HoyInstructorsNotes

**Instructor’s Notes for**

**Professional Association Activity and Rhetorical Analysis of Scholarly Genre**

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For all my versions of English 302 the semester begins with a focus on the rhetorical context of various genres. Students are provided with a series of common readings both in-class and at home that represent popular sources (news, feature articles, editorials), trade/professional, and scholarly articles so they can begin to think about differences in audiences and purposes. Students work in groups to analyze various rhetorical features of each and are given rhetorical analysis assignments to complete at home for discussion during the next class.

The **Professional Association Activity** (HoyActivity) may be assigned any time after the add/drop period (usually a week after the first day of classes), but placing it in the second or third week of the semester would be optimal to help students develop an appreciation for the larger world of what they think of as their majors. Many composition instructors use some version of this early assignment as an introduction to the larger discipline awareness project. While I teach face-to-face classes, it works for distance learning versions as well and meets the Students as Scholars (SaS) and English Department learning objectives that students understand how knowledge is transmitted in their discipline and the ethical practices surrounding transmission. I usually schedule an instruction session with a Mason librarian prior to this activity (and make mention of it in the activity prompt), but that does not necessarily have to precede this activity. (Those sessions may be scheduled by accessing <http://library.gmu.edu/instruction/request> ). There is also a reference to group work although that is not a requirement. Depending on the version of English 302 there may be too many students in a single major, which will make it difficult for each group to find a different association that publishes academic journals. This occurs frequently with IT majors. I'm beginning to have students work individually until after the rhetorical analysis paper. Once they have completed the professional association activity students are assigned the **Rhetorical Analysis: Scholarly Article paper** (HoyAssignment),which requires an in-depth look at one of their association's journals and a thoughtful analysis of one of its peer reviewed articles. When I first piloted this assignment students were asked to perform a rhetorical analysis on two or three different genres in their journal. There were some wonderful papers, but I ran into two problems: first, many students have a difficult time with the concept of genre and became a bit lost, especially early in the term; secondly, not all academic journals have non-peer reviewed material, such as editorials or book reviews. Most recently the assignment included here asks for a single, peer reviewed article.