

ENGLISH COMPOSITION

ANALYSIS, RESEARCH, & ARGUMENT

ON FOOD



Course Description

Far more than providing sustenance, food defines us. It connects us with people and places. It sets us in relation to others. It calls up important questions of sustainability and production, of ethics and responsibility. For all these reasons, food gives us a variety of rich opportunities for writing and research, and this course is designed to help students read, think, and compose with all of these considerations and questions in mind. Students in this course will examine not just what they eat, but how they eat—by analyzing written and visual texts (including essays, memoirs, reports, menus, and documentaries); by researching food-related issues of their choosing; and by composing analyses and researched arguments based on class discussions, readings, and collaborative work.

Required Texts

- *Food*. Brooke Rollins & Lee Bauknight, eds. Fountainhead Press, 2010.
- A rhetoric (addressing research, argument, and/or analysis) of the instructor's choosing.

Assignments & Grade Distributions

- **Short Writing Assignments, 10%**
 - Throughout the semester, students will be asked to respond to the “Explore,” “Invent,” “Collaborate,” & “Compose” prompts in *Food*. These short assignments will help build the skills needed for the semester’s more comprehensive writing and research projects.
- **Rhetorical Analysis of a Visual Text, 10%**
 - Students will analyze the rhetoric (including the food politics and ideologies of eating) at work in a restaurant menu.
- **Rhetorical Analysis of a Written Text, 20%**
 - Students will rhetorically analyze an argumentative essay.
- **Sequenced Researched Argument Project, 60% total:**
 - Contextualized Annotated Bibliography and Presentation, **20%**
 - Working in small groups, students will conduct research and produce a comprehensive annotated bibliography of sources that they will use to write two major arguments. They will contextualize this list of sources with a 500-word introduction, and each group will present its findings to the class.
 - Causal Argument, **20%**
 - Based on the research completed for the annotated bibliography, each student will define a problem related to his or her food issue and compose an

argumentative essay that examines the causes or consequences of this problem.

- Policy Argument, 20%
 - The research project culminates with an argumentative essay that proposes a course of action to deal with the problem outlined in the causal argument.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: Course Intro: Our Food Ourselves

Readings: “Introduction: Recipe Writing” (pg 1-4); “Excerpts from *The Cooking Ape*” (pg 7-19); Overview of argument from rhetoric textbook.

Assignments Due: Short essay based on Invent pg 5.

Week 2: Food and Identity

Readings: “Tasteless” (pg 29-32); Day 1, Recipe 1 (pg 45-61); “Food is Good” (pg 63-70); “Dinner with Mario” (pg 73-80); “The Culinary Seasons of My Childhood” (pg 33-43); Chapter on analyzing arguments from rhetoric textbook.

Assignments Due: Short essay based on Explore pg 62; Short essay based on Compose pg 81.

Week 3: Analysis of a Visual Text (Screen and discuss *Food Inc.*)

Readings: “The Pleasures of Eating” (pg 21-27); “Fear Factories: The Case for Compassionate Conservatism—for Animals” (151-167); Chapter on visual argument from rhetoric textbook.

Assignments Due: Short group essay based on Collaborate pg 28.

Week 4: Analysis of a Visual Text

Readings: “Dining Out” (pg 83-90).

Assignments Due: Short essay based on Explore pg 91; Rhetorical Analysis of a Visual Text (pg 191)

Week 5: Analysis of a Written Text

Readings: “Why Bother?” by Michael Pollan from *The New York Times Magazine*, April 20, 2008; Chapter on rhetorical analysis from rhetoric textbook.

Assignments Due: In-class rhetorical analysis exercises.

Week 6: Analysis of a Written Text

Readings: Chapter on writing arguments and types of claims from rhetoric textbook.

Assignments Due: Rhetorical Analysis of “The Lady or the Tiger” from *Sex, Drugs, and Cocoa Puffs: A Low Culture Manifesto* by Chuck Klosterman (Scribner, 2003).

Week 7: Food and Gender

Readings: “Who Cooks?” (pg 93-100); “A Woman’s Place?” (pg 101-105); “What’s That Smell in the Kitchen?” (pg 107); Clips from Food Network Shows: *Giada at Home*, *Barefoot Contessa*, *Guy’s Big Bite*.

Assignments Due: Group work based on Explore pg 106 & Collaborate pg 108; Short essay based on Compose pg 106.

Week 8: Local and Organic Food, Intro to Primary and Secondary Research

Readings: “A Healthy Constitution” (pg 109-111); “Beyond Organic” (pg 113-116); “Organic Foods: Do Eco-Friendly Attitudes Predict Eco-Friendly Behaviors?” (pg 125-139); Chapter on research from rhetoric textbook.

Assignments Due: Group work based on Explore pg 111; Short essay based on Invent 139.

Week 9: Causal Arguments

Readings: “The Carnivore’s Dilemma” (pg 169-173); Chapter on writing causal arguments from rhetoric textbook; a sample annotated bibliography.

Assignments Due: Short essay based on Explore pg 173; Group work based on Collaborate pg 173; Students will choose groups for the Annotated Bibliography project based on research interests.

Week 10: Policy Arguments

Readings: “Attention Whole Foods Shoppers” (pg 141-149); “Declare Your Independence” (pg 175-187); Chapter on writing policy arguments from rhetoric textbook.

Assignments Due: Group work based on Collaborate pg 149 & Invent pg 188.

Week 11: In-class Presentations on Research Areas

Readings: Selection on primary research from rhetoric textbook.

Assignments Due: Annotated Bibliography

Week 12: Conferences and Primary Research

Students will have the week off from class to conduct primary research (interviews, observations, surveys) and to meet with the instructor about the researched arguments in progress.

Week 13: Incorporating Research Rhetorically

Readings: Chapter on incorporating research in rhetoric textbook.

Assignments Due: In-class exercises on incorporating research; Causal Argument.

Week 14: Peer Review

Readings: “Suburban Foraging: Two Families Eat Only Local” (pg 117-123).

Assignments Due: Rough draft of Policy Argument for peer review.

Week 15: Course Wrap Up & Party

Assignments Due: Policy Argument; Groups bring to class (and present) food and drink from locally sourced ingredients, organic ingredients, or environmentally friendly ingredients.