Chapter 3

Composing Arguments

The Lessons of Chapter 3

Chapter 3 builds on the lessons concerning strategies of persuasion from the first two chapters. From the basic idea that rhetoric is all around us in words and images to the idea that we can learn from the preparation that goes into composing an advertisement to the formal rhetorical modes such as ethos, pathos and logos, we arrive at the topic of photographs and their accompanying captions in newspapers as a way to expand students’ understanding of arguments.

Using photographs and their captions as the medium and the classical Greek canons of rhetoric as the foundation for instruction, this chapter teaches students how to analyze seemingly transparent visual texts and to create powerful written work with attention to invention, arrangement, style, persona, and stance. The chapter also includes concrete strategies for composing effective titles, introductions and conclusions.

Pedagogical Practice: Begin with the Chapter Preview Questions

For this chapter, we recommend that you ask students to create a writer’s log and put each one of the chapter preview questions at the top of a new page. This can be done either by pen in a notebook or in a Word document on the computer. Then, as students work through the lessons of the chapter, they should write down their reflections on what they learn about the canons of rhetoric; about titles, introductions, and conclusions; about the role of persona in persuasion; about the visual rhetoric of photographs; and about approaches to writing a synthesis paper.
At the end of working with the chapter, students can look back on their writer’s logs and see clearly how much they have learned.

**TEACHING THE CHAPTER’S OPENING IMAGE: HURRICANE KATRINA PHOTOGRAPH**

The first photo of Chapter 3 can serve as a launching pad for your class discussion of how photographs are arguments that present only one angle on the “historical truth” of any event. When teaching, we project this image on a large screen and ask students to tell us what they notice: what is the argument? How do you “read” such visual rhetoric? Ask students what they remember from the Hurricane Katrina coverage. The chances are they will at least remember that a certain amount of controversy raged as a result of the variety of newspaper perspectives. Your students may not be familiar with the idea that newspapers exhibit bias in their photograph selections, as well as with their words. For evidence of these varied perspectives, you can pull up past newspaper covers through the Internet site Newseum, available through the *Envision* Website. Or, consider compiling newspaper front-page images from a more recent international incident to augment your discussion of the way in which visual and verbal texts such as these construct an argument. The point here is to get students thinking about multiple perspectives on an issue, and to help them approach photographs not as representations of reality but as strategically chosen arguments by a specific writer to a particular audience.

**Pedagogical Practice: Understanding the Canons of Rhetoric**

Early in the chapter, we introduce the five canons of rhetoric used by the ancient Greeks to understand communication: 1) Invention, 2) Arrangement, 3) Style, 4) Memory, and 5) Delivery. Chapter 3 emphasizes the first three canons and Chapter 9, the final two. To help students grasp these concepts, have them complete the “Photographs as Argument” exercise on the *Envision* Website. This exercise asks students to work in groups pretending that they are editors at a newspaper who have to choose between two images for their front page. They have to negotiate as a group what type of argument they wish to make with their image and then present their image and argument to the class. This exercise gets students practicing constructing mini-arguments using photographs as evidence, as well as practicing
their oral communication skills in front of the class. You can assign one person in each group to be the lead making the case for an image based on “invention,” based on “arrangement,” and based on “style.” This exercise is fun and easy to do whether or not you are in a high-technology classroom. You can either refer students directly to the Website or print the instructions for the assignment from the Website and bring photocopies to class.

**Writing Activity on Invention**

Invention is the discovery or crafting of a valid argument. Many students might not realize that photography is the result of a strategy of invention that often passes for a visual snapshot of reality. Many students are all too accustomed to the idea that a photograph is a document of reality. Thus, it is often difficult for them to imagine finding anything substantial to say about a photograph. After all, how can one speak for something that is supposed to speak for itself? The commentary on Dorothea Lange’s photographs, discussed on pages 69–70, demonstrates to students that a slice of reality can be interpreted many different ways and criticized on many fronts. To help students understand that a photo’s invention properties shape the version of reality it conveys, ask students to add their voices to the commentary. They should imagine that they are contemporary reporters commenting on Lange’s invention strategies and write up a brief analysis of the two Dorothea Lange photos in Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4. Finally, as a class, compare the writing strategies students use as reporters to the historical interpretation and journalism about Lange on page 69 as a way to introduce students to the importance of style in written work.

**Working with the Creative Practice**

Students can learn about invention in photographs by completing the Creative Practice on page 71. Ask them to discuss Todd Heisler’s photo in Figure 3.5 of a soldier’s coffin returning on a civilian flight. Is Heisler inventing controversy? How does the choice visual elements create a perspective or argument on the issue of how best to treat wartime dead?
WRITING ACTIVITY ON ARRANGEMENT IN ARGUMENT

Like invention, arrangement in photography offers another lens through which students can view their own writing. Use the list of arrangement strategies on page 72 as a way to get students thinking about the complex process of organizing their writing. Examples of paper topics for each type of structure are included in the list. Ask students to write a brief essay on the photos from Game Face depicted in Figures 3.6–3.9. You can assign different organizational strategies to different students in the class or, if you want to devote more time to this writing lesson, have the students try out each arrangement technique in turn and then reflect on which one they think works best for the subject matter.

WRITING ACTIVITY ON STYLE IN ARGUMENT

Building on the style samples from *Sports Illustrated* and *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* on pages 76–77 of Chapter 3, ask students to experiment with writing and rewriting a comment in very different language, tone, images, appeals, and emphasis. You might have them describe the representation in Figure 3.10 of President Obama speaking on healthcare. Imagine two different publications requiring quite distinct writing styles. Or, ask students to work with the Hoax Photo Gallery collection of photos or with other doctored photos available through the Envision Website (see Student Resources/Chapter 3/Resources and Readings/Photography Collections and Exhibits at http://www.pearsonhighered.com/envision) in order to write two commentaries in very distinct writing styles. They should read their two passages out loud to the class so everyone can hear the very different approaches to style.

Pedagogical Practice: Choosing a Rhetorical Stance

Use the At a Glance box on page 78 and ask students to brainstorm specific examples of the three types of inappropriate stances listed: 1) the pendant’s stance, 2) the advertiser’s stance, 3) the entertainer’s stance. They might select video clips from youtube or examples from their own life as evidence for how these stances threw the rhetorical situation (from Chapter 1) out of balance and damaged the credibility of the persona.
WRITING ACTIVITY ON TITLES

After working through the instruction on pages 79–80 on the importance of titles in newspaper headlines, challenge students to use titles as a way to introduce the style of their own writing projects. Ask students to browse the photo collections on the Envision Website (either in class or as homework) and compose three different titles for the same image. Share the writing in groups and have students discuss how the style reflects the rhetorical stance of the writer and sets up an argument for the potential essay.

WRITING ACTIVITY ON INTRODUCTIONS

Give students practice writing multiple introductions on the same material, using the list of introduction writing strategies listed on pages 80–81. You might, for instance, use the photos in Jane Gottesman’s photo essay, Game Face, on pages 73–74, or bring the book to class, or look online through the Envision Website at Lauren Greenfield’s photo essay Girl Culture, available in both book and online formats. For each case, students should imagine they are writing a rhetorical analysis essay on these images and try out the different introductory strategies. When we teach this material in our classroom, we find it effective to use material the entire class shares first, and then repeat the writing exercise with individual projects and have students try out different introductions. Then, we ask students to peer review each other’s introductions, sometimes suggesting combining elements until the best possible opening emerges. Use the student-writing sample by Michael Zeligs on page 81 as a way to model such peer review.

WRITING ACTIVITY ON CONCLUSIONS

Repeat the above exercise with the list on page 83 of effective conclusion strategies. Offer students time to peer review each other’s draft paragraphs in class. Be sure to attend to stylistic choices in the conclusion, such as those demonstrated by Michael Zeligs.
**Pedagogical Practice: Crafting a Position Paper**

Have students analyze the student writing by Angela Rastegar on pages 84–87 with regard to the canons of invention, arrangement, and style. This exercise will help students retain the lessons on rhetoric while they move into writing their own essays, and it will help ensure that they don’t just write opinion papers but work carefully on arguments.

**TEACHING WRITING MULTIPLE SIDES OF AN ARGUMENT**

Have students work in groups and visit photographs by Ansel Adams on the Japanese-American Internment at Manzanar found on the Envision Website. Alternatively, students might select any of the Chapter 3 Resources, including links to online photography collections from the American Museum of Photography, American Photography: A Century of Images, Life Magazine: Classic Pictures, and more. Students should use the images to create their own multiple sides projects. That is, they should write several short arguments about the perspective offered by these photographs.

Remind students that the multiple sides project asks students to experiment with different perspectives on a given issue in order to try out different styles of argumentation and to come to a more complex understanding of a situation. Pedagogically, this project is useful as it helps introduce students to the various elements of style (such as language, tone, syntax, rhetorical appeals, metaphors, imagery, etc.) while encouraging them to avoid flat arguments by experimenting with a range of possible perspectives on a given issue.

For a research project, ask students to look at any of these collections on their own and then look for criticism or reviews of the photographers or collections in their library. They can write short papers on their findings, taking into consideration their own analyses of the photographs compared to any criticism they uncover.

**WORKING WITH STUDENT WRITING ON MULTIPLE SIDES OF AN ARGUMENT**

To help students compose various perspectives, consult Ashi Ali’s project mentioned on page 89 and available at the Envision Website.
The many additional models available on the Envision Website, including Janelle Cornwall’s Multiple Sides Project, “Pepsi and Brittany,” can serve as fun or serious models to get students thinking about persona, stance, invention, arrangement, style, evidence, and perspective in writing an argument. Janelle’s project can be printed and divided up so that one group will read a letter to the editor of CosmoGirl, another will read “Surfer Dude Weighs In,” a response to this letter, and a third will read “I am Woman, Hear Me Roar,” and a fourth, “Oops, She Did it Again,” for a full range of writing strategies.

An alternate way to have students explore persona and multiple perspectives would be to show clips in class from Anna Deavere Smith’s Twilight Los Angeles, available through the Envision Website. In the film, Smith assumes the personae of several different Los Angeles residents as a way of commenting on the public reaction to the 1992 Rodney King verdict.

**PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE: WRITING A SYNTHESIS PAPER**

Students often find synthesizing the various sides of their research as difficult, if not more so, than coming up with a solid thesis.

**TEACHING THE CHAPTER READING: “THE BOSTON PHOTOGRAPHS” BY NORA EPHRON**

We chose Nora Ephron’s 1978 article “The Boston Photographs” because it offers a powerful example of how to allow for multiple perspectives in writing about an issue and then concludes with a compelling statement of argument. The subject of the article happens to be multiple perspectives on a single photograph, and Ephron herself offers a complex thesis after she has discussed and then synthesized the various perspectives in her piece. Specifically, Ephron takes on the controversial photos that newspaper photographer Stanley Forman took of a woman and child falling from a burning building. The baby survived by landing on the 19-year-old woman who died in the fall. Ephron’s piece is partially organized around quoted reactions to the sensational photos. Ephron first creates a context for her piece in the chorus of quoted voices and then forms her own argument about the photos through partial synthesis of the previous opinions.
To teach this piece in class, we often ask students to take turns reading paragraphs out loud and then we also read out the annotations. By giving the different perspectives different voices, the article’s genre as a synthesis paper becomes clear. You can use the At a Glance box on page 96 to show what the paragraphs of Ephron’s article look like when broken down into an arrangement outline. Then, ask students to write a piece about a similarly controversial issue—such as people jumping out of the World Trade Towers on 9/11—using one of the several strategies of arrangement listed in the At a Glance box on page 98.

**Teaching the Writer’s Process**

You can continue to work with synthesis and arrangement by having students analyze some of the students’ essays on the Envision Website. Work with the table on page 97 to help students develop critical literacy about how writing is constructed. Focus first on those models before turning to the drafts your students write. When they do begin their projects, ask them to work through the Prewriting Checklist on pages 99–100 and perhaps complete one of the two options on Prewriting with the Envision Website. They should pick their stance and their style strategically, and share their work often in peer review for feedback on their choices. Return to this chapter often when teaching other media, as the lessons from classical rhetoric in Invention, Arrangement and Style—as well as the writing lessons in titles, introductions, and conclusions—will serve student writers well for years to come.

**BREAKING THE CHAPTER INTO DAYS OF THE WEEK**

**DAY ONE (PAGES 64–76)**

Have students write down their initial answers to the Chapter Preview questions in a writer’s log. Introduce students to three of the five classical canons of rhetoric. They will approach these rhetorical strategies through the modern lens of photography. Get students thinking about a variety of perspectives in photography and in their own writing by having them perform the writing activities around photos of Hurricane Katrina. Work with the photographic resources in Envision and on the Envision Website to have students think about invention. Continue to stress the
connections between crafting a visual argument and crafting a written one. Use the underlying structures of photo essays to discuss the rhetorical canon of arrangement.

**DAY TWO (PAGES 76–88)**

Move on to style and introduce the idea of rhetorical stance. Use student-writing examples to discuss a writer’s persona and style. Have students experiment creating titles using the photos in *Envision*, their own photos, or photos from the collections on the *Envision* Website. Discuss links between titles, introductions, and conclusions by working through the writing activities. Introduce the position paper assignment and have students examine the importance of style in Angela Rastegar’s work.

**DAY THREE (PAGES 88–102)**

Now that students have thoroughly explored the first three canons of classical rhetoric, as well as the position papers, they are ready to think about multiple sides in research writing and synthesis. Use Nora Ephron’s article “The Boston Photographs” and the accompanying analysis to discuss the way she synthesizes a variety of perspectives to create her own thesis. Ask students to work with the strategies of arrangement table on page 97 to think about how they might organize their arguments on visual texts. They can work with some of the samples of student writing to analyze the writing strategies in a variety of pieces from the *Envision* Website, and then write a concluding reflection in their writer’s logs on what they have learned from Chapter 3.
ONLINE RESOURCES FOR CHAPTER 3

At a Glance: Chapter 3 on the Envision Website

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MyCompLab Resources for Chapter 3

1. **Writing Introductions**: exercise on writing introductions. Find at Resources > Writing > The Writing Process > Drafting > Exercises > Writing Introductions

2. **Working with Illustrations on a Word Processor**: multimedia resource demonstrating how to insert and work with pictures. Find at Resources > Writing > The Writing Process > Drafting > Multimedia > Writing in Action: Working with Illustrations on a Word Processor

http://www.pearsonhighered.com/envision for expanded assignment guidelines and student projects.
http://www.mycomplab.com for additional general writing and research resources.