*Unit II*

**Eulogy**

For the second unit, we will be using our newfound rhetorical analysis abilities to analyze our culture, specifically how our culture perceives and influences us in how to approach grief, pain, and death. This unit will be divided into two larger topics: (1) an analysis of texts that challenge us to compare/contrast the historical perception/handling of death to our current culture’s perception/handling of death, and (2) an in-depth examination of the genre of the eulogy.

The first part of the unit will allow us to examine what we learned in our first unit – how our culture influences us and persuades us through images and texts. We will be looking at how culture adapts and changes in mindset and ideals, and how that influences the individuals that construct the community. We will be studying a few texts to see whether our culture has changed from a communal approach (historically) in handling grief and pain to a more individualist approach (presently). Some questions that we’ll be evaluating further include: how often do we talk about death or suffering among the people around us? If we talk about death (or if we don’t talk about death), how does that influence us when pain or suffering happens? If death is a universal truth, what is the most effective way to engage in that discussion and what is the most efficient way to prepare us for those circumstances? Since we are limited in time, I should note that the chosen texts are just one view of a much larger conversation. Therefore, they should not be held as the *only* argument.

The second part of the unit will challenge us to analyze and examine the nature of the eulogy. Like every piece of writing, a eulogy is a type of genre that follows certain conventions and expectations with an intended audience in mind. We’ll be studying *what* the genre – the eulogy – does and *how* it does it, and we’ll be looking at examples in class. Ultimately, you are being asked to write a eulogy: you’ll be writing a eulogy for an individual who you think you might have to give a eulogy for at some point. This type of writing evokes a personal, usually privatized state of mind that encompasses a variety of emotions and feelings. I believe our exploration of how our historic and present culture handles grief will allow us to see the benefit in producing this type of document, even with it being an often suppressed, sensitive subject.

When writing this eulogy, you may need to address such issues as:

* Who is the intended audience? What effects does the eulogy have on that intended audience?
* What are the genre expectations of a eulogy and how have you met those expectations?
* How are you representing the individual’s life in the eulogy, and how may that embody what that individual stood for?
* Is there a system of belief (e.g. faith) that the individual possessed, is there an organization that should be recognized when talking about the individual (e.g. local community), etc.?
* What tone is the eulogy communicating (celebratory, somber, etc.)?

When thinking about writing the eulogy, you need to consider some other aspects and how these influence your mindset: are you writing the eulogy for a grandparent? Are you writing for a parent who passes away later in life? Are you writing this for a friend who has unexpectingly passed away? Consider the timeframe and cause of death. You don’t have to acknowledge either one of these aspects in the eulogy, but both aspects influence the tone, style, and content of what is being said.

**As I read the eulogy, I will consider the following questions:**

* Does the eulogy follow conventional genre expectations?
* Does the eulogy consider the intended audience and is it appropriate, tasteful?
* Does the eulogy extensively represent an individual’s character, including signifiers that make it apparent what the individual’s life was about?
* Does the eulogy possess an identifiable tone?

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, 3-4 pages in length (1000-1450 words), 12 pt. Font, 1” margin, Times New Roman.

Optional: Due to the nature of the genre – a eulogy is delivered orally – I’ll offer up to ten extra points if you decide to read the eulogy to the class. I understand the personalized nature of the genre, and I respect the decision to not share this with the class.

**Deadlines:**

**Wednesday, October 21st:** Unit II first draft due (in class and online)

**Monday, October 26th:** Unit II second draft due (in class and online)

**Friday, October 30th:** Unit II final draft due (in class and online); optional reading