Instructor: Jenna Alexander

Honors 3100: Writing in the City

**Unit 3: Argument Synthesis Essay**

**Introduction**

Experienced academic writers have knowledge on the subject and evidence to support their positions. For this essay, you will use outside texts to support, develop, and/or refute your own argument about academic writing. This essay will require you to synthesize ideas – to pull ideas from multiple texts together – into an original argument; simple summary will not suffice. This essay will allow you to position yourself as a fellow scholar within theoretical and academic conversations.

**Brainstorming, Research, and Analysis**

1. Start by looking through the course readings. Select **two articles** **from class** that relate to one another in some way, even if they disagree or take different perspectives on an issue. Then, select **one source from a scholar in your major** that relates to the other two articles.
2. Next, **read your texts *closely* and analyze them *rhetorically***. Here are some questions you might consider when you analyze:

What are the authors’ goals and purposes? Who were the intended audiences, and how did those audiences shape the texts? How do the authors’ backgrounds shape the texts? What forms of evidence do the authors use? Where and why do the authors agree? Where and why do the authors disagree?

1. Next, think about **how your texts relate to the overarching themes or questions** of the class. Here are some questions you might consider:

* How do issues of power and authority play a role in academic writing?
* To what extent should teachers focus on grammar in school? How can teachers help students learn about grammar in more effective ways?
* How does metaphor and other figurative language function in academic writing?
* How do different literacy sponsors influence academic writing?
* How do other rhetorical arts (like silence, listening and voice) intersect with writing?
* How is academic writing personal? How do our past experiences shape our writing?
* How can education and literacy learning be improved?

1. Using your analysis notes and research question, provide a 4-6 page **argument about writing in academic situations, using your three texts as evidence**. This argument may support, refute, develop and/or challenge the ideas that you’ve encountered in the assigned readings. Regardless, you should contribute to the scholarly conversations you’ve encountered in the assigned articles.

**Goals**

The goals of this assignment are (1) to synthesize ideas from multiple texts into an original argument and (2) to become conversant with several theoretical issues that concern composition scholars and teachers.

**The Process and Writing Calendar**

Thursday, March 24 – Topic and sources due

Monday, April 4 – Wednesday, April 6 – Conferences (first draft due at your conference)

Tuesday, April 5 – Second draft due

Tuesday, April 12 – Portfolio 3 due (along with the final draft of the Argument Synthesis)

Rubric/Requirements (Subject to change as announced.)

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| **Structure/Organization:**   * Follow prompt, use approved topic * Clear, focused purpose * Well-written thesis, represents essay in entirety * Brief summary of the original text to help the reader(s) understand the example * Brief summary of the scholarly source to help the reader(s) understand the debate * Introduction is attention-getting * Sets context, motive and criteria for analysis * Introduces the sources by providing relevant background information (author, title) * Clear organization that emphasizes content and strategies for development * Each paragraph clearly fits with purpose of essay * Paragraphs are structured clearly (MEAL Plan) * Utilizes effective transitions between main ideas and paragraphs (flows well) * Resolution/conclusion |
| **Development/Detail:**   * Analysis is clear and fully explained * Analysis demonstrates depth of thought, going beyond surface meaning for each example * Each main point (paragraph) analyzes specific detail from text and connects to thesis * Quotes are smoothly worked into paragraph, not dropped in * Quotes and support from text are fully explained in connection to thesis * Essay demonstrates a certain level of maturity, professionalism and appropriateness * Makes significant revisions from draft to draft, not just sentence-level changes |
| **Polish:**   * Grammar * Active verbs, present tense * Clarity * Sentence structure and variety * Punctuation—commas, colons, dashes and semi-colons * Mechanics |