

Calera High School Summer Reading Assignment AP Language

Assignment : Close Reading of the section titled "Offense" in Jay Heinrichs' *Thank You for Arguing*

Directions: Use this book as a reference for our argumentation. Based on your understanding of the concepts presented, please answer the following questions using textual evidence as well as your personal experience. The page numbers listed are from the Crown Publishing Edition of the book 2007. If you have a different edition, do not fear – the questions are in chronological order with the book.

pp. 1-45

1. Given your early impressions of this book, are the skills of argument important enough to return rhetoric to "the center of higher education"? If not, what could be more important than rhetorical proficiency in the world after college? As students, have you already decided what you need to learn in school?

2. What is the distinction between an argument and a fight? Note several places in the text where Heinrichs puts this difference into words and write down the quotes.

3. Think of a time when you fought when you could have argued. Now, how could you have turned that fight into an argument? Explain your example in a paragraph.

4. How does seduction fit into Heinrichs's discussion of argument? Why does he make so many connections between argument and intimacy? What kind of argument strategy is normally used when seducing or manipulating an audience?

5. What are the tenses of argument, and why is future tense the most productive tense for debating about a choice to make? What is Aristotle's term for this kind of rhetoric?

6. Distinguish ethos, pathos, and logos, and be certain that you can identify the unique value of each type of argument. Again, think of personal examples when each kind showed up in an argument you participated in, either as the audience or the one trying to achieve consensus.

pp. 46-90

1. "You will find exceptional decorum in places where the consequences of indecorous behavior are the most dire" (p. 54). Is the classroom one of these places? What, if anything, could really go seriously wrong if students and teacher did not behave as the other expected?

2. "It is indecorous to stand in judgment of the very people you want to persuade. You don't want to stand apart from them" (p. 61). How are teachers and students at a decided disadvantage when trying to live up to this standard? What would have to change to give them a better chance?

3. Rhetorical virtue is "the appearance of virtue," a kind of "temporary trustworthiness" (p. 65). Are you in favor of teachers using what Heinrichs calls "Lincolnesque" virtue (pp. 59-60) to gain trust of their students, or would you rather your teachers not pretend to share your values?

4. Are teachers and students even in the business of persuading each other? If so, how? Which direction do you think the persuasion should go, if higher education in America is to recover its global prestige?

5. In what way is ethos performed, not natural (p. 77)? What does this idea have to do with academic writing, the main skill you are learning and being evaluated for in this class? Who is your audience as you write the assignments for this course?

6. And what about pathos? Why is expressing your own emotion the least effective way to motivate your audience emotionally? What are the disadvantages of using humor and anger, strong as they are, to motivate an audience in a deliberative argument? Which pathetic approach would work best on you, as a student, to excel in your education?

pp. 91-133

1. "People often pitch an argument that sounds persuasive to themselves, not to their listeners" (98). Do you agree or disagree – why? Who wants your opinions to be true?
2. What does Heinrichs mean by "When commonplaces clash, arguments begin" (106)? Is persuasion possible if your audience has a different commonplace from your own? How so?
3. How do you make, as Heinrichs says, "an intractable, emotional, values-laden issue like abortion . . . look politically arguable" (119)? In the world of rhetoric, is it better to be persuasive or stick to principles? Would you give up the chance to be persuasive in order to uphold your principles?