

DUE: February 14 on Canvas by submitting electronic upload
(doc, docx)

English 104, Unit 2: Documentary Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetoric is everywhere: our media, our conversations, our disciplines. For this assignment, you will be watching a documentary, analyzing the documentary for its rhetorical effectiveness (or ineffectiveness), and then writing a rhetorical analysis paper.

Assignment's Writing Program Goals:

-Take initiative for the development and completion of individual research projects

-Employ format, syntax, punctuation, and spelling appropriate to the rhetorical situation in a stylistically sophisticated manner.

Additional goals:

-Research the contextual information of the documentary

-Analyze documentaries for its rhetorical effectiveness

-Write a rhetorical analysis based on a documentary and incorporate research

Why should I care about this?

This assignment functions as a building block to the rest of the semester:

How does this help me for the next assignment?

⇒ In the next assignment, you will use this documentary to inspire a topic that you would like to investigate more. From there, you will generate a research question that will guide your research process as you create an annotated bibliography. Moreover, in an annotated bibliography, you will need to evaluate your sources, which are skills you'll practice here.

How does this help me for this course?

⇒ After you research your question to create an annotated bibliography, you will then write a research paper. This paper will become the hallmark of the class that will both be a paper as well as a remixed multimodally. Additionally, you will need to employ effective rhetorical techniques in your own work like the documentarians do (or don't).

How does this help me in my life?

⇒ Documentaries are a form of mass media, which inundates our lives, so being able to be rhetorically critical of these arguments will make you a more rhetorically aware. Additionally, documentaries are based in research (and will help generate questions for your research), which will help prepare you to investigate, argue, and about issues and topics you are interested in--a huge skill to have both for your college career, but also for life.

Choosing a Documentary

You will get to choose from one of the following documentaries to watch, research, analyze, and write about:

- ◆ *13th* (Available free on Netflix)
- ◆ *Blackfish* (Available free on Netflix & for \$2.99 on YouTube)
- ◆ *RBG* (Available free on Hulu & for \$3.99 on YouTube)
- ◆ Any **two** episodes of *Adam Ruins Everything* (Available for free on Netflix, free with cable subscription on TruTV, and \$1.99 on Amazon)

Researching the Context

Usually, every author/documentarian/speaker is creating their argument during an opportune moment in time for a specific, intended audience (*kairos*). You will need to research the larger societal context(s) and background information that inspired the documentary. This research will need to be integrated into your paper as you argue for why the choices the documentarian made are rhetorically effective (or ineffective).

Your research should only include credible sources. According to [BallPoint](#), you want to make sure that your sources can pass the C.R.A.A.P. test. Your source type could include, but is not limited, to periodicals, magazine articles, and/or scholarly articles.

Writing the Paper

Remember that a rhetorical analysis considers how the author(s) create(s) (or does not create) an effective argument, not what it being said. In other words, you will not summarize the documentary, but instead looking at how the documentarian uses rhetorical strategies to establish their credibility (*ethos*) and also appeal to their intended audience's sense of logic (*logos*) and emotion (*pathos*).

Most likely, you should focus on 2-3 rhetorical strategies throughout their documentary and delve into how those make the documentary effective. Similarly, the chosen rhetorical strategies may not use all three appeals, so it is perfectly fine to address fewer appeals.

Your paper will be **4-5 pages** and integrate a minimum of **two credible sources** regarding the context of the documentary.

Submission Criteria

- Electronic upload to Canvas with paper formatted in MLA 8
- 4-5 full pages (*not including visuals or Works Cited page*)

Grading Criteria (150 points overall/15% of grade)

This paper will be graded holistically with all components (incorporation of research and rhetorical analysis) taken into consideration. You'll primarily be graded on you incorporate research on the documentary's *kairos* to determine whether the documentary was rhetorically effective. You should have credible sources that get integrated and analyzed throughout the paper. Additionally, you'll be graded on your analysis of how the documentarian uses rhetorical techniques to create (or not) a rhetorically effective documentary. A paper that merely summarizes content and/or does not meet this assignment's requirements will not garner a passing grade.