**ASSIGNMENTS**

**ASSIGNMENT # 1: CONSTRUCTING AN ACCOUNT & ANALYSIS OF AN ARGUMENT**  
**Length** 4 – 6 pages

In “The Scientific Consensus on Climate Change: How Do We Know We’re Not Wrong?” Naomi Oreskes examines the nature of scientific consensus. Oreskes, an historian of science at UCSD, examines how best to understand consensus, what constitutes persuasive evidence, and how to evaluate knowledge claims. Oreskes argues that overwhelming consensus exists on the subject of global warming, and that “denialists” have presented a series of claims that are both flawed and dangerous. The text is a chapter from the book *Climate Change: What it Means for Us, Our children, and Our Grandchildren*, edited by Joseph F. DiMento and Pamela Doughman (MIT Press, 2007.)

**Criteria for Evaluation:**

1. Describe Oreskes’ project and argument, and what you see as her most important or interesting sub-claims, explaining how these sub-claims relate to the main claim.
2. Describe how Oreskes organizes her text and how this influences what she has to say.
3. Analyze the ways in which she supports her claims, and the moves or strategies she employs to advance these claims.
4. Write the paper as if addressing a reader unfamiliar with Oreskes’ text.
5. Comment on how this article is significant—what difference it might make to readers.
6. Use an effective structure that carefully guides the reader from one idea to the next, and be thoroughly edited so that sentences are readable and appropriate for an academic audience.

**Key learning outcomes:** students will be able to describe and analyze an author’s argument, claims, project, support and rhetorical strategies.

**ASSIGNMENT #2: GATHERING INFORMATION AND MANAGING SOURCES**

**Length** 6 – 8 pages

*Food Inc.*isa documentary by Robert Kenner about the politics of industrial food production. The documentary features interviews with writers Michael Pollan and Eric Schlosser, as well as farmers and "environmental entrepreneurs." The film aims to “lift the veil on our nation's food industry, exposing the highly mechanized underbelly that has been hidden from the American consumer with the consent of our government's regulatory agencies, USDA and FDA.” The filmmaker suggests that careful examination of our food system reveals shocking truths about what we eat, how it’s produced, and who we have become as a nation.

For this project you will select at least two outside texts that make arguments that connect with those of *Food Inc*. You will use these texts to illustrate, clarify, extend, or complicate one of the arguments advanced by *Food Inc*.

**Criteria for Evaluation:**

1. accurately describe the film’s project and argument
2. signal the topic and give a clear indication of how the paper will proceed
3. locate claims and/or evidence from (at least) 2 outside sources that connect with the argument
4. analyze these claims/evidence in order to show how they illustrate, clarify, extend, or complicate arguments found in *Food Inc*
5. present evidence that explains in detail *how* these texts illustrate, clarify, extend, or complicate the movie’s arguments
6. use an effective structure that carefully guides the reader from one idea to the next and be thoroughly edited so that sentences are readable and appropriate for an academic paper

**Key learning outcomes**: students will be able to construct an account of an author’s project and argument and carry out small, focused research tasks to find information that helps clarify, illustrate, extend or complicate that argument; use appropriate reference materials, including a dictionary, in order to clarify their understanding of an argument.

**ASSIGNMENT 3: EXPLAINING RHETORICAL STRATEGIES**

**Length** 4 – 6 pages  
  
For this paper you will analyze rhetorical strategies in *Confessions of a Radical Industrialist.* You will describe, analyze and explain these strategies, and discuss how they advance the book’s arguments. This will require that you consider the writer’s argument, purpose, audience, and the rhetorical situation he is responding to.   
  
**Criteria for Evaluation**

Successful papers will:

1. accurately describe the authors’ project and argument
2. signal the topic and give a clear indication of how the paper will proceed
3. describe the strategy/strategies, provide interpretation and analysis of *how* the strategy works, and explain why the authors chose to use this strategy (purpose and audience).
4. explain how the strategy/strategies advances the authors’ arguments.
5. present ample evidence to support the analysis of rhetorical strategies
6. use an effective structure that carefully guides the reader from one idea to the next and be thoroughly edited so that sentences are readable and appropriate for an academic paper

**Key learning outcomes**: construct an account of authors’ projects and arguments and explain rhetorical strategies that these authors—and by extension other writers—use to engage readers in thinking about their arguments;

**ASSIGNMENT 4: LENS/PORTFOLIO**  
Either, a) Take one of the texts we have read this semester and use an element of it as a “lens” or framework for understanding and writing about a text of your choice.  
 b) A collection of written work completed over the course of the semester. This may include (but is not limited to) journal work, pre-writing assignments, student reflections, etc. Your instructor may choose to have you present a final group project, paper, visual text or other form of work as part of this assignment.