

English 110.01

Assignment #3: The Project Proposal
And
Assignment #4: The Final Project**Important Due Dates:**

- No Class on Monday, February 19. Instead, your conference time is: _____
- Assignment #3 due on Wednesday, February 21, by midnight, on Carmen
- Thesis outline & assigned free-writing due: Wednesday, Feb. 28 **in class**
- Assignment #4 due in my office (507 Denney) in person, between noon and two p.m. on Wednesday, March 14.

Percent of Grade: Assignment #3: 15%; Assignment #4: 30%. The entire project consists of 45% of your final grade.

Format: Assignment #4 will either take the form of a 7 – 8 page essay that offers a rhetorical analysis of a representational trend in technology, or a website that presents a selection of research on a subject of your choice, with your own rhetorical analysis of the sources & subject as your main page. If you choose to write a paper, it should be 7 – 8 pages, double-spaced, 12 point-font with standard 1 inch margins. In the upper left hand corner should be: your name, my name, the class (English 110) and the date/quarter. Paper should be stapled in the upper left corner and should have a title and an MLA bibliography. If you choose the option to build a website, you should follow carefully the requirements discussed later in this handout. You should save your website to a CD-R labeled with your name to submit for a grade.

Assignment #3 is a document that records the development of your assignment #4. You must include a bibliography of five secondary sources, one of which may be a reading from class. Each of your five sources should be annotated, meaning you will write a short summary paragraph of the source and another paragraph that explains how and why you find this source useful for your project. This “annotated bibliography,” as it is called, should be typed, but you should adopt any writing style that helps *you* to think about and analyze your sources. You might write first-person “journal entries” for example, or you might work with lists. Grammar, mechanics, spelling and the like are courtesies, but you will not be graded on them in assignment #3. The requirements for assignment #3 are slightly different depending on whether you choose to develop an essay or a website; these differences are discussed later in this document. To grade assignment #3, I’ll be looking for some record of your development of an analytical research paper, but I am well aware that different people develop their writing in different ways. Take this as an opportunity to figure out what works for you, with my direction, feedback and help.

Description – Essay Option:

If you choose the essay option, you must first develop a project proposal and create an annotated bibliography of five sources that you will use in your final essay. The essay is a 7 – 8 page rhetorical analysis of a representational trend. This trend should grow out of our ongoing study of technology and its impact on peoples and/or cultures.

Part 1: Research Proposal (Assignment #3)

In a paragraph or two, lay out the parameters of your analysis. What is the representational trend you wish to examine and why is it of scholarly interest? That is, what can analytical attention to the subject possibly reveal about larger cultural issues, about how technology changes and impacts our environment? Remember: you are analyzing the *representation* of technology by examining cultural texts, not the impact of the technology itself, although your reasoned thoughts on this might help further your thesis. At the close of your proposal:

1. List at least three analytical questions you would like to explore in your research paper. These questions should be “why” or “how” questions, not “yes” or “no.” They are fundamental in shaping your final project, so take the time to think them through and revise them several times.
2. Respond to each of your questions in 1 – 3 sentences by describing how you anticipate addressing this question in your final project, why you think this question is important, and how it will help you to analyze the representation.
3. In 1 – 3 paragraphs, about a page of typed text, free-write an answer to the following question: “I want to write a paper about the representation of _____ in _____.” This writing is pure free-writing; you should adopt a comfortable tone and not worry about mechanical issues. Just explore your subject. Give me some idea of the kinds of things you want to explore in your paper.

Part 2: Annotated Bibliography (Assignment #3)

An annotated bibliography allows you the opportunity to free-write in response to the primary and secondary sources you use in your research essay. Primary sources are the cultural texts that illustrate your representational trend. Primary sources might include movies, commercials, magazines, websites or pages, how the technology represents itself (for example, the screen of a cell phone or a computer program). A primary text is generally not analytical in nature. Secondary sources are the sources you use to expand and explain your analytical research; they are generally scholarly and/or analytical sources themselves. An example of a secondary source from our course is the selection from Neil Postman’s *Technopoly*, in which he discusses and analyzes the use of computers in every corner of life. You may use one secondary source from our class, but you must also use the OSU library or other research databases (Google Scholar, for example) to find at least four other secondary sources.

1. List your primary sources (the texts you intend to analyze) using MLA format (consult www.easybib.com for help). The number of primary sources will vary from one project to another. Consult with me if you have questions about what constitutes an appropriate number of primary resources for your particular research project.
2. List your secondary sources (texts that offer analysis related to the representational trend at the heart of your inquiry). You will need at least five secondary sources for your assignment #3, only one of which can be taken from our class readings. You may use more than two of our class readings, but only one can count towards your five sources; you must find a minimum of four secondary sources using your own research skills. Other sources may include newspaper articles, scholarly articles, essays, book chapters, and web resources. An encyclopedia—or Wikipedia—is not an appropriate secondary source. You may use one movie or book review if the review is analytical in nature.
3. Describe each primary source. You can write a short paragraph, or you might list all the things you notice, ala’ “The Method.”
4. For each secondary source, write one descriptive summary paragraph; explain the thesis of the source and summarize or paraphrase the analytical work going on in the source. Then, write another paragraph that answers the question: “In what way does this source relate to/support my own analytical work?” Remember, these paragraphs are not graded on mechanics and you should use a style of writing you find comfortable for exploration. You might address me directly in a letter, or treat it like a journal entry. The important thing about this stage is to allow you to respond to the ideas in the work, and to get down in writing how the secondary source shapes your ideas & thinking on your subject. A note: I often notice a direct correlation between the care and depth with which students engage with the secondary sources in assignment #3 and the outcome of assignment #4. Ample analytical work done at this stage sets up stronger and more precise analytical writing in later stages.

Part 3: The Analytical Research Paper (Assignment #4)

The analytical research paper is a rhetorical analysis of a representational trend. This trend should be something you have observed about the relationship between people and technology, and should arise out of the readings and discussion in this class. Using the overall method outlined in our textbook *Writing Analytically*, you should develop an evolving thesis—a claim about the representational trend you see, and a record of its complicating thoughts. You might, for example, be interested in how mp3 players are portrayed in advertising. You might locate two or three commercials or online advertisements (your primary text) and do The Method on them. At the same time, you should research your subject, gathering secondary texts. Through the process of closely describing your primary texts and consulting your secondary texts, you should begin to arrive at your own idea about the subject, what it means, what it represents to us about our own culture. Your idea is your thesis, and you should then work to explain and

account for how you arrived at your thesis, in your writing. You should also continue to work to evolve your thesis, by re-examining your primary texts, looking specifically for anomalies and complications to your thesis.

Assignment #4 of course builds on the work you have done in assignment #3, but it also extends the skills you practiced in assignments #1 and #2. Assignment #2 was a rhetorical analysis of two websites; you should use what you learned in assignment #2 to analyze the rhetoric of your primary texts. Who has made them? To say what? Why? This rhetorical analysis will help shape your thesis. In assignment #1, you were asked to create a rhetorical statement using visual images. This activity helped you to be aware of the rhetorical choices of others, but it also called upon your own creativity, your own ability to make your own rhetorical argument. In much the same way, you should make your own conscious rhetorical choices (in word choice, tone, the order that you present your argument, your introduction, etc.) while writing Assignment #4.

Essay Options: You may choose one of the following options to write your assignment #4, or you are invited to propose to me your own. If you have formulated an idea through the course of this class that you would like to explore in writing, please ask me for feedback and we'll work together on it. Here are some suggestions though, to get you started on developing your own analytical essay.

1. Consider the selection from Marshal McLuhan's *The Medium is the Massage*, and what it suggests about our relationship to technology as something that extends our reach into the world around us. The wheel as an extension to the foot, as he says. In what ways do we use modern forms of technology as extensions of ourselves? What can we not do without, and why? What do these connotations suggest about our relationship to the technology, or our relationships with each other as mediated by the technology? If you choose this option, you might consider how advertisers capitalize on our desires (and fears) to use technology as an extension of ourselves, for example, how we must stay "connected" with cell phones, or how representations of people who use technology in these ways is presented in the news or other media. Don't limit yourself to thinking about computer or communication technology, though; you might consider looking at the news stories about the medical technology used to replace missing limbs in returning soldiers or the promises made about LASIK surgery in the medical literature. Look again at the McLuhan reading and consider the interesting things it caused you to think. Then look for evidence in the culture around you that helps explain the idea you had in response to McLuhan's writing. This will help you arrive at your own thesis.
2. Consider our reading "Saucer Wisdom" by Rudy Rucker, and how it presents a futuristic view of the world, and how it asks us to question what we should expect with new technology. Some of his "predictions" were silly, but some were uncannily familiar; we could see how we might get "There" from "Here." If you choose this option, you should look for places in the current media where someone is making a prediction or a promise about future technology. A futuristic

commercial for flying cars, for example, or space-age pogo sticks. You should ask yourself, what do these images of our future potential relationship with technology reveal to us our cultural hopes and dreams and fears? What do these futuristic texts tell us about ourselves? If you choose this option, you might also look at science fiction films or books. What do movies such as *Terminator* (all of them) tell us about our fears of nuclear annihilation? What does *War of the Worlds* tell us about what frightens us most? What does *Futurama* say about humanity? Or robots? Look for evidence in the culture around you of the promises we make ourselves about what technology will eventually bring us, but be aware also of evidence that suggests our darkest fears about how technology might fail us.

3. Consider Neil Postman's selection "The Ideology of Machines: Computer Technology" from *Technopoly*. Specifically, Postman makes many observations about the ways that computer technology changes us and our culture negative and damaging ways. Where around you do you see unrealistic promises being made about technology's positive impact on humanity? Where do you see real dangers being acknowledged, in terms of human's use of technology? You might examine the rhetoric used in the media surrounding the issue of global warming, or you might examine the ways medical technology is presented in patient literature or advertising as unrealistically positive. If you choose this option, look critically at the ways Postman presents his argument—his rhetoric—and look for similar tactics on other media. Or, you might extend Postman's argument about the unrecognized negative side of some technology use and examine the positive spin put on some technological advances. You might consider your own reaction to Postman's essay, and write in response to it, illustrating your rebuttal with your own primary texts, or you might allow Postman to support your own analytical thesis about the nature of technology's impact on human culture.
4. Consider Julian Dibbell's "A Rape in Cyberspace:" specifically how harm can be perpetuated against our virtual or electronic "selves." In what ways does the "virtual world" change our sense of ourselves, and our boundaries? Consider carefully Dibbell's observation that his own views on the matter changed as he grew from "newbie" to regular MOO user. If you choose this option, you might examine how the rhetorical strategies people use to present themselves in online public spaces changes as they become more "adult" Web citizens. Examples might come from people's MySpace pages, or the like. You might also explore how the dangers of identity theft are addressed rhetorically in commercials or journalism. If you choose this option, you should perform a close read of Dibbell's essay and position your thesis in relationship to something Dibbell writes that interests or challenges you.
5. You might also choose to do a literary analysis of the Cory Doctorow short story, "Anda's Game." If you choose this option, "Anda's Game" will be your primary text, and you will have to choose four secondary texts, which will likely be literary criticism. These secondary texts might be specifically about Doctorow's

story, but probably not. More likely, you will have to perform “The Method” on the story, looking for patterns of repetition and contrast, and decide upon an analytical interpretation of some theme addressed in the story. Your secondary sources might address a similar interpretation of another story or novel, or might discuss a larger school of literary criticism that you will use as a lens to discuss Doctorow’s story. Choosing this option means you should expect to read “Anda’s Game” at least three or four times, paying special attention to the details that will help you form your analysis or interpretation. You will then develop your thesis by explaining how you have arrived at your interpretation of the story.

Description – Website Option:

If you choose this option, you must develop a website using the software program Dreamweaver (available in campus labs; or an equivalent program) that presents your own conscious rhetorical stance on a subject—that may or may not have to do with technology—and also includes links to other websites, with a rhetorical introduction (including reference to at least one secondary source) for at least three websites or groups of websites. If you choose this option, you are preparing a hypertext document that will be accessible by people all over the world; you should make your rhetorical choices (in tone, in word choice, in layout/design, etc.) in light of this fact.

The main page of your website (index.html) should include at least three healthy paragraphs of carefully edited text that explains the reasons for your stance on a subject of your choice: what you believe about a particular subject, and why. This is the equivalent of the “thesis” in an analytical essay. You should formulate this thesis after you have performed a rhetorical analysis of a number of other websites that concern your subject (the skills you used to develop Assignment #2 will help you with this step). You may, for example, create a website that first expresses your thoughtful, reasoned and researched opinion (your thesis) about the causes of global warming, and what you believe humanity should do to respond to that problem. You would present a main index page with an introduction to your “thesis,” and links to other pages that summarize some of the other rhetorical positions concerning your subject. On those other pages, you should write an introduction to the rhetorical stance of the other websites, and create links to those sites. You are also encouraged to be creative in your layout and design, and to include pictures and graphics in your website (your skills learning Photoshop for Assignment #1 will be useful here).

Working with Dreamweaver to create a hypertext website can help you think about how you present information in a number of ways. First of all, you are addressing a very wide audience. You should make careful rhetorical choices in presentation and tone intended to convince as many readers as possible that your thesis, your belief, is just, valid and well-reasoned. Second of all, you must make choices in how to order your links, how to gather your online research and present it in a clear and organized matter. Third, if you choose this option, you will be learning a new language, hypertext markup language

(HTML), and learning a new computer program, Dreamweaver, that will help you create in this new medium.

If you would like this option, please make arrangements with me during my office hours, and I'll get you started in Denney 343 with Dreamweaver. The lab in 343 is open in the evenings (generally 6 to 10 pm) and Sundays from 2 to 10 pm, and is staffed with lab workers who can help you with Dreamweaver questions. I believe some other labs on campus have copies of Dreamweaver for you to use (Baker Systems, Science/Engineering Library, etc.).

Part 1: Annotated Bibliography (Assignment #3)

The preparation for building a website is different than that for writing an essay, though some of the steps are related. I suggest you begin your website project with research. Decide upon a topic or subject that interests you, and spend some time finding and examining other websites that have to do with your subject. Follow the same general steps you performed to prepare for assignment #2; you are free to use the subject and websites you used in assignment #2, but you must find at least one other website to analyze, and you should analyze each website again, in relationship to each other. Keep notes, do The Method, and do lots of free-writing. At the same time you are examining a collection of websites, you should be searching for at least one secondary source that addresses in some way the rhetorical strategies used by those who have an interest in the topic you choose. For example, if you are interested in the rhetorical differences between CNN.com and FoxNews.com, you might then use the OSU library website or Google Scholar to find an article or essay that discusses the different rhetorical choices used by news media outlets, while at the same time, you look at other online news sources (perhaps Al Jazeera, or a local newspaper's website, etc.).

For assignment #3, your annotated bibliography should:

1. List the URLs and names of a minimum of three websites that concern a similar subject, using MLA format (see www.easybib.com for help). For each website, include a thorough description. Describe the rhetorical stance the website has, the organizational layout of the website (as best you can tell), and what information the website includes. The skills you developed in Assignment #2 will help you now.
2. Also, include for each website a healthy paragraph that answers the question, "In what way does this website relate to the others? Where are they similar? What are their differences? In what way does each website relate to/impact my own thoughts on the subject?" Remember, these paragraphs are not graded on mechanics or grammar; you should use a style of writing that helps you explore your topic. You might address me directly in a letter, or you might treat it like a journal entry. The important thing about this stage is to get down in writing your preliminary analysis of the rhetorical differences used by different websites about your topic.

3. List at least one secondary source (a text that offers analysis of the rhetorical differences apparent in your topic) using MLA format. You may use more than one secondary source—I encourage it, in fact. You may also use readings from our class, but you must find at least one appropriate secondary source using your own research skills. For each secondary source, write one descriptive summary paragraph; explain the thesis of the source and summarize or paraphrase the analytical work going on in the source. Then, write another paragraph that answers the question, “In what way does this source relate to/support my own analytical work?” A note: I often notice a direct correlation between the care and depth with which students engage with their sources in assignment #3 and the outcome of assignment #4. Ample analytical work done at this stage sets up stronger and more precise analytical writing in later stages.

Also, you should either make an appointment with me or go to Denney 343 during their open lab hours to get familiar with Dreamweaver, if you are not already. Working with Dreamweaver to build a website requires a different way of thinking than developing an essay; the building blocks are different, and you should take this opportunity to think about the most effective way to present your information using hypertext as a medium. If you choose this option, we will continue to discuss how hypertext can be used effectively to present scholarly work, and I will be one of many technological resources ready to help you get started with Dreamweaver.

Part 2: Project Proposal (Assignment #3)

After you have gathered your texts and performed a preliminary analysis on each of them, you should then prepare a project proposal. In two or three healthy paragraphs, lay out the parameter of your topic and analysis. What is the topic you intend to present and why is it of interest or important? That is, what can analytical attention to the subject possibly reveal about larger cultural issues, about how your subject changes and impacts our environment? At the close of your proposal:

1. List at least three analytical questions that explore the differences and surprising similarities you found as you analyzed and described your website. These questions should be “why” or “how” questions, not “yes” or “no.” They are fundamental for shaping your project, so take the time to think them through and revise them many times.
2. Respond to each of your questions in 1 – 3 sentence that describe how you account for these differences, taking into account the different rhetorical strategies and positions of each website. Why does each website approach the subject the way they do? How can you tell?

3. In 1 – 3 paragraphs, address your own stance on your topic, state your “thesis.” Think of your website as a public service announcement, a scholarly presentation of what you think the world ought to know about your subject. In this sense, your index page is a personal page—you should make conscious rhetorical choices that help readers understand your position, as well as your topic. In these paragraphs, work to define your ideas in relation to the ideas presented in the other websites, and how your secondary source(s) helps you to be aware of and understand the rhetorical choices you make when you write about your subject.

4. Include a drawing or flowchart, some graphic representation of how you intend to lay out and link the pages you build for your website. You will need at least one index page, and probably at least three other linked pages, though you can create as many pages as you need for your project. Remember to work on organizing your project in a modular fashion. Design with the overall flow of information in mind, then work to construct the common elements on each page. If you choose the website option, we will discuss this further in your conference.

Part 3: Website (Assignment #4)

You should design a website that presents your analytical thesis and research on a subject that interests you. Your website should attempt to convince its audience (which is multifaceted and worldwide) to accept or adopt your scholarly stance or argument about a subject. Consider the causes you believe in: stopping the genocide in Darfur. Access to safe & reliable birth control. Vegetarianism. Your website should present your persuasive and conscious rhetorical argument (created with both text and visual elements) that addresses the complexities of your subject while also encouraging your audience to adopt your views. You should also work to understand and examine your own rhetorical stance, why you believe what you believe about the subject. You must introduce your topic and present your thesis on your main index page. You will also include at least three html pages that each link to another website and present a rhetorical analysis of the linked site—you should contextualize the other websites against your own. You should also consider carefully the ways to best take advantage of hypertext as a medium to present scholarly information.

The criteria for the website option of Assignment #4 depend on content and conscious rhetorical choices in design, not technological bells and whistles. With a little effort and curiosity, Dreamweaver is fairly simple to work with. Furthermore, as long as you communicate with me about problems or issues throughout the process of design and implementation, I will not lower your grade for technological issues that “don’t work right.” A simple website carefully designed and created can easily earn an A grade.

Remember to test your website on a few different computers. If I have *serious* problems loading elements of your website or if essential files are missing from your final project, your grade will be adversely affected. If you are having problems getting a particular element to work, please contact me early and often! The DMP and the lab in Denney 343 are resources, as well. Work for clarity and simplicity in layout and work to make your textual elements as clear and polished as possible. Remember: your audience is the world at large; mistakes and sloppiness count.

Words to the Wise:

While working on Assignment #3:

- Consider where your secondary sources come from. Are they reliable? Reputable?
- Use the analytical skills we have practiced in previous assignments—notice and focus, The Method, Seems to be About X, etc.—to come to an analytical thesis.
- Free-write—often the germ of our best idea emerges from just free-writing.
- Don't worry about how formal you sound—just get your thoughts on paper.

If you chose one of the essay options for Assignment #4:

- It is imperative that you address the “So What?” question—what does this reveal about contemporary society. Also consider the “Why Now?” question—what cultural conditions exist that allow this representational trend to occur?
- Be sure you are making an original claim in your project, not simply restating other research or conventional wisdom. The goal of this project is *not* to simply present research or report on what others have said. Instead, you must analyze your topic, using your primary and secondary sources to support your interpretation of the subject. What are you saying that hasn't been said before?

If you choose the website option for Assignment #4:

- Begin with a flow chart. Think about your information in modules.
- Write, edit, revise and proofread your text in a word processing program and then import it to Dreamweaver.
- Use consistent colors and repeat graphic elements for consistency, such as navigation buttons and splash screens.
- Consider yourself the project manager for this website. I am available as your technical and textual editor, and to give feedback. Also, the DMP and the lab in Denney 343 are also available to you.
- Make sure you test your website on more than one computer before burning it to a CD-R and handing it in to me.
- Have fun and be creative!

Criteria for Evaluation:

A strong assignment #3 assures me that you are on the right track with your research and analysis.

A strong assignment #4 essay:

- Demonstrates that you understand your primary text(s) in a new way and can ask complicated questions about the primary text(s) and representational trend, using the methods of analysis discussed in this class.
- Complicates, extends, and qualifies the claims made by critics and moves beyond simple agreement/disagreement.
- Demonstrates familiarity with rhetorical analysis and application of the key analytical methods in this course.
- Clearly introduces the themes and issues, and indicates where analysis is headed
- Develops and evolves a specific analytical thesis.
- Uses specific and concrete examples and illustrations from primary texts to support analytical claims.
- Provides a coherent analysis based upon a few examples, rather than a list of unconnected references (10 on 1, not 1 on 10)
- Provides evidence that students have read and interpreted secondary sources fairly, accurately, and can point to specific claims in the secondary sources themselves.
- Concludes by reconsidering introductory questions and leaves the reader with something to consider.
- Blends correct paraphrases and quotations with the writer's own prose.
- Clear and correct quoting, citation, diction, punctuation, and grammar.
- Appropriate use of sentence structure, word choice, grammar spelling, and punctuation that enables rather than hinders clear and effective communication.
- Uses correctly formatted MLA in-text citations.
- Shows significant revision through drafting process.

A strong assignment #4 Website:

- Contains one index.html page with appropriate links to...
- A minimum of three other pages that are part of the website, and
- Links to three outside websites with appropriate rhetorical analysis of each link.
- Makes a claim or thesis about the overall rhetorical analysis of a variety of websites, situating the website author's position among the others.
- Thoughtful and polished writing.
- Conscious and consistent choices in layout and design.
- Conscious rhetorical choices that address a wide audience.
- Conscious relationship to outside websites or links. You must work to contextualize your website with other related sites on the web.