Unit I: Close & Critical Reading

Assignment 1: Rhetorical Summary Portfolio

Overview:
In this assignment, you will create rhetorical summaries for **two texts** related to one issue in our class theme to build a portfolio. More specifically:

- You will apply **close and critical reading skills** on two selected texts from the reader;
- You will **provide rhetorical context** for those articles;
- You will write brief **key-point summaries**.
- This assignment is worth 10% of your semester grade.
- We will use the following timeline for this assignment:
  - Peer Review Workshop on **Wednesday, September 7**
  - Style and Conventions Seminar on **Friday, September 9**
  - Final Draft of A1 due on **Monday, September 12**

Purpose and Focus:

- As we have discussed in class, effective summary writing is an important academic skill that enables us to carefully consider others’ arguments. As academic writers, we need to take time to “listen to the conversation” about every issue and show an understanding of what others write by **paraphrasing** their writing in a **clear, concise, and accurate manner**. When we summarize **rhetorically**, we account for both the writer’s context, including the writer’s purpose, and the audience’s context as well.
- Once you have shown this understanding and listening in Assignment #1 with your rhetorical summary portfolio, you will analyze important aspects of the issue and present a possible solution to a stakeholder in Assignment #2 with a proposal.
- Here is a way to distinguish between close and critical reading:

  **Close Reading**
  - practicing summary skills
  - looking for WHAT is said
  - "listening to convo"

  **Critical Reading**
  - analyzing rhetorical elements
  - answering: Who is the author’s audience, and what is his/her purpose?

- Using the reading and writing strategies discussed in class, you will read all **THREE** articles listed below, write and workshop rhetorical summaries for all three articles, and then submit **TWO** of those rhetorical summaries:
  - “Chapter 2.” *The Real Cost of Cheap Food.* – Michale Carolan
  - "'Take My Job!' Campaign Markets Agricultural Labor" - anonymous author
  - "Indigenous Diets Can Help Fight Modern Illnesses, Experts Say" - anonymous author
**Development for Audience:**
The **audience** for this assignment will be an academic audience who has not read the articles and is interested in their content. In order to best achieve your purpose with your audience, you’ll need to:

- Carefully and closely read the selected text, understanding WHAT is being said;
- Critically read the selected text, looking for the author’s intended audience and purpose; and
- Develop the rhetorical summaries by:
  - Providing your reader with the author, audience, purpose, text (genre), and context of the article;
  - Explaining which feature(s) of the text you analyzed to determine the audience;
  - Writing a brief key-point summary which includes the author’s thesis and key points, leaving out details and your own opinion;
  - Signaling through author tags that you are always aware that you are summarizing someone else’s ideas, not your own

**Genre and Organization:**
The genre for this assignment will be a **130-160 word rhetorical summary** for EACH of two articles. The purpose is to inform your reader about the texts you have “listened” to; therefore, you will draw heavily from Chapters 1 & 3 in JTCR.

**Style and Conventions:**
Since your rhetorical summary portfolio is an academic genre, the tone and style should be appropriate for an academic audience.

- Your rhetorical summaries should be **grammatically correct** and you should pay close attention to all conventions of standard, written English—especially those discussed in the Style and Conventions Seminar. Additionally,
- Your portfolio should be typed and double-spaced, using Times New Roman, 12 pt font;
- You should have a header in the upper left-hand corner with your name, course, instructor, and date;
- Have your last name and page number in the upper right-hand corner of each page
Hierarchy of Rhetorical Concerns for Feedback and Evaluation: Rhetorical Summary

Your assignment will be evaluated based on the following hierarchy of rhetorical concerns and the extent to which the assignment effectively achieves its purpose with its audience in the given context. The following questions will be used to guide the feedback and evaluation of the assignment.

**PURPOSE and FOCUS:**
- How well does the author show how the key points support the thesis?
- How well does the author describe the feature(s) of the text that they analyzed to determine the text’s intended audience, purpose and other components of the rhetorical situation?

**GENRE and ORGANIZATION:**
- How effectively does the rhetorical summary follow its required format?
- How well does the rhetorical summary follow genre conventions of remaining objective?
- How effectively does the essay organize ideas?

**DEVELOPMENT for AUDIENCE:**
- How well does the author show close and critical reading skills?
- How accurately does the rhetorical summary describe the text’s rhetorical situation?
- How effectively does the author paraphrase clear, concise, and accurate key points of the text?
- How effectively does the author focus on key points rather than details?

**STYLE and CONVENTIONS:**
- How does the author effectively use quoting and/or paraphrasing of the original text?
- To what extent do English grammar and stylistic concerns distract the reader and/or keep the reader from understanding the ideas in the analysis?
Grading Criteria

An "A" (excellent) summary portfolio (90% +):
• will convince your reader that you have read the articles closely and represent each argument well.
• will fully and accurately describe the articles’ rhetorical situations.
• will not only accurately and objectively report the arguments, but will focus on showing the articles’ theses and demonstrating how the main ideas support the thesis.
• will only report main ideas.
• will rely mainly on effective paraphrasing but will quote key words, phrases and/or sentences effectively.
• will contain frequent and varied author tags.
• will be clear and readable without distracting grammar, punctuation or spelling errors.

A "B" (good) summary portfolio (80% +):
• will also show that you have read the articles closely and represent their arguments well.
• will include most of the articles’ rhetorical situations.
• will report the theses and reasons of the arguments but may have one of the following problems:
  ➢ The writer may need to organize the thesis and reasons more effectively, showing a stronger connection between the main claim and how it is supported.
  ➢ The description of rhetorical situations may be incomplete or slightly inaccurate.
  ➢ The summaries may be slightly long, containing one or two unnecessary details, or language that is not concise. Or, the summaries may be slightly short, omitting one supporting idea.
  ➢ The summaries may need more work on balancing quoting and paraphrasing and/or attributing information. However, they will still have effective paraphrasing.
  ➢ The writer may need to work on communicating information more effectively. The summaries will be generally clear and readable but may need further editing for grammatical errors.

A "C" (satisfactory) summary portfolio (70% +)
• will show the writer is learning to read closely and to summarize but has more work to do fully achieve all of the goals of the assignment.
• will be generally accurate, but may contain one or two the following problems:
  ➢ The summaries may contain minor misreadings.
  ➢ The description of rhetorical situations may be largely missing or inaccurate.
  ➢ The summaries may contain subjective responses to the articles as well as objective information.
  ➢ They may show an effort to focus on the argument, but may get sidetracked by giving too many details.
  ➢ These summaries may need much stronger organization to show how the arguments’ reasons support their theses. They may list points, not showing how they connect.
  ➢ These summaries may have some problems with paraphrasing, either not paraphrasing enough, not using the writer’s own language (rather than that of the text), or causing the reader to misunderstand the text.
• "C" summaries may also need more editing for readability.

A "D" (poor) summary portfolio (60% +):
• will show an attempt toward the assignment goals that has fallen short.
• will show significant problems with close reading and will not communicate effectively.
• may have serious paraphrasing and/or editing problems.

An "F" (failing) summary portfolio:
- ignores the assignment requirements.
- or is unreadable due to language and coherence problems.
- or shows little to no understanding of the article or summarizing.
- or contains significant problems with academic integrity.