

Reflection Paper Instructions, according to due date

Sep 17

Write 200 - 300 words reflecting on the **Reynolds article** considered in the group discussion. As we are all familiar with the article, there is no need to summarize it. Instead, comment on **what you think the article does well** and on **what you find problematic** in it. For each point you make about the article, **explain why** you evaluate it as well done or as problematic.

The general purpose of the assignment is to encourage you to look closely at a popular press article and to evaluate the ideas and thinking found in it.

Sep 24

Write 200 - 300 words of rhetorical analysis on one of the following items you read for the September 17 class: Elgin, hooks, or Swanwick *et al.*

There is no need to summarize the item. Instead, in sentences and paragraphs comment on how the rhetorical features discussed thus far in the course can be seen in the item. For example, your analysis could provide answers to questions such as: who is the author/speaker, who is the audience, what is the topic/subject matter? What seems to be the author's purpose? What are the assumed characteristics of the audience? What are the relations among author, audience, and topic? Does the author rely more on *logos*, *pathos*, or *ethos* in the presentation; are the other two absent or also present but less central? Do the organization, choice of words, and figures of speech facilitate or detract from the author's purpose, from the audience's purposes? Is there a central piece of information given or an argument around which the article is constructed? **Be sure to explain or give examples to illustrate the points you make in your analysis.**

The general purpose of the assignment is to practice applying the concept of rhetorical analysis, particularly as it is described in the Larsen encyclopedia entry.

Oct 1

Write 200 - 300 words reflecting on the definition of rhetoric given by Michel Meyer (pages 6 and 9).

Some questions you might consider in your reflection include: What does Meyer's definition add to the conception of rhetoric developed by the authors we considered in the first week? What do you consider to be its most important features? Why? Do you think that Michael Billig would be favourable or unfavourable to Meyer's definition? Why? How about Tafarella? In what ways is Meyer emphasizing something different from the authors in his definition? Does the strategy of thinking critically fit with Meyer's definition – any more or less than with other definitions? What might someone conducting a rhetorical analysis do differently if using the Meyer definition instead of one those offered by other authors?

The general purpose of the reflection paper is to make connections and comparisons among the conceptions of rhetoric offered thus far and to attend to some of their implications.

Oct 8

Write 200-300 words reflecting on your personal experience with one or more of the aspects of rhetorical analysis and critical thinking raised thus far in the course. You could write about a situation in which you were the persuader or the one being persuaded, the critical thinker or the object of someone else's critical thinking, or about a rhetorical situation you observed. Features of analysis you might choose to illustrate include keeping an open mind, seeking alternatives, promoting understanding through analogies, assessing a speaker/writer's credibility, assessing shared premises with an audience,

using style/arrangement in persuasion, emphasizing the relationship between speaker and audience as a basis for persuasion, misunderstandings based in differences in cultural expectations for rhetorical situations,

The general purpose of the reflection paper this week is to draw connections between {1} the aspects of rhetorical analysis and critical thinking illustrated in the course readings, and (2) your personal experience.

Oct 22

Excerpts from three published articles were provided in the [Discussion Questions for October 8](#), and in that week's class we worked together to analyze the first of the three. For this reflection paper, choose one of the other two excerpts and write 200-300 words of analysis using concepts from the October 8 readings. It is not necessary to use all the concepts from the readings, but you should try to choose the ones most relevant to the excerpt you choose. The twelve questions at the end (p. 34) of the Roediger/McCabe article provide an example of the kind of questions you might ask to guide your analysis.

Oct 29

Newspapers, websites, TV shows, and many other media regularly present claims. These claims are often premises for an argument or the conclusion to an argument. The writers rarely use the terminology of claim, premise, conclusion, but you can spot these characteristics if you are looking for them. This week find an argument that is in a public place (newspaper, website, etc.) and explain why you think it fits the definition of argument. Describe its logical features. For example, you could point out the premises and conclusion in the argument you find. Use as much of the terminology of the readings on argument and logic as you can in describing the argument - valid, cogent, strong, fallacy names, etc.

To see two examples of how one might complete this exercise, go to [this page](#):

At the beginning of your reflection either copy out the material you are discussing or give a link that will take your reader directly to the item.

Nov 5

Write 200-300 words reflecting on your experience with the topics of the Oct. 29 readings (fake news, conspiracy theories, rumours, for example) using ideas from the readings as much as possible.

Examples of ideas/questions you might address in your reflection: describe how well your own interaction with these matters matches, or does not match, what you found in the readings. Did you ever spread fake news, memes, conspiracy theories, or rumours? Did you ever start a rumour? Do you feel like you, or friends, are living in an echo chamber? Have you ever attempted to step out of your echo chamber? Have you made use of fact-checking sites in trying to persuade others? Have your practices regarding misinformation changed as a result of this week's readings?

As you discuss these or other reflections on the reading, make explicit reference to the readings wherever appropriate.

Nov 12

Write 200-300 words describing the development of your process for reading academic material. Use the terminology from the SPARK module and the Critical Analysis PowerPoint where appropriate.

Examples of questions you might consider include: Has your reading process changed? What were valuable prompts to your development? Would you consider yourself an active reader? Are you now engaging in critical analysis as you read? What aspects of SQ4R and critical analysis are you confident with and which ones could use more development? Are there aspects of critical reading and analysis that required more work than others to develop?

Nov 19

Choose one (or more) of the [Discussion Questions for November 12](#) and write a 200-300-word response to the chosen item(s).

Nov 26

Construct a one- or two-paragraph argument on the topic of requiring university students to explicitly study critical thinking in their degree programmes. You may take a position for or against such a requirement, as you wish. Also, you could choose to focus on some element of, or variation on, critical thinking instead of critical thinking broadly – argument mapping, logical fallacies, analytic thinking, for example. Try to use a full complement of argument components (claims, evidence, reasons, counterclaims, for example) as described in recent readings. Where possible, in your argument use ideas taken from the assigned readings.

Dec 3

Write 200-300 words reflecting on your experience with interactions that could be described by concepts in this week's readings such as collaboration, collaborative learning, dialogue, constructive conflict, deliberative communication, group discussion/conversation. Describe how your experience does, or does not, display the characteristics associated with these activities as described in the assigned reading. What does your experience suggest regarding important considerations for obtaining the benefits from such activity that the readings suggest are possible?

As you reflect on the reading and on your related experience, make explicit reference to the readings.

Jan 14

Choose one of the articles assigned for November 26 and write a paragraph or two summarizing its primary argument (or another important argument within the article). Indicate the role that each sentence (or portion of a sentence) in your paragraph plays in the argument. For example, you might choose to highlight claims in yellow, evidence in green, warrants in red, etc. Or you could number the sentences, as in the following example based on the Widder & Anderson article from November 19.

The rhetoric of alternative medicine providers is based in straw man arguments regarding professionalized medicine.¹ For example, such providers say “Western physicians view medicine as war.”² This is a straw man argument because it misrepresents the view of Western physicians and is easier to counter than their actual more complex view³ (see Talise & Aiken on definition of straw man arguments).⁴ Alternative medicine providers claim that their argument is not a straw man⁵ because Western physicians do use phrases such as “this medication is the best weapon to attack your illness”.⁶ However, this claim misses the point that physicians also use non-military language and encourage patients to listen to the cues provided by their bodies.⁷

1. Claim 2. Evidence 3. Warrant connecting 2 to 1 4. Backing for 3 5. Counterclaim 6. Evidence for counterclaim 7. Refutation of counterclaim

Jan 21

Choose one (or more) of the [Discussion Questions for January 14](#) and write a 200-300-word response to the chosen item(s).

Jan 28

Choose one of the following brief (about 10 minutes) articles and reflect on the connections to be found between the chosen article and the readings assigned for January 21. For example, the chosen article might discuss some of the same topics that appear in the readings, the article might provide examples of processes described in the readings, the article might make use of some of the same theories or suggestions presented in the readings, or the readings might provide ways to understand or explain things mentioned in the chosen article. Write 200-300 words summarizing your reflections.

The *Salon* article by Susan Shapiro and titled, [The Forgiveness Tour: How to Find the Perfect Apology](#).

The *New York Times* article by Charlie Warzel and titled, [The Pro-Trump Movement was always headed here](#).

Feb 4

A theme of this week's work is how fear can be an obstacle to critical thinking, as well as how that obstacle can be overcome. Among the fears described were: fear of showing weakness, fear of change, fear of failure, fear of uncertainty/ambiguity, fear of strangers/foreigners/others, fear of disrupting an important relationship, fear of losing money or other important thing, fear of losing face, and fear in a life-threatening situation. Choose one of these with which you have some personal experience and write 200-300 words describing how your critical thinking was affected in the situation or might be handled in future instances of the situation. Comment on whether or not your experience matches with the ideas found in this week's reading (Jan 28).

If you prefer, interview someone else about these matters, or select an appropriate character from a film or novel, and comment on how their experience or plans for future situations fit with the course reading.

Feb 11

Choose one (or more) of the [Discussion Questions for February 4](#) and write a 200-300 word response to the chosen item(s).

Feb 25

Describe a situation with which you have personal experience (or one you know from a film, novel, or news story) and in which you (or the person in the film, for example) came to realize that something that had been taken for granted and thought of as normal was actually a social construction and could be "remade" differently. In your reflection (200-300 words) explain how the ideas of social construction, as seen in this week's readings, apply to the situation. Use terminology from the readings where appropriate.

Mar 4

Choose one (or more) of the [Discussion Questions for February 25](#) and write a 200-300-word response to the chosen item(s).

Mar 11

Debating the adoption of public-school curriculum guidelines on the topic of climate change and its human origins, an American state legislator said,

There's been a lot of recent criticisms.... I know it's a very very difficult, very very controversial subject...that is very much in dispute even among even the academics." But the state representative "is very very wrong. In a recent survey of just over 4000 scientific papers in which the scientists took a position on the cause of global warming, 97.1% endorsed a human cause. The survey found that the consensus has grown slowly over time, and reached about 98% as of 2011. ([Dossey, 2014, p335](#))

Write a 200/300-word reflection on your own experience of doubt about human-created climate change. You could consider your own personal doubts or those you have encountered in others. Relevant considerations in your reflection would include where do these doubts come from? Have they increased or diminished in recent times? What, if any, sources have you (or those you are describing) sought out in thinking about this issue? Has it been a topic in any educational experience you have been part of? Who benefits from sowing doubt about human-created climate change? What obstacles might stand in the path of you or others thinking critically about this topic.

Mar 18.

Choose one (or more) of the [Discussion Questions for March 11](#) and write a 200–300-word response to the chosen item(s).

Mar 25

Review the paper you wrote for the Project 3 assignment (Feb 25) and evaluate it using the Washington State University rubric. Based on the rubric descriptions, give your paper a score from 0 to 6 for each of the seven dimensions of the rubric. Report these scores and write a paragraph describing what you learned about the rubric, about your writing, or both, as a result of applying the rubric to your work.

Apr 1

This week we have considered a number of ideas that arise when one thinks critically about the discipline of Psychology. Choose one of these ideas and write 200-300 words summarizing your sense of the claim being made and the evidence/reasons supporting that claim. Briefly indicate why you find the reasons strong or weak.

Some example claims (though many others are possible):

- Psychology's focus on individuals limits its ability to explain human experience.
- Important aspects of psychological experience cannot be explained at the level of biology.
- Psychological researchers should conduct their work in ways that actively address systemic problems in society.

Apr 8

Please write 200-300 words regarding how the assigned Critical Psychology material has changed your conception of the discipline of Psychology. Mention factors that were significant in changing your view/understanding.

It is also acceptable to argue that the material did not change your conception of the discipline. In that case, describe why no change occurred – weak arguments, irrelevant content, prior knowledge, ...