*Unit I*

**Album Cover Analysis**

For the first writing project, you will write a rhetorical analysis of two album covers each from a different genre of music. In this unit, we will define rhetoric and look at three modes of persuasion, or rhetorical appeals (pathos, logos, and ethos), and we will analyze how images persuade our culture, therefore persuading us as individuals. Performing an analysis of a visual text will help you enhance your analytical ability and practice the kind of work you will do in your other courses at the university, which is central to being an active participant in both academic and civic life.

We live in a world where we continuously use images to persuade, communicate, and inform in order to change attitudes and induce cooperation in an audience. These rhetorical moves can be found in various forms of visual texts such as advertisements, posters, billboards, and book covers. While we are all aware of this to some degree much of the subtlety of rhetoric passes by without our notice. In the process, it slowly influences our worldview in ways that we might not even recognize. Allen Ginsburg said: “Whoever controls the media – the images – controls the culture.” Becoming aware of the rhetorical moves used in public discourses, then, is essential to critical thinking and decision-making.

In this essay, you will choose two album covers each from a different genre (e.g. rap, indie, rock, country, etc.) and analyze the rhetorical situation. You may need to address such issues as:

* What message is the artist trying to convey through their album cover?
* Who is the intended audience?
* What effects does the album cover have on that intended audience?
* What appeals are the artists consciously using through the visual image of the album cover?
* How do color schemes potentially influence audience reactions?
* How is the artist commenting on historical/social/political situations?
* How is the artist playing into or subverting the preset roles or assumptions of their particular genres?
* How is the artist communicating their album cover through the lyrics in that particular album?
* How do the two genres differ in terms of visual presentation?

When you analyze your two chosen album covers, you’ll need to have an understanding of the context, including the possible historical/political/social situation(s). Context provides a foundation and could help us interpret images. You may quote specific phrases/sentences/lyrics from the album itself as a way to help your analysis of the album cover, but remember that the majority of your album cover analysis is based on the album cover itself - the images. Examine everything about the rhetorical features of the album, even how and why the artist uses specific words, images, design/format, colors, etc. Providing thorough explanations of how your examples connect to your observations is a key to an in-depth analysis.

**As I read your essays, I will consider the following questions:**

* Does the essay have a clear controlling idea thoroughly developed throughout the essay?
* Does the essay provide a detailed analysis of the rhetorical situation of the chosen text and the major rhetorical strategies used by the author?
* Do the paragraphs develop well-defined claims with specific examples from the text and detailed explanations?
* Are the paragraphs linked together into a well-developed and coherent interpretation of the chosen text?
* Do the sentences of the essay express the writer’s ideas clearly and effectively?

These questions should help guide you in understanding the expectations of the assignment. We will form a more in-depth expectation criteria together as a class, and we will negotiate what is and is not effective for this particular assignment.

Your essay should be double-spaced, 4-5 pages in length (1250-1650 words), 12 pt. Font, 1” margin, Times New Roman.

Note: There is a mandatory conference for this project. Failure to show up to the conference will result in two absences (not one).

**Deadlines:**

**Wednesday, September 16th**: Mandatory meeting

**Friday, September 18th:** Mandatory meeting

**Monday, September 21st:** Unit I first draft due (in class and online)

**Friday, September 25th:** Unit I second draft due (in class and online)

**Wednesday, September 30th:** Unit I final draft due (in class and online)