

Project 4: Issues Matter

What issue are you passionate about? What would you like to change about the world we live in? In this project, we will use all the skills we have developed throughout the semester to develop effective and persuasive arguments.

However, not all audiences will find the same types of arguments or modes of delivery as persuasive as others; **it is our job as writers to adjust our rhetoric for these differences**. Therefore, we will analyze different audiences' expectations and **propose/describe** pieces that are most likely to persuade them to agree with our position.

What will this project include? For this project, we will create **four** distinct pieces of writing:

- The first will be a (*non-persuasive*) research paper that outlines the major aspects of the issue, identifies at least two sides of the issue and the arguments those sides usually cite, and explains the specific course(s) of action you would recommend taking. This piece is largely an information-gathering exercise; that is, since you have to do the research anyway, you might as well turn it in for credit. Also, reading this piece will give me information about your issue, therefore allowing me to better judge if your products would be effective.
 - This piece will require at least 3 outside sources (at least one scholarly) and should be between 800-1200 words.
- 3 memos (letters written directly to me), each *proposing and describing* a rhetorical product designed to convince a different audience to take the action you're advocating for. Each memo will include a detailed description of the product, an explanation of how the decisions you are proposing would be particularly persuasive to that audience group, and an explanation of how you are using ethos, logos, and pathos.
 - Each memo should be approximately 500 words.

What kinds of issues can we discuss? The issue can be social, medical, educational, political, business-related, etc. (Please note: abortion and legalization of marijuana are off-limits, no exceptions.) Choose something that interests you, whether you already know a great deal about it or you have always wanted to understand it better.

- Choose an arguable issue. As is true with creating a thesis, there is no point in arguing something that no one disagrees on. For example, most people would agree that world hunger is a problem. What might be an arguable issue is which particular method of eradicating world hunger is the most prudent, as it's something that different members of society (farmers, politicians, families) could disagree on.

- In addition to choosing an arguable issue, you will be trying to get your audiences to take a specific course of action, rather than just “raising awareness” or informing your audience of an issue. Try to choose an issue that multiple audiences have the power to make change, and think critically about what that action might look like.

Choose your topic and position on that topic and then identify three audiences who might disagree with your position or are undecided on the issue, and who have some power to enact change (i.e., think further than “informing” your audiences).

You will then decide what modes of delivery (infographic, newspaper editorial, speech, poster, comic, commercial, brochure, website, position paper, letter to a representative, among many others) would be most effective for convincing those audiences to take your recommended course of action. Your memos will then describe these rhetorical products and justify your choices.

Scope: If your issue is too broad, your pieces might be vague and unfocused. Being able to assess the constraints of your medium and adjust the scope of your argument accordingly is an important skill, both professionally and academically. Most large issues can be broken down into smaller, more concrete, and more manageable chunks. Look at some of the smaller issues within a larger issue to find an issue that is more suitable for your pieces.

The learning goals for this piece are to:

- Strengthen persuasive written and visual rhetorical skills
- Evaluate audience expectations
- Consider advantages and restrictions of composing in different modes
- Continue to develop research skills
- Make arguments that are supported by evidence

Due dates:

- 7/16: Proposal *Issues Matter* (10 points)
- 7/23: Rough draft (20 points) and peer reviews (15 points each, 30 total)
- 7/30: Final draft *Issues Matter* (125 points)