

Part 3 – Rogerian Rhetoric: Building Common Ground

THE PROJECT!

You will design an project (ie. craft an argument) that seeks to communicate your perspective to your audience, while establishing common ground and/or offering a spirit-of-compromise solution and/or with an audience that might disagree with you. The idea here is to demonstrate our learning about the complexity of political issues, while staying true to our own political identities and expressing ourselves with rhetorical artistry.

What is Rogerian Argumentation?

Rogerian argumentation urges the cultivation of multiple perspectives based on nuanced thinking.

It identifies common goals and shared values while acknowledging opposing views in a non-confrontational way.

It is focused on mutually-beneficial compromise, not merely on winning the argument.

Five Major Elements of Rogerian Argumentation

1. INTRODUCTION/FRAMING

- Defines your issue (or the essence of the issue) in a way that does not place blame or cast judgment
- Frames issue as a shared concern or a problem to be solved rather than as a divisive issue

2. EXPLORATION OF COMMON GROUND

- Includes an examination of what both sides might be able to agree on
- Establishes common ground by asserting shared values and/or desired outcomes (THINK: What concerns, values, relevant goals do both sides share?)

3. FAIR STATEMENT OF OPPOSING POSITION

- Identifies the other side's position in such a way that would satisfy someone who holds it
- Uses fair and objective language and avoids *ad hominem* and *straw man* fallacies

4. FAIR STATEMENT OF YOUR POSITION

- Identifies your side's position in a way that doesn't insult or assert moral superiority
- States how adopting (at least some parts of) your ideas would benefit all and serve the common good

5. SOLUTION/RESOLUTION (Thesis!)

- Offers suggestion for compromise (or at least an exhortation for further dialogue)
- Reasserts common ground and shared goals and points out how compromise would benefit all and meet the needs and concerns of other
- The "THESIS" of a Rogerian argument often occurs at the end

Project Options

TEXTUAL ARGUMENT WITH VISUAL ACCOMPANIMENT

• Essay • Open Letter • Op-Ed • Podcast • Poem (challenging but possible!)	Any of these options should be accompanied by an engaging visual upon exhibition. ➤ IDEAS: Photograph, art piece, political cartoon, photoshop, infographic, other?
--	---

VIDEO: COMBINED TEXT AND VISUAL

• Speech or TED Talk made into video • Spoken Word Poem as Video Voiceover • Other?	The video option should have a script that includes the major rubric elements of Rogerian Argumentation (see next page)
---	---

****Your project should....

- make a significant contribution to the conversation surrounding your issue, successfully employing the Four A's of rhetoric: Argument, Appeals, Arrangement, and Aesthetics.
- make connections to the underlying American values that impact perspectives on your issue.
- demonstrate that thorough research was done and that you understand opposing viewpoints.
- build common ground AND/OR offer a solution that considers both sides of the argument.
- demonstrate skillful use of Aristotelian appeals.
- avoid *ad hominem* and *straw man* arguments*
- exemplify beautiful work

**ad hominem*: a logical fallacy rooted in personal attack rather than logical argumentation

EX. We shouldn't build a wall because Trump is an idiot.

**straw man*: a logical fallacy that misrepresents your opponent's argument in order to make it easier to knock down

EX. Pro-choice advocates want to ensure that women have the right to murder their babies.

Part 4 – Engaging Your Audience: The “Exhibition”

Obviously, this year we can't have an exhibition event. Each of you will identify your audience and craft a project that can be authentically shared with that audience. If you are writing an op-ed, where can you publish it? If you are writing a letter, does it have an audience? If you are focusing on your visual piece, can we display it somewhere? What types of projects may be shared on social media? Can we share the entire project with underclassmen? Display it on the walls? We will figure all of this out together!