Critical Reading/Reflection Essay 1

Think of this assignment as part of a media investigation into freedom of expression, an important issue that has engaged us in public storytelling and civic dialogue. Now that you have collected your thoughts in your rhetorical reading chart, you can share them with an audience.

Write a letter to a friend(s) or family member(s) explaining how stories in the *New York Times* and other media (articles, news reports, letters to newspapers, letters to students, quotes, songs, etc.) on the free speech controversy raging across the country have engaged you in a public conversation in class and made you feel like a member of a national or global community.

The purpose of your letter is to **persuade your audience** to join this public conversation – to understand the issue and what needs to be done about it.

To be typed in class
Monday, October 2

Bring to class

- ✓ Computer
- ✓ Your annotated *NYT* and other writings
- ✓ Your rhetorical reading chart, journal, notes
- ✓ Outline printed
- ✓ Spell check, grammar check, online dictionary and thesaurus, and any other resource you would use at home while composing an essay draft

You will have 65 minutes to compose your letter. At end of class, upload it to Canvas.

Strategies to consider while writing

- ☐ **Introduce your readers to the subject of freedom of expression.** Who are the key figures and who are the stakeholders? What are the major events, places, dates? **Give your readers enough information to see their connection to the story as U.S. or global citizens.** You are actually *creating* this connection between your story and your audience the same way all the writers we have read have created a connection between us and their stories.

- ☐ **Put the story in context. Explain the Kairos**. Why these stories at this time? Why is freedom of speech being questioned today in the U.S.? By whom? Where did the idea originate? How has it changed over the past half century? Why do you believe it is important, where it might be heading, and why you are following the story in the *NYT*?

- ☐ **Share your personal experience and observations of life** as well as your **worldview** to help your readers understand their stake in the story and how they should respond to it.

- ☐ **Use evidence from at least three *NYT* articles** and **two other sources** (five total) to support your argument. Share the arguments (claims and premises) of your sources with your readers.

- ☐ **This is a letter, so keep your reader's expectations in mind when writing in this genre**. What will your reader expect to see at the beginning and ending of your letter? What tone will the reader expect? For your letter to be convincing, it should be clear, detailed, and concise. It will most likely be about 600 words, or almost two pages with 1.5 spacing.

Purpose of this Assignment

To turn reading into writing.

To use reading to dialogue with others.

To select relevant information from reading to structure an argument for a specific audience.

To integrate information and ideas from reading into your own draft through quotation and paraphrase.

To use specific sentence strategies to convince a particular audience.

Criteria for Success

Together we will judge your writing both as a ***composition intended for a specific audience*** and as a ***writing process that includes reading strategies and pre-writing preparation***.

If you have effectively used your reading to prepare for this writing exercise, you can in fact achieve a full, readable draft in a relatively short 70 minute period of writing.

Scoring Guide for Critical Reading/Reflection 1

Process

- ☐ The writer extracts compelling evidence from at least 5 relevant articles. The writer incorporates active and rhetorical reading as part of the writing process.
- ☐ The writer has **engaged in critical thinking** about his/her connection to the story, referring to personal experience, observations, his/her worldview and biases, while attempting to engage the reader as a stakeholder in the issue.
- ☐ The writer constructs the letter on **critical thinking pre-writing activities** –annotated readings, rhetorical reading chart, journal entries, fast writes, lists, questions, diagrams, and other idea play.
- ☐ The writer uses **awareness of the reader's needs** by providing **context and background information**, and **selecting, arranging, and planning** a letter that both informs and persuades.

Product

- ☐ The draft is unified by a **strong sense of purpose**: To bring family and friends into a media story and public dialogue. The letter **has a clear central idea expressed in a quotable thesis statement** that governs the development of the information.
- ☐ The letter offers a useful **summary** of the story and its **Kairos**, and provides enough **contextual information** for the reader to understand what is at stake.
- ☐ The letter uses **paragraphs** to sort through evidence and move readers toward conclusions.
- ☐ The letter uses **sentences purposefully** to shape evidence, and **sentences are readable**, i.e. **complete, clear, and concise**. There is no wordiness and unnecessary repetition.

☐

Grade