Instructor: Jenna Alexander

ENGL 3100

**Unit 2: Rhetorical Analysis**

**Introduction**

People often attempt to read, interpret, and evaluate texts “objectively,” as though the text exists in a vacuum. However, many composition scholars emphasize the importance of *context* in reading and writing. For this essay, you will analyze Plato’s *Republic* by considering the rhetorical situations within that text. Writing a rhetorical analysis is more than just summarizing *what* the text is about; rather, it requires a close attention to language and *how* the language was used to accomplish certain goals.

**Brainstorming, Research, and Analysis**

Start by reading Plato’s *Republic* closely and critically, analyzing the rhetorical strategies and “moves” that Plato uses. You should think about how the individual characters within the *Republic* utilize rhetorical strategies as well. Consider the following questions:

* What are the purposes of writing this text? What are the main arguments being made within the text? What patterns emerge within the text?
* Which lines stand out to you? Why do these lines seem significant?
* How does the character’s background influence his ideas?
* How do the characters support their arguments? What evidence do they provide?
* How does Plato organize the text? Why is the structure important?
* Who are the intended audiences for this text? How do you know?

Next, think about the overarching concepts we’ve addressed in class (like power struggles, culture, healing/progress, reader/writer relationships, writing processes, knowledge, voice, silence, metaphor, justice, democracy, etc.). You may also choose a topic of your own to explore. Regardless, select at least one concept to use as a theoretical framework for your analysis. In other words, you should **frame your analysis** around a specific topic to help you develop your argument and organize your ideas. For example, you might ask, “How is Plato’s *Republic* autobiographical?” Or, “How do the characters use metaphors to illustrate and shape their ideas?” Or, “How does silence/silencing operate in Plato’s *Republic*?”

Using your analysis notes and research question, **provide a 4-6 analysis** of Plato’s text. In other words, you’ll **formulate an argument about how language operates in Plato’s *Republic***. This argument may support, refute, develop and/or challenge the ideas that we’ve encountered in the assigned readings. Regardless, you should use Plato’s *Republic* as evidence to contribute to the scholarly conversations you’ve encountered throughout the semester.

**Goals**

The goals of this assignment are (one) to analyze Plato’s text rhetorically and (two) to become conversant with several theoretical issues that concern composition scholars and teachers.

**The Writing Calendar**

Thursday, November 3: Conferences (first draft due at your conference)

Tuesday, November 8: Second draft due (bring two copies)

Thursday, November 10: Portfolio 2 due (along with the final draft of the Rhetorical Analysis paper)

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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 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, publication information, etc.) * Clear organization that emphasizes content and strategies for development * Each paragraph clearly fits with purpose of essay * 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 |

Rubric/Requirements

(Subject to change as announced.)