

First "Gateway" paper

Assignment: Tell me how you will know whether you have learned how to think like a rhetorical theorist (or not).

Due: Tuesday, 17 January, in class.

Details:

1. Be *specific*. Tell me specific things you will know, feel, or be able to do at the end of the course, if you have learned. Imagine you're talking to a friend. You might say, "Wow, I really learned a lot in that class—I never knew.... [exactly what?] I never saw [what?] before. I can now ... [do what?] that I couldn't have even imagined before."
2. Be *personal*. Tell me specific things *important to you* that will you know/feel/be able to do, if you have learned. "Theory" is pretty vague and abstract. This assignment asks you to consider what thinking like a rhetorical theorist means *to you*. How could being a rhetorical theorist make a difference in your life? Do not fib.
3. Be *relevant*. You may learn a lot of things in this class—how to work in a group; that you never want to read another word by Cicero; that Carver hall is loud. This assignment asks you to focus only on what's *relevant* to your learning to think like a rhetorical theorist.
4. This is not an assignment about *grades* but about *learning*. If you're aiming for an "A"—good for you. But we all know you can get an "A" in a class and learn nothing, and get a poor grade in a class where you learned a lot. This assignment asks you to specify how you will know you *learned* (or not).
5. Don't worry—you won't have to actually *meet* the standards you're laying out! In the final self-assessment, you'll be asked to look back at this first paper and see whether or not you've learned to think like a theorist. Even if you've utterly failed, if you can do a careful self-analysis of your failure, your final course assessment will raise your final grade.
6. I suspect this assignment will take about a page. It should be comprehensible and typed, but other than that there are no particular "formal" requirements.

Assessment: A passing paper will discuss *specific* and *personal* criteria that are *relevant* for determining whether you have learned to think like a rhetorical theorist.

Note: You cannot pass this course until you pass this paper. If necessary, you can rewrite it until it passes.