Week 2 Argument Analysis -
Assignment Description

Write a short, well-supported critical evaluation of the *types* of argument used in a reading selection of your choice. The single reading source you'll be working with should be addressing some aspect of your own metier (e.g. accounting, marketing, economics, etc.) in either academic analysis or editorial fashion. Examples of legitimate source sites might be *The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Marketplace*, site pages associated with your textbooks in your other SFSU courses, etc. Your close textual assessment of the success or failure of specific argument strategies extant in the work must be a **minimum of 2 *full* pages** (top to bottom of each page) of 12-point double-spaced text. Please review the sample essays posted on our course page at GregTeach.net/SFSU to see what I'm looking for in the assignment.

Your essay's thesis argument must attempt to **evaluate** (not just describe) how well or not well your chosen piece argues and communicates. You'll base that critical assessment on your identification of key argument strategies you see being deployed in the work – argument strategies you'll learn about in the *Everything's an Argument (EA)* Chapter 1 overview of argument strategy and rhetorical language you've read in preparation for this essay. Be sure to provide detailed description and analysis of your selection along with convincing textual support that illustrates your arguments and observations – remember that you're imagining an ignorant audience who knows nothing of your subjects until you tell them.

The sections from *EA* that will be particularly useful to you here are those that will help you describe and interrogate, in your chosen selection:

- **Purposes of argument** (e.g. to inform, to convince, to persuade, to explore, to decide, to pray)
- **Occasions for argument** (e.g. forensic, deliberative, epideictic)
- **Kinds of argument** (factual, definition, evaluative and causal, proposal)
- **Target audience(s)** of a given set of arguments
- **Audience appeals** used to talk to them (e.g. pathos, logos, ethos)

Identify **one or two** (more than that would be too much for this short critical examination) of those components in your chosen piece to help you analyze the argumentative success and effectiveness – or not – of your chosen selection. You'll need to be asking appropriately critical questions of the text as you seek to analyze its rhetorical structure for this assignment, and the strategy groups listed above will help you do that better. Again, remember that your primary task is to determine what kind(s) of argument you see being used in your chosen selection, why you think so and what textual evidence you can show us to prove it, and then how well or not well you think those arguments are being deployed and why.

Some critical questions you can ask your reading selection as you begin to try and understand its argument structure:

Who is arguing?
What purpose(s) is the writer(s) trying to achieve?
To whom are (they) directing their arguments?
Does the writer's intended audience determine which arguments he/she leans on the most heavily?
Does the logic match the evidence?
Is the writing clear, are the ideas well developed and well supported?
Per the modes of argumentation you see being used in the piece, are they being used effectively? Why (or why not)?

Nuts & Bolts:

Use standard MLA in-text *and* works cited list citation practices to properly attribute your source(s). You'll find a link to a quick MLA style guide on our GregTeach course page. There are additional MLA citation guides and templates in your *Business Writer's Companion* text. Essays won't be accepted without correctly formatted in-text citations and a works cited list at the end of your work.

Use **academic language** that has been carefully and repeatedly edited and proofread to eliminate ALL sentence errors. Stay in the **present tense** throughout your discussion and **use only 3rd person speech** (No "I," No "me," No "you"). Poorly proofread work will be returned ungraded for revision.

This assignment is worth 20 points and is due as its own document attachment before class on the date listed on our course page at GregTeach and in iLearn. As always, late, short, or ineffectively proofread work won't be accepted for credit. Please remember to format your document and name the file according to the guidelines I've laid out in the course – you'll find guides for formatting and naming files correctly on our GregTeach course page as well.

Good luck!