofs in order to support an argument
  - Note: for the forms of these exercises, you may choose to have students write traditional print-based exercises or require them to explore different multi-modal forms as an alternative. A strong component of the exercises should be a comparison of forms (see below).

3) Digital Form Revision exercises
- These revision exercises ask students to revise their work significantly by investigating how the work resonates differently between different audiences, forms, and purposes. For the Digital Lab courses, students will primarily be revising either from traditional print forms to digital spaces, or from one different digital form to another. The goal for these exercises is not only to push students to revise as a habit, but also to look critically at the limitations and uses of different technologies, styles, arrangements, and other rhetorical strategies within the context of academic argument. By engaging in frequent and significant revision of their own work, students will be encouraged to see academic writing as it is expressed differently in different forms and for different purposes. Exercises in digital form revision include:
  - Revising mode: students “translate” a print draft of their argument into a digital space
  - Revising proofs: students use digital tools to support the claims of their argument, including: Images, Video, Audio, Hyperlinks, Comments
  - Revising arrangement: students revise their argument in order to create a nonlinear text using digital tools
  - Revising audience: students revise their text to meet the expectations of a general popular audience versus a specific audience within their chosen academic discipline
- Note: Each revision exercise should also engage a critical component that requires students to reflect on their textual choices in revising.

4) Research-based Hybrid Project
- Specifications
  - Purpose: Argument for a plan of action addressing a relevant and exigent topic
  - Audience: Academic, preferably from within students’ disciplinary interests
  - Content: Relevant issue drawn from secondary text
  - Format: Hybrid, partially in traditional print media and partially in a more current digital media form
- The Research-based Hybrid Project will be the capstone writing project for the Digital Lab course and will require students to submit a well-researched, rhetorically sophisticated textual
argument. For the Digital Lab course, this argument must take on a hybrid form: the argument will be made both in traditional print and in a different digital medium. In order to articulate an argument using each form, students will need to draw on all of the rhetorical strategies that they have been studying in the course. The project will focus on an aspect of a larger problem or issue that students see circulating in the secondary text from the course. For the project, students will expose and at the same time to lay out a researched plan of action aimed at two different audiences—one “academic” and one non-academic. In addition to this focus on production, a critical component of the project will ask students to articulate how writing for a digital environment allows different rhetorical choices than writing for a traditional academic environment. Students ultimately will be asked to think about how the different scenes, forms, and audiences in digital and traditional academic settings shape (and and are in turn shaped by) the rhetorical strategies we choose when we write. The Hybrid Project has three parts.

(a) First, a sophisticated analysis of the audience and purpose of the project. This analysis needs to explain why there is an exigent need for the kind of action the student is proposing, who will be invested in the project, and how the course of action recommended will impact the audience. For the Digital Lab course, the analysis must also consider how the argument will change in its different hybrid forms. The justification for the audience and purpose of the essay should be grounded in the students’ observations from their own Commonplace Blogs (see above), as well as from their experience in “inventing” academic arguments in multiple forms over the course of the semester using strategies of stasis theory, logical appeals, and extrinsic proofs. The analysis may be turned in as a proposal for the larger “invention” part of the project.

(b) Second, invention, which requires students to invent two separate forms for their argument.

(i) First, students will create a traditional print-based essay arguing for a course of action to be taken on a relevant issue or problem. The Hybrid Project should ultimately propose a recommended course of action about a topic of interest to the student. The essay also needs to provide context and support for the student’s argument, demonstrating sophisticated understanding of how different textual strategies work together to make an academic audience receptive to the ideas intended by the student-author. This text should meet traditional academic expectations (and students should be able to articulate these expectations critically).

(ii) Second, students will create an alternative form for their argument, considering all of the means of persuasion studied over the course of the semester. The digital portion of the Hybrid Project may use images, links, video, space, and other rhetorical strategies in order to draw a different audience to the students’ arguments. In creating this Hybrid Project, students will need to think carefully about the audiences and purposes for the various forms of their argument, considering what proofs and premises each audience is likely to find appealing as well as what kinds of alternative courses of action or definitions of the problem the audiences might be inclined to consider. The hybrid arguments will be a significant (but not the only) component of the student’s assessment for the project.

(c) Third, critical reflection on the scope and limitations of the Hybrid Project. This final element of the project will ask students to engage in critical reflection about the
limitations of their abilities to argue in different forms and for different audiences and purposes. This reflection should consider the essay in the context of larger questions about how texts function rhetorically in the contemporary academic environment, and particularly within the students’ chosen disciplines or areas of interest. Students will analyze how the choices they have made in their Hybrid Project “fit in” with the expectations of the academy as well as with the larger values and beliefs that students have been observing in their Commonplace Blogs over the course of the semester. The goal for this final stage of the project is to look at what the scene of academic writing allows and disallows—what we can see more clearly through academic arguments and what this scene makes very difficult to express or make visible. The critical reflection component of the project asks students to answer these larger questions by appealing to what they have learned through the attempt to promote their own arguments and courses of action using the textual strategies of rhetoric learned in the course.

5) Assignment Schedule
- Note: make sure that you plan time to focus on how students are reading the secondary text for the course using the rhetorical strategies they are learning

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<td>Extrinsic Proofs</td>
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