ARGUMENT/PERSUASION

“It is not too much to say that argument is a civilizing influence, the very basis of democratic order . . . . In free societies, argument and debate remain the preeminent means of arriving at consensus.”

Annette Rottenberg

“A time has come when silence is betrayal. That time is now . . . .”

Martin Luther King Jr

ASSIGNMENT: In this last essay project, you’ll have the opportunity to use the rhetorical strategies you’ve been perfecting all term. In an essay of 4-5 typed pages, take a stand on an issue of real concern for you. Analyze your probable audience, then decide on your focus/purpose. Let that focus guide you through your research on your position. Use this research to support your position with evidence (examples, facts, statistics). In your essay, you must use and acknowledge at least 3 authoritative sources. Finally, you’ll need to develop your position using the classic art of persuasion.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

• Confidently use a variety of rhetorical strategies (narration, description, comparative analysis, causal analysis) to affirm your own position on important issues.
• Join the academic conversation on issues that are important to you.
• Appreciate the power of your own writing.

ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

♦ Choose a topic that interests you and that causes genuine controversy. Your “argument/persuasion” should take place in an area that “invite(s) more than one opinion.” Here’s your opportunity to advocate your own “open-eyed, open-minded view of reality” (Kennedy 503).

♦ Focus and define your issue. For this assignment, the more focused your topic, the more manageable your project, the more effective your essay.

♦ State your position in a thesis statement early in your essay. Also, remember that your readers appreciate a forecast of main points, a statement that lists the points your essay will make in the order that they are presented.

♦ Craft a well organized essay. For persuasion, effective organization is essential. Once you’ve focused your thesis statement and developed sound research to support your position, put creative energy into how you plan to present your information. Consider all the rhetorical strategies available: narration, description, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, definition, exemplification, etc.

♦ Make sure you have enough support (RATIONAL APPEALS: facts, logical reasons, statistics, testimony of experts, opinions, reports, examples, logical reasoning, analogy, etc)
and EMOTIONAL APPEALS) to establish your ETHICAL APPEAL (“convincing your reader that you are a well-informed person of good will, good sense, and good moral character”).

♦ **Keep an open mind as you develop your essay.** Don’t stick with a position simply because it is the one you started with. Allow yourself time for changing your mind.

♦ **Analyze your probable audience** (which should include those people who would disagree with your position). Show sensitivity to your readers by making concessions to their points-of-view.

♦ **Show off your MLA/APA documentation skills.** Be sure that you integrate your sources by using lead-ins and in-text citations for paraphrases, summaries, or quotations where needed.

♦ **End with a formal “Reference” page or “Works Cited” page that follows APA/MLA Guidelines.**

### CALENDAR

#### WEEK 8

<table>
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<th>Day</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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| Mon Feb 24: | READ: “Argument & Persuasion” pages 498-515  
IN CLASS: Collaborative Activity |
| Wed Feb 26: | READ: For your Reading Response, please choose from the following  
1) any essay from Chapter 13 (pages 516-557)  
or Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” p 603  
or a newspaper or journal editorial  
DUE: Thesis/Audience/Reasons/Support worksheet  
IN CLASS: Rangefinder discussion |
| Fri Feb 28: | IN CLASS: Writing Exercise #4: Source Search  
TURN IN: Outline |

#### WEEK 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mon Mar 3:</td>
<td>IN CLASS: Practice Final Day 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed Mar 5:</td>
<td>IN CLASS: Practice Final Day 2</td>
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<td>Fri Mar 7:</td>
<td>FINAL practice postscript/review</td>
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#### WEEK 10

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| Mon March 10: | Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” p 603  
DUE: Reader Response: Summary/Analysis/Response |
| Wed Mar 12: | Peer Review Workshop |
| Fri Mar 14: | TURN IN PERSUASIVE ESSAY  
As usual, please include all work in your final folder (prewriting activities, worksheets, outlining, drafts, research sources with the passages you’ve used highlighted, workshop notes, and postscript). |

**GOOD LUCK ON THE FINAL EXAM**