

## WR 39C: ARGUMENT & RESEARCH

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### The Advocacy Project: A Multi-modal Composition + the Oral & Visual Presentation

In about 5 weeks from now (yes, you have lots of time!), you will turn in the final version of this assignment. Like the HCP Project, the main assignment here is a multi-modal composition that uses various rhetorical positions and different types of evidence to make arguments. This one, however, is a bit different from the first in that over the course of these next few weeks, as you research and evaluate various sources, and as you draft, craft and organize your thoughts and evidence, you will at some point have to make a decision to become an advocate for solutions to your central problem in at least one of the following three ways: **1) you might advocate for one or more specific solutions** to the significant and current political/social/cultural problem that sits at the center of your focus; **2) you might locate the next steps to potentially solving your project's central problem**; or, **3) you might argue for why the current solutions do not work and leave your readers with questions about possible next steps**. In other words, your arguments for advocating solutions in combination with the analytical reasons you provide for why you have chosen to focus on particular solutions will after weeks and weeks of diligent engagement become a richly-textured thesis statement, one that deepens your articulation of the problem at hand and argues for convincing for ways to move forward.

When we think of the act of advocating and when we imagine a person or an organization who is an advocate for a cause, we think of strongly held opinions delivered with intensity from a rhetorical position that appears unshakable, deeply confident in the ethical rightness of its arguments and the accuracy of its knowledge. If we look at advocacy in such ways, we can understand why it takes time to become a convincing advocate, and that advocacy, even when it is delivered in the form of a thesis-driven composition, is a form of argumentation that can be quite different from the balanced arguments we often think of as academic writing even if it is as rigorous in its presentation of evidence.

This is not to say that academic writers are not advocates. They are, and over the course of this project, you will become such an advocate—one who uses academic research and methods to deliver persuasive arguments convincingly to a public of one's peers. Academic writers in many disciplines often write with the purpose of advocating for solutions to political/social/cultural/environmental problems. When they do so, they are expected to consider and present positions that run against theirs in various ways – call them counter arguments – in order to meet the expectations of their academic audience. They must demonstrate their mastery of established arguments and knowledge in areas of discourse and recognize the legitimacy of other perspectives, even if the author seeks ultimately to dismiss them.

In the realm of public advocacy, arguments and persuasion can look, feel, and sound quite different. Public advocates deliver strong and impassioned arguments by undermining counter arguments. They do so by choice and with knowledge about the various perspectives and pieces of evidence that may potentially undermine their case. When putting forth arguments in academic or public settings, the most convincing advocates do not simply put forward solutions without first comprehending the informed debates in which these solutions are situated. Rather, successful advocates draw from a

deep well of knowledge when carefully selecting the evidence and rhetorical appeals that will make their case about how to address the profound social problems they put before their audiences.

**This assignment challenges you to become that strong advocate**, one who delivers convincing solutions to a current and pressing political/social/cultural problem. You cannot, in all likelihood, be this advocate at the beginning of the project. You will need to spend time researching and evaluating sources; you will need to explore various arguments and perspectives as you write proposals and drafts. At some point, however, after deepening your knowledge and maybe even after writing a full draft or two, you will need to choose a position to advocate.

### **The Rules of the Game:**

#### **The Oral/Visual Presentation**

At some point during the next few weeks--weeks 6-10 (your teacher will do the scheduling)--you will **deliver an oral & visual presentation that is at least 5 minutes in length, but you will have up to 10 minutes of total time. Your instructor will decide what to do with the 5 remaining minutes. One teacher may ask her students to talk for 10 minutes, another will ask his to talk for 5 and take questions for 5.** Your advocacy presentation is your opportunity to convince your peers of the legitimacy of your positions and the credibility of your solutions.

**The oral and visual elements** should work together but not like they do in a conventional presentation in which the visual elements simply restate what you are delivering orally. You can deliver much more information with a couple good visuals than you can possibly talk about in 5 minutes. So you should make good use of your visual presentation; select important pieces of information and data and create visuals that argue for you without you having to describe all of the details they make visible. **Your presentation should (1) be well paced** (stay within the time limit!) and succinctly delivered; it should **(2) clearly present your thesis statement at it stands on the day you give your presentation**; **(3) describe and summarize the significant political/social/cultural problem** you're addressing; **(4) frame this problem with motives or warrants**, which are current examples or incidents that show your audience that the problem you're addressing and the solutions you're advocating are alive and relevant right now; **(5) give your audience a sense for the deep foundation of research on which your positions stand**; and **(6) demonstrate clearly how your oral arguments work together with the visual arguments**, and how the visual arguments, on their own, articulate the depth and rigor of your thesis statement and your research.

#### **The Graded Submission:**

In Week 9, you will submit your advocacy composition for a grade.

#### **The Ungraded Work:**

Between now and the submission deadline for the final version in Week 9, your instructor will give you a number of assignments to complete: source evaluations and annotations, outlines, prospective statements of argument, free writing, drafts, peer reviews, and other useful things to help you develop and craft your arguments. All of these assignments are ungraded, and they give you lots of artifacts to use in your ePortfolio! Take advantage of these ungraded assignments; use them to explore ideas and various arguments and as opportunities to receive feedback from your peers and your instructor so that your arguments become clearer and your composition more cogent, richly textured, and gracefully organized. If you complete all of the ungraded work, you put yourself in a

much better position to turn in a well-developed submission by the time the final deadline arrives. If you do not do the ungraded work, your final product will have to contend with the final products of others who have and who will therefore turn in work that is of higher quality because it will be more polished comprehensively, and its arguments will be more mature, its thesis more persuasive, and its evidence more convincing.

### **The Word Counts for the Multi-modal Composition:**

(Include notes and in-text citations but not the bibliography)

-Draft 1: 1850 words

-Draft 2: 2000 words

-Graded Submission: 2500 words

### **The Oral & Visual Presentation:**

-5 minute oral & visual presentation

-5 minutes of Q&A

### **Sources & Citations:**

You should use at least 10 sources beyond the sources you've been assigned in class or used in your first essay. Use the MLA system for citing your sources.

### **The Assignments**

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Deadlines</b>	<b>% of Final Grade</b>
<b>Advocacy Composition: Prewriting/Prospectus/Research Proposal</b>	Week 6	
<b>Advocacy Composition: Draft 1</b> (Written portion of Draft 1: 1850 words minimum including notes and in-text citations but not bibliography, multimodal.)	Week 7	
<b>Advocacy Composition: Draft 2</b> (Written portion of Draft 2: 2500 words minimum including notes and in-text citations but not bibliography, multimodal.)	Week 8	
<b>Advocacy Composition: Graded Submission</b> (Written portion of Draft 2: 2500 words minimum including notes and in-text citations but not bibliography, multimodal.)	Week 9	30%
<b>Advocacy Presentation: Oral &amp; Visual Components</b>	See WaaG Template	10%