PORTFOLIO 1: RHETORICAL READING

PROJECT 1: RHETORICAL ANALYSIS ESSAY
For this project, you will write an expository essay (one which makes and supports a claim). This will be based on your rhetorical analysis of one “text” (or, if you’re feeling ambitious, a small set of deeply interrelated “texts”) chosen by you. This text can be on any topic, but must be related to gender in some way.

By “text,” I do not mean this has to be an alphabetic or paper-based text (although it well could be); I mean one discrete (“individually separate and distinct”) message. It could be a magazine article, a news story, a website, a video, a song (or the whole album), an advertisement (or a set of ads for one product, or aimed at one audience), or...something else. WHAT you choose to analyze is entirely up to you, but it will take more space/words than you think to do a thorough job on this with even one small text (like an ad), so don’t overload yourself with too many.

Your goal is to closely read your chosen text, analyzing it in terms of the rhetorical strategies its writer uses. Your goal is NOT to challenge the writer’s claim, nor to comment on the topic of the work itself, but to show how the strategies s/he uses advance their claim. You will make, and support, an assertion, but that assertion should be focused on answering this question: What rhetorical strategies does the writer use to persuade his/her audience of the validity of his/her claim?

In answering this question, consider:
• the writer (or performer). Who are they? How do they build ethos, or credibility?
• the immediate and larger context(s) for the writer’s claim.
• the writer’s purpose, or intention. (What was his/her “reason to write”?)
• the intended or “ideal” audience. (Texts often reach other audiences, but authors usually have a very particular intended audience, and, if they do their work well, the text is shaped specifically for that group.)
• the relationship between the writer’s purpose and the strategies s/he uses.
• the relationship between the intention, strategies, and audience.
• the effectiveness of these choices.

A successful essay will have a strong central claim around which the essay is organized, and will demonstrate your understanding of rhetorical analysis by using the vocabulary and information from our class readings and discussions on the topic. The analysis should demonstrate how the specific strategies your author uses work to support their claim, how those strategies suit the author’s claim, the issue, the position s/he takes, and their intended audience. Additionally, “A” papers will be logically organized, use the intellectual property of others ethically, and contain few sentence level errors.

All sources (including the text[s] you analyze, and any other sources you decide to use) should be cited in MLA style, including both in-text citations and a Works Cited list. You MUST cite whenever you use information from another text, whether paraphrasing or quoting. I encourage you to integrate images as appropriate to your work; these should be cited as well. (You will find a citation guide in The St. Martin’s Handbook; however, I also have provided a link to a good Internet-based citation guide on our class resources page.)

This essay should be a minimum of five pages (approximately 2500 words), not including images and citations.

THE REFLECTIVE OVERVIEW:
In this class, you will never hand in just the project document. Instead, you will hand in a portfolio comprised of the current project document and a sort of cover letter, called a reflective overview. In this critical, thoughtful, and
carefully edited reflection of approximately three to five pages, you are to explain your work and learning during this project cycle. As we approach the end of this portfolio period, I will help you develop a list of prompts to guide you in considering various aspects of this project, but just as each of you have your own unique reading/writing/research and learning processes, what you cover in your reflection, and how you do so, will also be quite individual. An understanding of the purposes of this type of writing is therefore more useful than a list of prompts.

One way to think about the purpose of your overview is to persuade readers that your performance for the period of the project should be evaluated in a certain way, earning a certain grade, with ample reasons to support your claims. This piece is meant to help you demonstrate your performance as a learner/researcher/writer, but also to help your reader understand the kinds of work, engagement and learning that you went through.

Report on and evaluate the different processes you used in various parts/stages of each assignment, explore what and how you learned, and evaluate whether/how what you’ve done/learned will be (or not be) useful to you (for this class and others, and in your day-to-day life). Remember to be more than descriptive about your work—be reflective and analytical. Explain the text you’ve created. How? Why? What works? What doesn’t?

Include a section in your reflective overview that serves as self-assessment. Based on the expectations for the project/the course, what grade do you think it should earn, and why? Please list concrete reasons from the assignment, your readings, and/or the learning goals articulated in our syllabus to explain why this grade is appropriate.

Because it is such an important piece of writing, this reflective overview will be the result of multiple drafts and peer review. It will represent careful, college level writing. Obviously, with this much to accomplish, the overview is important. Effective overviews will be carefully developed, well organized, and clear.

**Turning it in:**
This portfolio will be due on Tuesday, October 2nd, and is worth 20% of your final course grade. Approximately ½ of the portfolio grade will come from the reflective overview, and the other half from the rhetorical analysis essay. As we work on this portfolio, I will ask you to help develop the rubric I will use to grade these two documents, so you will have a very clear sense of what I’ll be looking for in your work. To hand it in, post your work to the Blackboard drop box before your class begins.

**Resources:**
(These resources should help you do this work. Please read them! Note: I cited them in MLA style as a model for you, BUT I also include a weblink. MLA would NOT have you include this, so I’m breaking the rule for your convenience here.)


