***Unit 3 Assignment – Composing Rhetorical Narratives***

In Unit 3 of 101 we will continue to develop some of the rhetorical skills and strategies that were introduced in the “Zines” and “Image-Text Analysis” assignments. This unit is primarily concerned with developing critical thinking skills, cultivating rhetorical awareness (especially of the Audience & Purpose of your project), and improving the finesse with which one identifies and employs rhetorical appeals.

Unlike previous projects, this unit affords our class two options. Today, we will be reviewing the pros, cons, possibilities, and complications of each of these assignments in small groups and as a class, and I will be inviting both sections of the class to **vote** on which Unit 3 option we will undertake. On Wednesday I will announce the “winner” and we will begin to work!

Both project options are designed to develop the skills we have worked to cultivate thus far in 801, and yet they are materially different. Both require a “creative/ narrative” aspect, and both will require a substantial piece of writing (a “methodology/ rhetorical analysis” hybrid”).

One aspect of this project that should form some sort of bedrock for your thinking is that the “creative/ narrative” aspect is intended to be “publishable” – i.e., I will (in part) be grading the assignment based on the assumption that you will, might, or *could* disseminate the project to a broader public stream via social media, digital forums, or some other means.

**Option 1 Option 2**

Compose An Image-Text Design a Mix-tape

The **first option**, Composing an Image-Text is exactly what it sounds like – you are invited to compose a piece of media which communicates an argument via simultaneous verbal and visual means. The only “physical/material” requirement of this project is that it measure 5” x 8” minimum.

Having composed this image-text, you will be required to write an accompanying methodology and rhetorical analysis of the project (minimum 5 pages). In this piece of writing, you will be called on to do two main things:

1. Present a **methodology** (akin to the writing which accompanied the zine) wherein you detail the process of putting together your project. This will necessarily entail a discussion of the project’s origins & goals, the materials you’ve employed, complications that arose and influenced your final product, and offer some sense of how you might re-approach the project.
2. Offer a **rhetorical analysis** of your image-text, articulating its ostensible Subject, Audience, and Purpose; reflect on some possible Messages that your “Target Audience” might encounter; discuss what Rhetorical Appeals are in play with your image-text, as well as how and why they are effective (or might be made more effective in future attempts).

Essentially, this piece of writing begins as a discussion of “what you did,” “how you did it,” and will develop from there into an argument about why and how you think your image-text effectively communicates with your audience.

You may use any two-dimensional means to complete this project: paint, ink, pencil, construction paper, collaged pieces of magazines and/or online sources, tape, spray-paint, coffee stains, stencils, x-acto knives, glitter glue, *et cetera* are all encouraged as components of this project.

This Image-text must have an obvious Subject, Purpose, and Message, and the Audience will be understood to be your peers in 101 and your instructor (Rob). You may choose to craft an image-text for any Genre, but somewhere (perhaps in your response paper) you’ll need to articulate *how* your image-text both corresponds to *and* subverts the conventions of that genre.

The most crucial part of constructing this image-text is, of course, the argument that it makes, and a substantial portion of your grade will depend upon the efficacy of that argument. You may make any argument you desire in this project, but I’ll encourage you to charge your arguments with a political, socially conscious, and/or culturally sensitive sub-text – the image-texts won’t mean a thing unless they advocate for something you’re interested in, serious about, and critically invested in!

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The **second option** for this assignment will ask you to put together a “mix-tape.” This is a static arrangement of songs (i.e., the songs are intended to be listened to in the order they appear in the track listing – rather than as discrete “shuffled” pieces). The “goal” behind a mix-tape (what distinguishes it from a playlist) is that one needs to listen to the thing *in its entirety* in order to “get it.”

Like zines, mix-tapes are cultural artifacts and byproducts from the 1980s and 1990s. They are D-I-Y, disruptive, and anti-consumerist – pirate media. Like zines, they say as much about their Author as they do the Audience, and therefore might be considered “narrative” texts. Mix-tapes are collages; mix-tapes are fun.

For this project, the mix-tape you produce must present an “argument.” Generally, the mix-tape genre indicates the “argument” (and contents) of the music tracks in the title.

Example titles of mix-tapes your instructor has produced, encountered, possessed, or experienced which suggest an argument: “Don’t Stop in Wyoming” “F U America: The Artistry of Nina Simone” “Die, Summer! Die! (Songs for Trashy Lake Days)” “How Long Since You Been Home?” “Bo Diddley’s *My* Dad Too” “Fear the Dark” “The Whole World is Rage” “*Going To…* (RoadTrip Mix Vols. I-X)” “TrueCultHateFolk: NE KS Blues & Dooms” “So Long, Fred Phelps! You Were Awful!” “We’re Breakin-up” “Trust Your Child” “I Won’t Be Your Santa Claus” “We’re Gonna Make It” “My Devil Is Reel: Slayer Goes Acoustic” & “Order Out of Chaos! (Global Street Music)”

Mix-tapes are and can do many things, but for our purposes they are “occasional” – meant to set the mood, atmosphere, or tone for a specific situation, event, or moment. This “occasion” can be “real” (i.e., something you’ve done or often do – “Moving Day” for example) or “imagined” (i.e., something that you’ve never done or don’t often do – “Going to the Moon” for example).

One caveat: the “occasion” for your mix-tape (what you might identify as the Subject, given our developing rhetorical lexicon) **CAN NOT BE** along the lines of “songs about me,” “songs I really like,” “autobiographical mix-tape,” “these songs are pretty good,” “my first year at college,” *et cetera*. In other words, the occasion which you choose to produce and compile tracks for must be specific, and the “mix-tape” itself must function as an Argument – with a Purpose.

In order to complicate the project, and to “standardize” your submissions, here are a few specific requirements that each mix-tape *must* include:

* 10 Tracks: no more, no less
* Play time: less than 74 minutes (the length of Beethoven’s 9th Symphony & maximum play time on CDs); more than 20 minutes
* Track order is static – no “shuffle” or “random” (see below) – part of what distinguishes a “mix-tape” from a “playlist”
* 2 Tracks must have been released/published in 2013 or 2014.
* 2 Tracks must have been released/published in the year you were born
* 2 Tracks must have been released/published before 1987
* 2 Tracks must have been released/published by an artist, group, band or collective who/which identifies with a gender not your own.
* 1 Track must be instrumental (i.e., no vocals/ lyrical content)
* 4 distinct genres of music must be present in the mix

\*It is not necessary that you include a “physical artifact” for your mix-tape. However: tapes, burned CDs, and/or flash-drive submissions will be appreciated; at the very least, you must include a hyperlinked track-list so that your audience (your peers and your instructor) can readily experience the tunes.

\*\*You are invited to include “album art” with the project, though this is not necessary and will not inflect your grade.

These mix-tapes will be accompanied by two pieces of writing.

1. You will write a review of another student’s mix-tape. This review will take the form of a critique, and must effectively function as a rhetorical analysis. You are invited to discuss the content of the mix-tape, the arrangement of the tracks, and its appealing (or unappealing!) qualities. The review will be accompanied by a “rating” of your own design (example: “Four Stars,” “9/10,” “Three Severed Thumbs Up,” et cetera). (600-750 words)
2. You will write a methodology and rhetorical analysis of your mixtape (see details above, under **first option**). This “methodological analysis” must indicate your “goals” for producing the mixtape (Subject!), articulate the desired effect on your Audience (Purpose!), and speak to the *order* in which the tracks are arranged (answering the [example] questions “Why is this the opening track?” “Why this one the closer?” “What mood were you attempting to cultivate?” “Which track is your favorite?” *et cetera*). Most importantly, you must treat each song individually *as well as* part of a whole, indicating *why* you chose each track you did, and the desired effect of each track’s inclusion in the mix-tape.

**Due: Monday Nov. 25**

**(other relevant dates – as well as a grading schedule – will be determined *after* voting)**