

# RHETORIC & COMPOSITION 002 ASSIGNMENT SHEET

## Unit 3: Civic Literacy

---

RHETCOMP 002-1076 (T/TH 12:35-1:50)  
OFFICE: Coughlin 249  
SPRING SEMESTER 2007  
MR. GOGAN  
EMAIL: [brian.gogan@marquette.edu](mailto:brian.gogan@marquette.edu)

OFFICE HOURS:  
T/TH 2:00-3:30  
(& by appointment)  
OFFICE PHONE: 288-3057 Ext. 5  
HOME PHONE: 414-217-5877

### **I. ASSIGNMENTS**

- 1 Creative Non-Fiction Essay, A *Newsweek* “My Turn” Column
- 1 D2L Postings
- 3 Short Writings (SWs)
- Oral Presentations (OPs)
- Paper Brief

### **II. “MY TURN” COLUMN**

#### ***Purpose:***

- To enhance your civic literacy and, hence, your critical thinking about the public sphere.
- To give you experience writing as a citizen, not simply as a student.
- To demonstrate that you can adapt your writing to different genre conventions, in this case creative non-fiction.
- To demonstrate that you can develop and sustain a persuasive argument (as a critical thinking skill).

#### ***Writer’s Task***

- Write a *Newsweek* “My Turn” essay. That means, you’ll pick a social issue and try to persuade *Newsweek* readers of its importance via the genre of creative non-fiction (also known as the personal essay). Creative non-fiction tells personal stories about social issues and invites writers to reflect on their stories. Unlike academic thesis-support essays, creative non-fiction essays are based on writers’ own experiences with a social issue or on writers’ observations of someone else’s experiences with a social issue. In sum, a creative non-fiction essay tells a personal story to persuade readers that a social issue is culturally relevant to them; the intended effects on readers are (1) to encourage them to think differently about a topic or even (2) to take action.

#### ***Possible Strategies***

- Think about a social issue either that you’ve been involved with via personal experience, volunteer work, etc., or that you’ve observed someone else experience.
- Think about the powerful stories associated with those experiences
- Think about why a general audience should be concerned about your issue.
- Reflect on what the stories mean to you.
- Be sure your stories/reflections intertwine personal & cultural elements so as to be relevant to *Newsweek* readers.
- Check *Newsweek*’s “My Turn” website for sample My Turn pieces.

*NOTE: We’ll discuss the genre conventions in class; for more information, you may consult ABGW, “Chapter 19”*

#### ***Sample Topics***

Any social issue [We’ll brainstorm a list of these in class.]

#### ***Audience:***

General public of *Newsweek* readers

#### ***Format:***

“My Turn” Template on D2L

#### ***Essay Grading Criteria:***

##### **1. Purpose/Audience Negotiation:**

- Establish a social issue as a rhetorical problem
- Clearly state the purpose/thesis of the essay

- Appropriately address the general audience of *Newsweek* readers
1. **Organization:**
    - Given the purpose and audience, effectively employ genre conventions of creative non-fiction [we'll list these in class, both in general and in particular (as they relate to the "My Turn" column).
    - Given the purpose and audience, effectively organize the text as a whole and as individual ¶s
    - Given the purpose and audience, effectively introduce and conclude the essay
  2. **Development:**
    - Tell a story that is linked to a larger social issue, which would interest readers
    - Reflect on what the story means for yourself and for others (i.e., truth-seeking), using these reflections as reasons that support your stated purpose/thesis
    - Employ specific details to develop your stories and to provide evidence for your reflections.
  3. **Writerly *ethos*:**
    - Employ engaged, engaging, and persuasive voice that seems to be talking directly to readers
  5. **Readability:**
    - Employ effective sentence style—i.e., sentences whose shapes (length, punctuation, wording . . . ) are appropriate to the genre and do not interfere with meaning
    - Use research [if needed] and cite it in ways appropriate to the genre of creative non-fiction (i.e., name the author and text within your own sentences—no parenthetical citation or Works Cited page)

### **III. D2L POSTING**

Please see the D2L discussion board for instructions.

**Due Dates:**

**D2L due before class on 3/22**

### **IV. SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (SW) AND ORAL PRESENTATIONS (OP):**

**Purpose**

- The sequenced SWs are intended to help you think about your essay topic so that you can revise your ideas as we proceed through the unit. If appropriate for your paper, your SW's *may be incorporated into your final essay*.
- The OPs are intended to help you become comfortable speaking in front of a group & giving briefs.
- You may always exceed the word count specifications.

**Writer's Task and Due Dates:**

**SW 1 (Th 3/8):** (A) Pick one social issue (*this will be your issue*) and explain your involvement with it-1 page

(B) Analyze this issue using the questions in PL (32-3)

- For #s 1, 2, and 3, select one question and write 1 paragraph that proves you can answer the question in the affirmative (and, consequently, your issue has "promise."

**Discourse Conventions:**

- address a listening audience (everyone will read it to a small group)
- bring 1 copy to class

**OP 1 (Th 3/8): Informal**—All students read SW1 to a small group

- present effectively for a listening audience

**SW 2 (T 3/20):** (A) Write a letter to the editor on your issue

(B) Copy/Cut letter specifications and enclose with your letter

(C) Turn in an **UNSEALED**, addressed, and stamped envelope with letter

**Discourse Conventions:**

- write 1 page; bring the above 3 components (A, B, C) to class
- make a claim about your issue, using a strong voice/tone
- follow letter conventions in PL (72)

**OP 2 (T 3/20): Formal**—5 students will read their SW2

- present effectively for a listening audience

**SW 3 (Th 3/27):** Profile your "My Turn" audience in terms of their values & beliefs

**Discourse Conventions:**

- imagine 3 different audience reactions to your topic
- make a list with these 3 headings

- underneath each heading, list the values & beliefs associated with that audience reaction

**SW & OP Credit Criteria:** *You will receive credit for doing the SWs and OPs if you have*

1. Completed them and brought them to class (or presented in class) on assigned dates
2. Shown evidence of having employed the above discourse conventions for each SW & OP.

## **V. PAPER BRIEF**

*[5 people for this unit; the rest of you will speak in other units]*

1. **Purpose:**
  - *To help you become comfortable speaking in front of a group*
  - *To give you practice giving brief summaries*
2. **Audience:**
  - A listening audience.
3. **Format:**
  - Speak for 5-minutes. You may use notes/outline but do not simply read your paper.  
[Hint: 5 min speech equals @ 2 double-spaced pages]
4. **Content:**
  - Brief the class on your topic for essay 1
5. **Organization:**
  - In a summary/brief, (1) define your topic, (2) state your thesis, (3) give main points (reasons) that support your thesis (Use particular details sparingly)
6. **Style:**
  - Formal Briefing
7. **Visual aids:**
  - Optional, but encouraged

### **Due Dates:**

**Th 3/29** Peer Review Session: Draft of column due, plus picture, along with author sheet & 1 peer review sheet

**T 4/3** Unit Three Portfolio due: Final Column; Draft; SWs; 1 Peer Review Sheet; Author Sheet

**T 4/3** Paper Briefs (If you signed up for Unit 3)

## **VI. UNIT 3 GRADE: (25 points) 25% of final course grade**

The unit grade will be awarded to the final essay; *however*, short writings must be completed on due dates AND turned in with Portfolio Three in order for you to receive full credit for the unit; otherwise, you may lose 1/2 (percentage) point for each SW not completed on time or included in your portfolio.