Spring 5-15-2023

The Key Role of Social Media in Students' Understanding of the Rhetorical Situation

Olivia Montine
Seton Hall University, olivia.montine@shu.edu

The Key Role of Social Media in Students' Understanding of the Rhetorical Situation

by

Olivia Montine

Master's Project Adviser: Kelly A. Shea, Ph.D.

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Master of Arts

In

The Department of English

Seton Hall University

South Orange, NJ

May 2023

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of English

APPROVAL FOR MASTER'S THESIS

Olivia Montine has successfully made the required modifications to the text of the master's thesis for the Degree of Master of Arts in English—Writing during this spring, 2023.

THESIS COMMITTEE

Kelly A. Shea, Adviser

Donovan Sherman, Second Reader

The Key Role of Social Media in Students' Understanding of the Rhetorical Situation

<u>Abstract</u>

Gen-Z students have been chastised repeatedly for their lack of attention span, addiction to social media, and inability to complete tasks in school in the manner of generations past (Richtel). It would not be productive to attempt to reform the way current college students process information, as their upbringing has largely altered their attention span and methods of content consumption. Older modes of understanding on how to write in a college composition class do not take this into account. What if the method of instruction professors utilized shifted to better meet the capabilities of college students in 2023? To answer this hypothesis, I conducted a case study on two sections of first-year writing students. The study focused on the success rate of integrating the foundational understanding that young people have of social media into the teaching of writing through rhetorical situation. Most young people have unknowingly been assessing the rhetorical situations of different social media posts and content for nearly their entire lives, and framing rhetorical vocabulary such as audience, genre, medium, design, tone, and purpose to be understood within this new context could be the key to unlocking a renewed understanding of communication and writing. The results of this case study are the reflection of data collection from my two first-year writing classes and are the culmination of syllabi and assignments that were designed with social media as the anchor for furthering students' understanding of rhetorical situation. The writing samples assessed come from both surveys the students took, and references in those surveys to the students' book review essays in which they were asked to assess the rhetorical situation of an existing social media account and cater their essay response to that account's audience. By deepening our understanding of how current

college students learn through social media, instructors of writing classes such as English I could help build more effective foundations for their futures as writers, readers, and thinkers.

Introduction

The generation of students currently in college, commonly referred to as Gen-Z, is often criticized for their supposed lack of attention span, social media addiction, and inability to complete tasks in a traditional manner. Gen-Z is the common abbreviation for Generation Z, which is defined as "the generation born in the late 1990s or the early 21st century, perceived as being familiar with the use of digital technology, the internet, and social media from a very young age" ("Generation Z"). It is crucial to acknowledge that this generation's upbringing has largely been shaped by technology and social media, which has had a profound impact on their cognitive processes and communication styles. Dar Mehsi comments on this shift in cognitive processes in his article "The Emerging Neuroscience of Social Media," saying:

> Using social media requires us to think about the mental states and motivations of other users: to mentalize. For example, before and after a social media user broadcasts information, she may think about how her audience will respond. When providing feedback on another user's posts, a user may think about how this specific user may react upon receiving this feedback. Finally, when viewing information and feedback broadcast by others, a user may think about the other user's motivations for posting this information. (4)

In light of this recent development in our understanding of human processes of comprehension, it is necessary to reform traditional teaching methods to better meet the needs of these students. This study explored the possibility of using social media as an anchor to deepen the understanding of the rhetorical situation in a college composition class.

The term rhetorical situation refers to the context in which communication occurs, including the audience, genre, medium, design, context, and purpose. These elements are integral to effective communication, regardless of the medium used. Social media posts and content are prime examples of communication that are often subject to analysis based on these elements. Most young people have unknowingly been assessing the rhetorical situations of different social media posts and content for nearly their entire lives. Therefore, framing rhetorical vocabulary in the context of social media can provide a renewed understanding of communication and writing.

Rhetoric, as it is used in English I, is defined as "the art, practice, and theory of ethical communication" (Lunsford et al. 1092). The text distributed for the course, *Everyone's An Author,* centers around rhetoric and rhetorical terms. The rhetorical situation refers to "the circumstances that affect writing or other communication, including purpose, audience, genre, stance, context, medium, and design" (Lunsford et al. 1092). Audience is listed as "those to whom a text is directed—the people who read, listen to, or view the text" (1067), purpose is "a writer's goal" (1088), genre is "a way of classifying things…[that] have well-established features" (1076), stance is "an author's attitude towards the subject" (1094), context is "conditions effecting the text such as what else has been said about the topic; social, economic, and other factors, and any constraints" (1071), medium is "a means for communicating—for example, in print, with speech, or online" (1081), and design is "the way a text is arranged and presented visually" (1073). These terms, as defined by the textbook, are the pillars on which the understanding of the rhetorical situation is developed.

To better meet the needs of college students, it is essential to reframe the way professors teach. Using social media as a tool for teaching rhetorical devices can prove to be an effective approach. The results of the case study showed that framing the rhetorical situation in the context

of social media can deepen the understanding of communication and writing for college students.

These students were able to apply their knowledge of social media to writing and communication

in a college composition class effectively. The book reviews that the students reference evidence

that they were able to identify the audience, genre, medium, design, tone, and purpose of their

chosen accounts. Additionally, the results of the survey from the end of the semester supports the

hypothesis that students were able to use social media as a reference point for effective

communication.

As technology continues to shape the way we communicate, it is essential to reform

traditional teaching methods to better meet the needs of college students. The results of this case

study demonstrate that students can effectively apply their knowledge of social media to writing

and communication in a college composition class. By implementing these strategies to better

reach and engage students in conversations surrounding rhetorical situation, we can create more

effective foundations for their futures as writers, readers, and thinkers. It is crucial to

acknowledge that technology and social media are shaping the way we communicate, and it is up

to educators to adapt to these changes to provide students with the necessary skills to succeed in

the modern world.

<u>Review of Relevant Literature</u>

The use of social media in the first-year writing curriculum has gained attention in recent

years, as educators seek to make writing classes more relevant and engaging for students. While

the existing research exploring correlations between the rhetorical situation and social media use

is somewhat limited, it is clear through the experiences students in this study shared that social

media is a shared currency and language among students from diverse backgrounds, and

therefore warrants further exploration. As Benjamin Gleason notes in his article "Digital

Citizenship with Social Media: Participatory Practices of Teaching and Learning in Secondary Education," social media supports new forms of citizenship that are increasingly participatory, driven by expressions of identities, and linked to changing conceptions of literacy (200).

Literacy has traditionally been defined as "the ability to read, write, speak and listen in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world" ("Information: What is Literacy?"). However, the skyrocketing presence of social media and the communications that come with it require an update to what exactly it means to be literate as writers and readers. By incorporating these "changing conceptions of literacy" (Gleason 200) into the first-year writing curriculum, students can gain a better understanding of the relationship between the key terms of context, audience, purpose, genre, and media. Nancy Sommers and Laura Saltz note in their article "The Novice as Expert: Writing the Freshman Year," writing is a critical foundation for students' capabilities as readers, writers, and thinkers, and it plays a crucial role in their first-year experience (129).

According to a 2021 report by the Pew Research Center, 76% of adults who have completed "some college" use at least one social media site, with the number increasing to 77% among college graduates. The concept of literacy has evolved in recent years to encompass more than just traditional reading and writing skills. In the age of digital media, literacy now also includes the ability to understand and analyze various forms of media, including social media.

For instance, students can explore how social media platforms shape the tone and genre of the content they consume and create. Through critical analysis of social media posts, students can also learn how to identify the audience for a particular message and understand the exigence or motivation behind it. In addition, students can figure out how to adapt their writing style to

different media platforms, such as using shorter sentences and more visual content in social

media posts, as opposed to longer and more complex writing in academic papers.

Incorporating social media into the first-year writing curriculum will help students

become more effective communicators in the digital age. As suggested in a study on multi-modal

composition, using a variety of media formats (in this case, engaging with the hypotheticals of

different social media modes and assessing their potential for use) can help students

communicate their ideas more effectively by connecting motivation to learn to real world

technological applications (Usher 20). The study notes that a lack of motivation can easily occur

in classrooms that do not feel applicable to areas of interest students have outside of class, and

that "if implemented correctly, technology can foster feelings of control, interest, competence,

and relatedness, thereby increasing motivation" (Usher 17).

Students can experiment with different forms of media, such as images and videos, to

enhance their writing and create a more engaging message. By incorporating social media

platforms into the curriculum, students can also learn how to use these tools to collaborate with

others and share their work with a wider audience—building on the existing cognitive processes

they have developed over their lives as social media users. Olivia Stewart, in her study

surrounding the use of digital media in the classroom, explores the idea of "multiliteracies" as a

way of adapting to students' evolving cognitive processes (2). "Multiliteracies," as the author

cites, refers to the scientifically supported idea that "there are many types of literacy practices,

not just one traditional way of viewing, enacting, teaching, and learning literacy" (2). The author

goes on to note that "Under a multiliteracies lens, students' social practices and experiences are

valued for their contribution to the meaning-making process, thereby calling for tailored

curricula that include and value these practices, which in turn, may lead to more engaged learning practices" (2).

To further explore the connection between the rhetorical situation and social media use, it is important to examine studies on personal writing and academic writing. If we approach teaching rhetoric with the understanding that Gen-Z students have been social media users who have engaged in this concept of "personal" writing, it is crucial to bridge the gap between the personal and academic as students enter the most rigorous writing transition of their lives. As Janet Richards and Sharon Miller note in their book, "Acknowledging this linkage between the personal and the professional is an important first step in improving academic writing abilities" (23). Giving students a platform like social media as a foundation to connect on begins to link this bridge between what they know and what they are expected to learn. This correlation suggests that exploring how social media can be integrated into the first-year writing curriculum to create a more engaging and relevant experience for students could be a fruitful avenue of research.

Several studies on the use of social media by college students could also shed light on how these platforms interact with the rhetorical situation. In his article studying the collaboration between social media usage and learning, Chang Sup Park notes that "When engaging in discussion, individuals often make significant efforts to comprehend topics of discussion, organize their thoughts into articulate expressions, and weigh the pros and cons of diverse arguments provided by diverse discussion partners… Additional mental work can help transform the information obtained from social media into a long-term memory" (215). The process of adding steps into the consumption of social media content, as is done in the college classroom when looking at social media through the rhetorical lens, builds on the efforts that students have

already been practicing. These studies suggest that social media can be a valuable tool for students to engage with academic material and collaborate with their peers.

Case studies, such as the one completed in support of this research, are a popular research method in various disciplines, including social sciences, business, and medicine. They involve the analysis of a specific case in-depth, providing an opportunity to explore complex issues and generate a detailed understanding of a particular phenomenon. The use of case studies has several benefits, including their ability to provide insights into real-world situations and their ability to contextualize and illustrate complex concepts.

Case studies provide an opportunity to explore complex issues in-depth. According to Robert Yin, a case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in depth and within its real-world context" (16). This definition suggests that case studies are an effective method for exploring complex issues that may not be fully understood within their real-life context as they are still unfolding. By examining a specific case in detail, researchers can identify patterns, relationships, and causal mechanisms that may not be apparent in broader surveys or experiments (Stake 137).

Case studies are also relevant because they can explore methods that have the potential to be replicated on other groups, with room for adjustments to be made to achieve optimal results. As stated in "Qualitative Case Studies," "the purpose of a case report is not to represent the world, but to represent the case" (Stake 156). This means that while case studies provide valuable insights into real-world situations that can be used to inform decision-making, policy development, and professional practice, they are at the end of the day the representative of a small group and cannot be taken as true for all groups. For example, a case study of a successful business could provide insights into the strategies and practices that led to their success,

providing valuable information for other businesses to learn from—but the businesses may not have the exact same outcome. When replicated in an educational setting, the input from students in correlation with a research hypothesis could provide vital clues to other educators for alterations to the way they approach curriculum, with the understanding that adjustments may need to be made to achieve the same results with varied groups.

Case studies also provide a means to contextualize and illustrate concepts such as the one outlined in this thesis. According to Pamela Baxter and Susan Jack, case studies provide a means to explore complex concepts in context and to illustrate the application of theories and principles in real-world situations (544). By examining a specific case, researchers have been able to identify how theoretical concepts apply in practice, providing a concrete example for students and professionals to understand. Case studies also offer several other benefits, such as their ability to generate hypotheses, their ability to examine multiple sources of evidence, and their ability to be used in comparative research. These sorts of studies have proven to be an important research method that can provide valuable insights into complex issues, inform practice, and illustrate the application of theoretical concepts. As stated by Robert Yin, "the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (2). In this type of educational research, in which something college students are presumed to do in their daily life is being studied insofar as to its usefulness in the classroom, these "meaningful characteristics of real-life events" are a key aspect of truly understanding any existing correlation.

Statistical analysis was also utilized for the two questions in this case study that were measured in Likert-scale format. Students answered on a scale of 1=disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=neutral, 4=somewhat agree, and 5=agree for the questions, and a Welch T-Test was

performed to provide evidence for the assumed idea that the two class sections did not have a significantly different set of responses. While a small part of this study, many variables are introduced by the two sets of data being taken from two separate classes—and this statistical analysis was used to show that those variables were not significant enough to affect the responses from the two classes. Paul Velleman and Leland Wilkinson support this method of data analysis, as well as the need for statistical analysis on Likert-scale data, saying "meaning in statistical analysis derives not only from the data but also from the questions being investigated, the patterns discovered in the course of the analysis, and the additional data that may be available" (71). This analysis provides a glimpse into the pattern of response that was consistent between the two class sections, regardless of the potential different variables (such as time of day, class discussion outcomes, and environmental factors) that may have been present.

Another technique used in this case study to analyze the collected qualitative data sets was text mining. Text mining is the process of extracting meaningful information and insights from large volumes of text data, such as written responses from participants in a case study. Text mining allows researchers to analyze and interpret written responses quickly and efficiently, identifying patterns, themes, and trends that may not be apparent through manual analysis. The use of text mining in case studies involving written responses from participants is becoming increasingly popular in various fields, including social sciences, marketing, and healthcare. Text mining can also help to reduce bias and subjectivity in data analysis, as it uses automated algorithms to analyze the data, rather than relying solely on human interpretation.

Text mining is particularly relevant in case studies that involve written responses from participants because it allows researchers to identify themes and patterns that may not be apparent through manual analysis. As explored in *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its*

Methodology, text mining provides a systematic and reliable approach to analyzing qualitative data, enabling researchers to identify patterns and themes that may not be immediately obvious through manual analysis (Krippendorf 27). By using text mining to analyze written responses from participants, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the data, identify emerging themes, and generate new hypotheses for further research. Furthermore, text mining can be used to identify sentiment and tone in written responses from participants. According to Leping Liu, text mining in conjunction with qualitative data analysis can be used to identify the sentiment and tone in large volumes of text data, providing valuable insights into how participants feel about a particular topic or issue (24). By identifying positive and negative sentiment in written responses, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the data and identify areas where further research or intervention may be necessary.

There is limited existing research on the use of social media in the college classroom, which highlights the need for further exploration. Since social media is a shared currency and language among students from diverse backgrounds, with further examination there is the potential for it to be a valuable tool for students to engage with academic material and collaborate with their peers. Incorporating social media platforms into the first-year writing curriculum can help students become more effective communicators in the digital age and learn how to use these tools to collaborate with others and share their work with a wider audience. Utilizing case studies has proven to be an effective research method to explore complex issues in-depth and provide insights into real-world situations, which highlights the importance of the design of this study. By examining a specific case in detail, I as the researcher was able to identify patterns, relationships, and causal mechanisms that may not be apparent in broader surveys or experiments. With more knowledge and development of social media and its use as an

educational tool, similar case studies could be conducted in the future to further explore and create nuance to how educators can best use social media in regard to teaching students about the rhetorical situation.

<u>Research Design and Setting</u>

CORE English 1201 Composition Courses, sections AI and AO

The class design, specifically the syllabi and assignments, reflected the hypothesis that utilizing social media as a launching point for deepened conversation and understanding of rhetorical devices can be effective. With the natural exposure to social media that students born after 2000 have gained growing up in the digital era, they have likely interacted with countless Instagram and Twitter accounts with catered audiences. The posts that these accounts create are tailored to serve their audiences best—commonly utilizing devices such as tone, media, and style. For example, the account @thereclaimproject is centered on "fostering generations of informed, empowered, and anti-prejudiced people" (Instagram). Upon clicking on the account, users find a grid full of informational posts centering anti-prejudice dialogue for a variety of issues, such as LGBTQ+ rights and how to help marginalized communities. Upon seeing their information, followers choose to interact with the account because they are interested in what they post and expect informative anti-prejudice posts to continue—the account knows this is their audience and continues to post similar information to cater to that audience.

The Seton Hall University first-year writing program is centered on a set of Outcome statements, based on key concepts of rhetorical knowledge, critical thinking, reading, composing, processes, and knowledge of conventions. While all outcome statements are relevant to the class discussion, the Rhetorical knowledge statements are most closely linked to the design of this

study. These statements outline that after their experience in the writing program, students

should:

- Learn and use key rhetorical and literary concepts through analyzing a variety of texts, both nonfiction and fiction, and composing in a variety of essay and research genres

- Gain experience reading in several genres (both nonfiction and fiction) and composing in several genres to understand how genre conventions shape and are shaped by readers' and writers' practices and purposes.

- Develop facility in responding to a variety of situations and contexts calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium, and/or structure

- Understand and use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences

- Match the capacities of different environments (e.g., print and electronic) to varying rhetorical situations (Seton Hall 2022)

With these outcome statements in mind, the syllabus and class discussion surrounding social media were continually tied into these concepts of rhetorical knowledge.

To introduce the idea of incorporating online presence and media consumption into the class, daily writing warmups were used to pose reflective questions to students. For example, one prompt asked, "What's one way you notice your online habits intersecting with or crossing over into your real-life behavior? How do the things you pick up online manifest into your daily life?" (Figure 1) Students cited points such as using abbreviations that were found online and referencing cultural points or memes with friends that they had seen online originally. This idea of utilizing social media was then applied to the work students completed in class.

Another writing warmup from later in the semester asked students to "Frame [their] visual analysis as if [they] were posting it on a social media account—What would the audience

of that account be interested in? Think about what type of user your chosen visual is primarily talking to" (Figure 1). Through class discussions about both the writing warmups and paper prompts, the class was able to make repeated connections between the use of rhetorical devices in essays we read and accounts that posted content online. They were able to apply those principles of reaching a specific audience, using a tone and style that supported their argument, and unpacking how authors of essays and social media posts alike apply these principles.

To help facilitate the analysis on this research, Voyant text mining services were used to help conceptualize and frame specific words and phrases used in student responses. Figures 3 through 7 illustrate the results of this text mining, showing the most frequently used words in the data set of answers collected from the student surveys. Voyant is an innovative text mining platform, which allows users to securely upload data sets in the form of documents, spreadsheets, or PDFs to be worked with and compared as one set of data. For case studies like this one, Voyant demonstrations were created with the responses for individual questions, allowing for both classes to have their data analyzed together for the most fruitful text analysis possible.

This research aimed to analyze the potential positive effects of utilizing the shared language of social media in the classroom as a strategy for teaching the rhetorical situation to students. In a post-pandemic academic environment where students' attention spans and interest in writing may be diminished, utilizing social media as a tool in the classroom unlocks a new understanding of the rhetorical concepts being taught. To see if this is possible, I conducted surveys on students' understanding of rhetorical terms and social media use and analyzed anonymized student writing samples. The full Institutional Review Board criteria for approval was met, and the Board concluded following the application's acceptance that the study was exempt from traditional IRB oversight due to it being carried out in an educational setting.

Additionally, consenting students participated in a brief interview. It is also important to note that because this study was conducted in a post-pandemic academic and social environment. Students' attention span and learning decline post-pandemic, as explored by Mervosh and Wu (2022), is a key factor in their class performance, as well as the shift into a visible sphere of online activism changing the way students may perceive information online (Adams et al. 58).

Methods

Figure 2 shows the first paper completed at the start of the semester, which was distributed to both sections in this study (CORE English I, 120AI and 1201 AO) within the first month of the semester. The paper, which fell under the genre of a book review, was explained as follows: "In a textual analysis essay, you will be creating a review to be posted as an infographic on an account of your choosing" (Figure 2) The book review paper was designed as an infographic following in-class discussions of what infographics were—the majority of students were familiar with this term following the sharp rise in the use of infographics by social justice and political accounts as a result of the 2020 election, the pandemic, and the Black Lives Matter movement. The assignment connected the concept of infographics to the summer reading by saying "These infographics are designed to show up on users' Instagram feeds and encourage them to think about new concepts, important political ideas, or societal issues—much like the aim of non-fiction texts such as the assigned summer reading, Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson" (Figure 2) Students were encouraged to look through potential accounts, and assess the existing information the account had posted—what was their targeted audience? Who might already be following this, and what would they expect to see? Conversely, whose algorithm might this show up in? What other groups or topics may users who have this content recommended to them be interested in? Following the completion of the paper, I had 20 research papers to use and analyze

within this case study. Within the data analysis, the writing samples are anonymized, and will be referred to as Writer 1 through 22 to differentiate paper responses.

The methods of collecting data included two sets of questions given after the end of the semester: one open ended, and one on a Likert scale with response options of agree, somewhat agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. A consent form was obtained from students participating in the survey, and they were made aware of its use as well as their anonymity. Responses to these survey questions will be referred to as Student 1 through 22. Additionally, all 36 students were asked if they would like to participate in an additional in-person interview after the semester ended. 20 of the 36 students expressed interest, but only two of those 20 were not enrolled in my class the second semester so were taken out of consideration to avoid any bias associated with being currently enrolled in a class in which I give them a grade.

The questions utilized in the survey, which was given to all students, consisted of the following:

- What is your understanding of terms such as audience, style, genre, tone, medium, and other rhetorical terms we have learned this semester? In other words--what was your understanding coming in, and in your own words how do you describe these terms now?

- Think back to paper 1 and all the discussions we have had about social media since--how did using social media as a framework change your understanding of the term "audience"?

- What advantages do certain media have over others? What effect does that have on what social media platforms can best suit a particular argument or claim?

- How did you form your argument in paper 1 with the audience of your chosen social media account in mind?

- How did the media (image style) and platform (where you found or searched for the image) affect the visual you chose in paper 2?

In addition to the above questions, which were distributed in an open-ended response format, there were also a set of statements with responses evaluated on a Likert scale ranging from agree to disagree. The statements given included:

- Social media has helped my understanding of rhetorical terms such as audience, genre, and medium.

- Going forward, I anticipate thinking about rhetorical terms and strategies when trying to understand whether an argument on social media is effective.

Students were asked to fill out this survey anonymously at the end of the semester, following our discussions about social media as a framing tool over the course of the semester. In addition, two students (one from each section) completed interviews at their own decision to talk more in-depth about their experience in 1201. The two students who participated will be referred to as Student A and Student B. The questions posed in these interviews included the following, with some natural divergence and expansion facilitated by the one-on-one conversational nature of the interviews:

- What was your understanding of audience, tone, and medium (using those terms or in other language) before coming into 1201?

- How did knowing what it meant for an Instagram/Twitter/TikTok account to have a desired audience help your understanding of the term for writing your papers?

- Was there a moment where you connected the use of these terms in a social media setting to the use of these terms in your papers?

- After 1201 ended, did you come out with a better understanding of rhetorical devices and terms?

- Would you say that using social media as a reference point had a positive effect on your learning and made it easier to understand the rhetorical terms being used?

Both interviews were roughly 20 minutes in length.

To differentiate between different types of data collected, answers from the survey will be denoted as "Student" and anonymized as 1-24. Answers collected from student essay samples will be labeled as "Writer" following the same anonymization process. The students were all made aware of the nature of this assignment from the beginning of the semester, and the following note was included at the end of the syllabus: "A note on this class: I am a Master's degree student currently working on my thesis project, which involves recording information from this class. In addition, I may be asking some students to participate in case study questions to contribute to my research. Any cooperation is very appreciated, and please let me know if you have questions at any time." (Montine 11)

Data Analysis

The findings of the survey portion of the study are reflected in the tables below. Out of 36 students in total between both sections, 24 responded and all 24 responded to every question. The remaining students were either absent, in which case they were told they were allowed to complete the survey on their own but elected not to or elected not to while being present.

agree accounts for the majority of responses to 'Social media has helped my understanding of rhetorical terms such as audience, genre and…

(Table.1: Results of students who selected "agree" (blue) as a response versus "somewhat agree" (orange). These were the only two selected results for this question.)

agree accounts for the majority of responses to 'Going forward, I anticipate thinking about rhetorical terms and strategies when trying to understand whether or not an argument on social media is effective.'.

(Table. 2: The table represents the number of students who responded agree (blue), somewhat agree (orange), and disagree (grey)

For the question "What is your understanding of terms such as audience, style, genre, tone, medium, and other rhetorical terms we have learned this semester? (In other words--what was your understanding coming in, and in your own words how do you describe these terms now?), 83% of students reported a positive change in understanding whereas 17% reported no change. The category of no change often involved variables such as an existing strong understanding from high school. For the question "Think back to paper 1 and all the discussion we have had about social media since--how did using social media as a framework change your understanding of the term "audience," 100% of students demonstrated improved understanding of the concept of "audience" using social media as a framework. These markers of improvement were observed by reading the short answer responses that the students wrote and interpreting the data accordingly. For example, markers such as "I have a better understanding of those terms now" (Figure 8, Student 16) and "I would say I had a fairly good understanding of these terms even before this class, but this class also emphasized their importance much more as it relates to writing" (Figure 8, Student 4) were both classified as markers of improvement. One student clearly cites their own opinion of improvement, while another emphasizes that even though they knew the terms beforehand their understanding is improved at the conclusion of the class.

For the second question "Think back to paper 1 and all the discussion we have had about social media since--how did using social media as a framework change your understanding of the term 'audience'" (Figure 8) there were multiple responses that clearly demonstrated an improvement of understanding. One student stated "By using social media as a framework forced me to choose an audience that I wanted to write the book review for. Had I not been forced to do this, I think I would have written the entire paper without considering what my audience would be and what type of information would convince to read Just Mercy" (Figure 8, Student 13). Another student responded that "Using social media as a framework changed my understanding of the term "audience" because it made me realize that there is now a chance to target a bigger audience and now when it comes to writing there can be multiple audiences who can benefit from listening or reading the particular information being discussed" (Student 15).

In regard to responses on specific assignments, students had a similarly positive review on how social media helped them come to understand what was being asked of them as the rhetor. In response to the question "How did you form your argument in paper 1 with the audience of your chosen social media account in mind?" one student responded that they "made [their] argument in paper 1 about unfair treatment in the criminal justice system and my Instagram account was in support of reform in the system" (Figure 8, Student 19). This demonstrates a clear understanding prompted by the assignment that because their argument was centered on reforming the criminal justice system, an Instagram account whose existing content supports that argument would have their desired audience. Another student cited that after finding an appropriate account, the assignment became "easier" because they "spoke up on [their] opinion and what I believe was right, then came in with solid facts and quotes on what I read over to form my argument" (Figure 8, Student 22). With a clear understanding of the

intended audience for their arguments, students were able to assimilate their opinions more easily with the appropriate facts and supporting evidence to give them a stronger paper based on the foundational elements of the rhetorical situation.

The Likert Scale data collected poses an opportunity for quantitative analysis, as the Likert scale responses can be converted into nominal data of 1=disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=neutral, 4=somewhat agree, and 5=agree. This data required analysis with a Welch T-Test, as the response groups were not equal between the two classes. The goal of this quantitative analysis is to support the assumption that the responders from the two different classes, overall, did not have a significantly different response to the Likert scale surveys. This is a crucial checkpoint of this case study, as it not only provides numerical data to further solidify the qualitative data, but it also removes the possibility of error created by the data sets coming from two different classes. In other words, running a test of significance helps to show that the two classes' survey responses were similar enough to stake that the two classes did not have a significantly different experience in using social media to understand rhetorical situation.

For the statement "Social media has helped my understanding of rhetorical terms such as audience, genre and medium," the statistical analysis was carried out as follows: The null hypothesis, or the presumed outcome, is that there should be no significant difference between the two groups being compared. The alternative hypothesis, or the unexpected outcome, is that there is a significant difference between the two groups. The calculated test statistic is 1.86, which is less than the critical value of ± 2.086. Since the calculated test statistic is less than the critical value, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, and it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the two groups. Therefore, we can conclude that the level of agreement between the two groups is not significantly different (Figure 10). For the statement

"Going forward, I anticipate thinking about rhetorical terms and strategies when trying to understand whether or not an argument on social media is effective," the same test provided a similar conclusion (Figure 11): there is not enough evidence to support the claim that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the two sets of data at a 5% level of significance.

In addition to the quantitative analysis made possible by the Likert scale survey utilizing the Welch t-test, Voyant technologies provided a data mining analysis to supplement the researcher interpretation of the responses to the qualitative survey questions. The results are demonstrated in figures 3 through 7 and can be interpreted in a few ways. First, the vocabulary density feature interprets the richness of all the submitted responses. For the set of responses in the survey question "What is your understanding of terms such as audience, style, genre, tone, medium, and other rhetorical terms we have learned this semester? In other words--what was your understanding coming in, and in your own words how do you describe these terms now" (Figure 8), the vocabulary density was 0.163, meaning only 16.3% of the words in responses were unique. In other words, the survey responses utilized a relatively small number of unique words compared to the total number of words. This could be due to a few underlying factors, including the fact that many key words in responses were prompted in the question, given that the rhetorical terms students were asked to reflect on were listed. However, this vocabulary density, which was consistent with the same tests run on the other survey questions, also showcases that students were able to 1) talk efficiently in their understanding of the listed terms, and 2) there were very few outliers in students' responses, indicating a trend of agreement on the meaning of the terms and the way that students' views on them changed in responses.

For less formulaic questions like question 4, "How did you form your argument in paper 1 with the audience of your chosen social media account in mind" (Figure 8), Voyant proved to be a similarly interesting way of interpreting responses. The vocabulary density for this question doubled, with a score of 0.334, meaning over a third of the words in the corpus were unique. This significantly higher percentage showcases a key difference: while students were answering similarly about their understanding of the key terms, the way they approached forming their arguments differed significantly.

Evidence of this difference can also be found in the papers submitted as part of this sample. Writer 1 utilized the following explanation to justify their choice of account in the introduction of their first paper:

> As followers of the Innocence Project know from their work and their Instagram page (@Innocenceproject), there is a great deal of humanity involved in the struggle of freeing the wrongly accused in this country. There are two key vehicles of the book's message: how Stevenson portrays the criminalization of poverty (which leads to mass incarcerations and capital punishment), and to also understand how moments of kindness and genuine humanity help further his messages that so passionately call for justice and redemption. (Writer 1)

Writer 2, in their response, took a different approach and connected the social media account they envisioned the infographic being posted on in their first body paragraph, and additionally, took a local political account into their argument as opposed to a larger non-profit. They wrote:

> As those who follow the Instagram account, victor4nj, you will find many of the situations within this book align closely with the content that is posted on this page.

Stevenson accurately portrays and explains these events and was able to create a piece that concisely explains the issues and conflicts the U.S Criminal Justice System has. *Just Mercy's* collection of cases presented throughout the book make for either an interesting read or allows you to expand your knowledge and truly see the abuse behind the system that was meant to "protect and serve" (Writer 2).

As outlined in the literature review, students have seen a drastic shift in the political landscape of social media during their young adult lives—both of these examples of student writing showcase an awareness of the audience and tone of politically and justice-oriented accounts, with different approaches involved for each one. Writer 1 chose a larger account with a wider following who may be interested in the book regardless of geographic location, while writer 2 demonstrated an innate knowledge of local political constituents that would be interested in the book's message. Both approaches, combined with the fact that this paper was the first assignment completed in the semester, support the idea that students have an innate understanding from their own social media use as to what it means for an account to have an audience and tone, and were able to apply those same concepts to make their writing appropriate for the designated readership.

The two individual interviews provided a chance for students to speak more candidly and in depth about their understanding of the correlation between social media and the rhetorical situation. Student A in their interview said that the rhetorical situation "was definitely something all of my past English teachers have talked about, but I think for me it was always easier to focus on other literary devices rather than addressing, like, medium and audience, especially because I've never really had a class that focuses specifically on rhetorical devices." The student went on to mention that:

I think it was beneficial…using social media a lot because it helped me focus specifically

on audience and they kind of helped me practice the skill more. Otherwise I feel like it's

always easier to say, oh, they're just talking to everyone who is reading it, you know?

And having it on a specific platform, like when I did the book review for just Mercy…I'm

like OK, now I understand. Like who is [the Instagram account] talking to, who do I want

to be talking to in this paper? (Student A)

 Student B had a similar take on the experience of finding an Instagram account to

address their book review to. They noted that "I follow a lot of the pages that I chose to write

about. So, it was just kind of like, well, what am I used to seeing on this? What's the thing that

catches my eye? And then I just would try to include that in the paper or ask…how did they talk

to me?" (Student B). This comment reveals the goal of the study in a nutshell—by creating an

association between the way students know social media works to attract a certain audience and

speak to them with the rhetorical situation, they are more easily able to apply these same

rhetorical tools to their own writing.

These students were also able to provide insight into how they use social media outside

of class, to give an idea of their familiarity with it in their day to day lives. Student 1 noted that

they used social media recreationally for "at least an hour every day" and that they "thought of it

as an escape" (Student A). Student B noted that:

 I think it's a lot of mindless activity, a little bit. But I think after COVID, I've also begun

following more accounts, at least on Instagram, that are more [centered on] social

issues…And so I've also started to use it to become more informed. I follow Black Lives

Matter, some feminist pages, just because like those are topics that have become

important to me and it like it kind of like, is just a constant reminder for me. (Student B)

Student A, when asked about something positive they felt about their social media use, said that "I think [social media] beneficial because it's it stops you from just kind of…moving on from a topic just because it's not a main social media trend anymore…it's like a constant reminder that 'you need to be aware of this, this is what's happening in the world'. And so even though social media like TikTok can be sort of mindless, I think it's also nice to cause it does remind me of current events and I can see what's happening in the world" (Student A). The role of social media as a form of connection during the pandemic is well known—and potentially especially so for young adults who were close to turning 18 and able to vote during the 2020 election cycle. The place of social media has become so prominent in the lives of young people for much more than dancing and curating feeds—it is also a source of connection and a resource that can applied to their in-class learning and comprehension.

Conclusion

The impact of social media on the way we communicate is undeniable, especially for younger generations who grew up with it. As a Gen-Z member and an educator, I wanted to explore how social media could be leveraged to improve writing instruction. While many studies focus on the negative effects of social media on students' learning and attention, my experience has shown that social media can be used to enhance students' understanding of rhetorical concepts and help them become more competent writers.

The statistical analysis provided supports the hypothesis that the two classes had similar experiences in their social media evolution, and the text mining data provided allows for an interesting look into the correlation between word usage in different questions. Additionally, the student papers sampled support the idea that providing a foundational touchpoint of social media

was able to encourage students to explore the rhetorical context of their book reviews and cater their responses to a specific audience more efficiently.

By tapping into the interactive nature of social media, I was able to teach students how to apply rhetorical devices to concepts they already understand. This approach not only streamlines the learning process but also prepares students to work effectively in the digital world, where social media is a dominant mode of communication. Writing, even with the invention of Artificial Intelligence, is an inherently human skill based on the ability to connect—and the tools of the rhetorical situation give students the language to understand how to make their messages resonate with their audience. In the same vein, social media was invented to be a means of connection—and students today know more than ever how vital of a tool this can be in times where in-person connection has been impossible. Using their existing knowledge and skills with social media, applying the language of the rhetorical situation becomes less intimidating and instead has them evaluate arguments with a skillset they may not be aware they already possess in a different setting.

Further study could expand on what this case study has begun to explore—social media is anything but monolithic, and there are new tools and platforms being created every day. Future researchers could use this existing understanding of the benefits of social media in teaching the rhetorical situation with these new platforms as they are introduced. For example, this study did not begin to work with TikTok, which is arguably one of the most popular new social media platforms, in part because there is limited scientific data and knowledge on what literacy on that platform consists of. Generation Z students, in my experience, are perceptive, bright, and eager to learn about the digital world in which they live—further exploration of newer social media models as they come out can assist in making future students better citizens and excited learners.

By acknowledging and building on students' existing knowledge and skills, we can help them become more confident and skilled modern communicators. Social media is a powerful force in shaping the way we communicate, and educators should embrace its potential to enhance instruction. By incorporating social media into the classroom in a purposeful and intentional way, we can better prepare students for success in the digital age.

Figure 1. Writing Warmup Questions

Writing Warm Up 9/12	What's one way you notice your online habits seep into your real life behavior? How do the things you pick up online manifest into your day to day life? (5-6 sentences/1 paragraph)	17	16	0	17
Writing Warm Up 11/2	Frame your visual analysis as if you were posting it on a social media account. What type of account would it go on (make one up--not an existing account)? What would the audience of that account look like? Think about who your visual is primarily talking to. (4-5 sentences) EXTRA: In one word, how was your weekend?	16	16		

Figure 2. Book Review Assignment

Prof. Montine
Fall 2022
Book Review Paper: Instagram Infographic

While Instagram is a photo-based social media platform, the use of eye-catching graphics as the background to text has increased in popularity from 2020 onward in accounts that create "infographics". These infographics are designed to show up on users' Instagram feeds and encourage them to think about new concepts, important political ideas, or societal issues—much like the aim of non-fiction texts such as the assigned summer reading, Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson. In a textual analysis essay, you will be creating a review to be posted as an infographic on an account of your choosing. **While the essay itself will be completed in a traditional MLA format, you will be highlighting which quotes you would use in a photo stack to engage the audience of your chosen account and get them interested in your review.**

A successful essay will utilize features of the various book reviews that are discussed in the Core English I text, Everyone's An Author, including:

-A clear sense of audience

-A concise summary of the plot

-An evaluation of the text and the author's argument and rhetorical choices

-A recommendation for your audience (see below regarding audience)

-What did you like/dislike/find intriguing about the book's portrayal of one or more of the following themes: the U.S. criminal justice system, the U.S. prison system, mental health treatment, poverty, homelessness, post-traumatic stress syndrome, childhood sentencing, legal representation for the poor, antiquated laws, disproportionate numbers of men of color in prisons, and/or other relevant themes?

- Do your thoughts on these themes affect your recommendation? Choose one of these issues above; that subject matter will be the focus of your review.

-Why is the account you chose the most ideal for your review to be published on? What do you want users to have gained after seeing this on their feeds?

Audience/Venue:

You will be choosing one Instagram account for this review to be posted to. Imagine a news article style-post/infographic, with highlights to the review being posted in pictures and the full review posted as the caption. What quotes would you highlight for the post itself as it appears in peoples' feeds? What image would you use as the cover?

Summary:

In short, you will write a 3-5-page analytical review for the account you have chosen, speaking **to the audience of this account**. That means you do not need to reference the account to me in the paper and say things like "I chose xyz account for this review"—act as if it is already posted there. Consider framing strategies such as "As followers of ___account know, criminal justice is an ongoing and important issue," etc. Make sure to do some background research on the account so that your tone, purpose, and content will align with the audience at hand. Reach out to Professor Montine with any questions!

In writing the paper, you will need to refer to the book; therefore, you will need to include in-text references and a Works Cited page.

Figure 3. Voyant Tools Text Mining Results

This corpus has 1 document with 6,435 total words and 1,052 unique word forms. Created now.
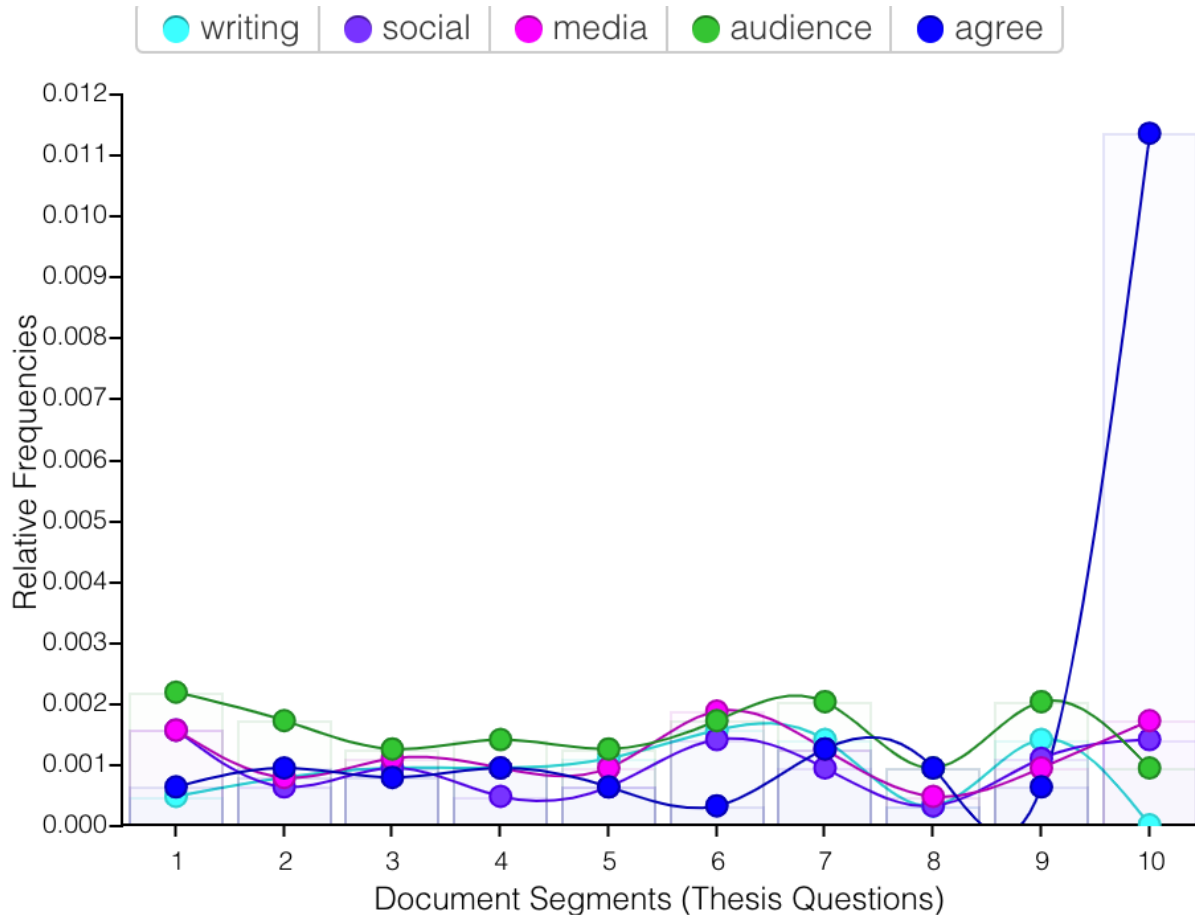
Vocabulary Density: 0.163

Readability Index: 9.861

Average Words Per Sentence: 29.3

Most **frequent words** in the corpus: agree (118); audience (99); media (74); social (60); writing (57)

Figure 4. Voyant Tools Text Mining Results

Figure 5. Voyant Text Mining Results

This corpus has 1 document with 824 total words and 275 unique word forms. Created now.

Vocabulary Density: 0.334

Readability Index: 9.233

Average Words Per Sentence: 28.4

Most **frequent words** in the corpus: account (21); argument (15); audience (13); paper (10); formed (9)

Figure 6. Voyant Text Mining Results

	Term	Count	Trend
1	Term	Count	Trend
2	agree	118	0.01833722
3	audience	99	0.01538462
4	media	74	0.01149961
5	social	60	0.00932401
6	writing	57	0.00885781
7	paper	48	0.00745921
8	terms	45	0.00699301
9	somewhat	40	0.00621601
10	understandir	37	0.00574981
11	argument	36	0.00559441
12	people	32	0.00497281
13	certain	32	0.00497281
14	medias	26	0.0040404
15	instagram	26	0.0040404
16	account	26	0.0040404
17	way	25	0.003885
18	medium	25	0.003885
19	different	24	0.0037296
20	2022	24	0.0037296
21	style	23	0.0035742
22	platform	23	0.0035742
23	genre	22	0.0034188
24	visual	21	0.0032634

Figure 7. Voyant Tools Text Mining Results

Figure 8. Excel Student Responses

	What is your understanding of terms such as audience, style, genre, tone, medium, and other rhetorical terms we have learned this semester? (In other words--what was your understanding coming in, and in your own words how do you describe these terms now?)	Think back to paper 1 and all the discussion we have had about social media since--how did using social media as a framework change your understanding of the term "audience"?
Student 1	when I came in my understanding of these terms was very little and did not know how important they are to a paper but now I know when writing a paper I need to have a clear audience and make sure that the paper is directly for that audience. I need to have a tone that will entertain the audience need a clear genre before writing, and a purpose of why I'm writing this, to prove the claim.	Each account I follow on any of my social media has an audience they are trying to reach and everything they will post now is targeted to that account. But now I realize that audience is now an important factor in papers too.
Student 2	I only understood some of these terms coming in, or not to the fullest extent, but now I have learned more about them. For	It has now made me realize that there can be different audiences, and social media can help with that because it can be used to appeal to more people.

example, audience, tone, medium, etc. I have all learned more about.

Student 3

I had a slight understanding of them coming into the class but now I understand them more and understand how each one of them contributes to making a cohesive paper.

Social media has changed my understanding of "audience" in the sense that I do not only write things about what the audience is interested in, but now I write in a way the audience would be interested in as well.

Student 4

Audience is who one writes to, style and tone largely relate to each other because they have to do with how an author uses their voice and how it's received, genre speaks to how that work of writing can be categorized, and medium relates to how and through what platform one chooses to write. In general I would say I had a fairly good understanding of these terms even before this class, but this class also emphasized their importance much more as it relates to writing.

It wasn't written, as it often was meant to be in other classes (middle or high school), to solely a teacher or some other academic audience.

Student 5

Coming in I just looked at if the writer used words such as I or words referring to them to see their tone and maybe the audience they were writing too. But, now, I use terms such as Pathos, Logos, Ethos that help me identify the tone and the audience in anything from the writing of a paper to the advertisement on tv.

It changed my understanding of the word audience because, usually I was the audience in such social media but now I had to cater to an "audience" that was not me and kind of "sell" what I was trying to pitch.

Student 6

My understanding, coming in, was that I was mostly already familiar with the terms. However, now, I am more familiar with all of them and know their differences. Audience is one's intended people to inform about, style is a way of performing something, genre is a group of creative composition, which includes but is not limited to being defined by interrelations in style. Tone is the speaker's emotions. Medium is the way a composition is deposited. Stance is one's take on a matter. Rhetoric is the use of persuasive/competent writing/speaking.

Using social media as a framework changed my understanding of the term 'audience' by causing me to believe that the audience has to be taken as literally real.

Student 7

My understanding of these terms has not changed. Audience is the demographic of intended and potential readers. Style is a personalized way of writing that links the author to what they have written. Genre is the type of writing. Tone is simply how the words sound and what emotions they invoke. Medium is essentially where something is written and for what purpose.

The paper certainly forced my writing to engage a far more specific group of people than I was used to.

Student 8

I didn't understand medium coming into this class

It helped me because I got to target specific people instead of just the world in general.

Student 9

Coming into this semester, I had very little understanding of these terms and did not know how to use them very well. However,

For one, I learned about an intended audience as well as your actual audience.

after spending time learning about each term and how to properly use each one my understanding of each one has increased tremendously.

Who you think you are writing to may not be all you are writing to.

Student 10

I feel like I understood most of these concepts in a general basic way, but after this semester I definitely learned about them more in depth and was able to use them more in an application type of way.

The audience for things can be a lot wider because it can be shared to practically anyone around the world, so the audience widely varies.

Student 11

I feel like I had a decent understanding of what these terms were when I came into college, but I feel like I can describe these terms much better now. Audience- the group of people/person who is reading a work. Style- the way in which a writer writes. Genre- the type or writing. Tone- the way the writer wants to be perceived. medium- the way the writing is delivered. I also developed a better understanding of a lot more rhetorical terms such as ethos, pathos, and logos.

Social media allows one to see who is going to view their audience better. Being able to see an understand who your audience through social media can give you a good understanding of them and allow you to know what they will and wont react good to.

Student 12

Coming into the course, I had a little knowledge what the terms meant, although I didn't know the terms like medium. If I was asked to incorporate them into my writing I don't think I would be able to. But now I am much more comfortable around these terms and can put them into my writing.

It helped me to see that the audience would also be the people looking for this type of writing or the subject that my writing was on.

Student 13

I think my understand of these terms has significantly improved since the beginning of the semester. I had previously heard of these terms before I came into this class but I never knew how to use them and never really focused on how using them could strengthen my writing. In high school, it was very much just about answering the prompt for me because I never felt that I reached a placed in my writing where I could focus on these terms.

By using social media as a framework forced me to choose an audience that I wanted to write the book review for. Had I not been forced to do this, I think I would have written the entire paper without considering what my audience would be and what type of information would convince to read Just Mercy.

Student 14

Coming in to this semester, I had a fairly basic understanding of audience, style, genre and tone. As I moved forward in the semester, I understood a lot more on what each term was. Audience is mainly about who you are writing your paper to (i.e. an economic paper to econ majors), style is mainly what type of paper you are writing (i.e. a persuasive argument essay), genre is a category of an essay (i.e. a narrative), tone is the how the author writes his work, whether he includes bias or injects his personality into his writing, and medium is what platform you write on, whether it be a long English paper or a short social media infographic.

Using social media as a framework changed my understanding of what an audience is mainly by simplifying the medium and clarifying certain topics in order to reach a broad variety of people who might not know much on topics such as Just Mercy, racial injustice, and problems with the US prison system.

Student 15   Before this course, I only kind of knew the first four terms, where the audience is who the author is writing to, the style was the writer's uniqueness in their writing, the genre was the type of text they are writing, and tone was the voice of the author's work. Now, I understand medium is how you present your writing, and other rhetorical terms we've learned so far are just to make us become better writers as we incorporate them into our writing.

Using social media as a framework changed my perspective of "Audience" because now I am more aware of how I can use the relationship between me, as a writer, and the audience and use that to target my writing towards their interest. By having shared interest already, it many times becomes easier to gain a bigger audience if placed in the right place. Using social media changed my understanding because I got to understand certain people's point of views

Student 16   I have a better understanding on those terms now

Student 17   My understanding of terms such as audience is that it is who you are catering your writing to, in certain situations the audience is who understands the prevalence of what you're writing about. Style is the way that you are writing as it may fit into a certain category of writing styles. Genre the response to a rhetorical situation that occurs fairly often. Tone is the authors use of words and writing style to convey their attitude toward a topic. Medium is how the writing is delivered such as Instagram post, essay, email, etc.

Using social media as a framework changed my understanding of the term "audience" because it helped me to understand who would be the type of people to read my essay. It also allowed me to narrow down on who would be reading and how it relates to them.

Student 18   Audience before this class was people who would be interested in the topic of the paper. Now, I know audience of a paper or piece are people who are impacted by the topic of the topic of the paper and the people who can change and become apart of making the problem in the paper become something less of a problem. Style and genre before this class were not really defined, I did not understand these terms well. Now, I know that they are different because now I know style is the way one writes, while genre is the category of one's writing like academic writing. Tone's definition has stayed the same for me during this class. Tone is certain word choices that make or gives one's writing a particular feeling. Medium is something I did not know about before this class, now I know that a medium is an appropriate means of getting what a person wants to say through different formats for different genre's or styles. For example, a poster can be medium to get your point across.

Social media changed my understanding of the term audience because it made me think of an argument should be framed in order to be persuasive to my targeted audience. So, I was thinking of what others would be convinced by and used word choices and evidence to support my argument.

Student 19   I thought the audience as the people who are reading your essay now I see the audience as who the essay is intended for in terms of reading. To me style was the structure of the essay now I see style as

Social media changed my understanding of the term audience because it showed me that the audience can be anybody, it does not have to necessarily have to affect 1

the way you write your argument in order to get a specific point across. Genre was just what type of to pic is the paper and now I see it as the significance of it. Tone to me was just the way you sound while now I see tone as the way you input your emotions into your paper without directly saying it. The medium to me was the way you write your paper now I see medium as the way you get your point across in your writing.

Student 20
I had familiar background from high school so these terms were kind of just review for me.

Student 21
Audience and tone were terms that I knew already. I did not know about style, medium, or genre. Medium is how the writing is conveyed like in print or online. Genre is a way of classifying work like reports and analyses. Style is the way an author writes or expresses themself in their work.

Student 22
In my understanding of the terms such as audience, style, genre, tone, medium, and other rhetorical terms is that they are all something I will need for future essays to keep in mind when writing them.

Student 23
My understanding going in was we would just be writing essays but I have learned so much about writing essays and ways of understanding different types of writing and evaluating pictures and videos as well.

Student 24
Before starting the class, the terms such as audience, tone, and style were known to me. I only comprehended them through simple definitions such as the particular person I am writing the paper for and the specific way the author or writer uses diction in their work. However, the terms now had a more detailed meaning. Genre plays an important role in a writing piece because it sets up the certain way to structure a paper and your intended audience is important to address to make the paper more effective.

group of people, it can relate to anyone in a similar situation.

It allowed me to speak a certain way, to be more professional because I am talking about a group of people.

It has taught me to adjust to different audiences since a casual post through social media or a text message should be written differently than a formal email or an essay. The work also has to be related to the people you are trying to address, which means that everything is not meant for all audiences.

Social medias audience can a lot of the times be different than a regular article online. It's just a different crowd of audience in certain situations and topics. Regarding social media, when writing or posting any content it needs to attract a certain audience so this will affect how you say or show what you want to put out on social media to grab a specific groups attention.

Using social media as a framework changed my understanding of the term "audience" because it made me realize that there is now a chance to target a bigger audience and now when it comes to writing there can be multiple audiences who can benefit from listening or reading the particular information being discussed.

What advantages do certain medias have over others? What effect does that have on what social media platforms can best suit a certain argument or claim?

How did you form your argument in paper 1 with the audience of your chosen social media account in mind?

How did the media (image style) and platform (where you found or searched for the image) affect the visual you chose in paper 2?

Student 1	they have more followers so they can reach more people and have a bigger audience when in an argument	I linked it to a religious account that took prayer request	it was an 9//11 account that posted how we honor this event
Student 2	Some medias can be used to appeal to more people, and different social medias have different uses. For example, official things happen on twitter, like you often hear people quoting tweets on the news, whereas instagram is viewed as a place to post photos.	I found an account and then made my essay catered to that group, so basically I just made an appeal to them in my argument.	I had a hard time finding a good image but I ultimately picked mine because graphics like it are popular on instagram and are good examples.
Student 3	Medias that are more visual based instead of textual based have an easier time visualizing their ideas instead of just using words. Using pictures along with words can help further your point and argument instead of only using words.	I formed it in a way where it was partly factual but I conveyed a lot of emotion to connect with the ausience and make them feel the pain of the characters I was writing about.	It gave me an idea of who the visual was meant for and how I would have to write the paper around that audience.
Student 4	Social media can be a powerful tool for communicating a message. For example, twitter would require the most effectiveness in the smallest package because twitter has a word limit for each message and its author must communicate most effectively within those bounds.	My argument in Paper 1 was formed around the crucial messages behind the book Just Mercy, and were formulated in such a way where they were able to most relate to the audience I chose, which was the Innocence Project's Instagram page.	The media and platform affected the visual I chose in Paper 2 because I was getting the picture from a social media site known for comical content known as Reddit but it also helped me emphasize that there's often more to such a platform than meets the eye.
Student 5	Some medias for example such as one of the biggest ones right now Tik Tok have the advantage of having most of their audience and influencers on their platform be teenagers and millennials. This makes it so that social media platforms like Facebook and snapchat get less usage because, a platform where people can communicate, laugh,	I formed my argument because, my Instagram page was about inequality in prison, so my account was advocating for the rights of the prisoners and telling stories about those who were mistreated in prison.	In my second paper the visual was a very concerning political image that I had remembered we talked about in one of my history classes even though it was very recent. When being told to pick an image I can write that many pages on it immediately cam to my mind being as so I like that I knew thing about it.

Student 6	and express themselves caters to the ages of the people who used to use apps like Instagram and snapchat who are no longer doing so as much. Advantages that certain medias have over others is that part of them have bigger audiences, especially if those medias are based on politics. The effect towards which social media platforms can best suit a certain argument/claim is that the medias with the bigger audiences have more supporters/viewers. Certain platforms are built for sharing certain things. Twitter is certainly more prone long winded arguments due to the prevalence of simple text over images. Therefore,	I formed my argument in paper 1 with the audience of my chosen social media account in mine by basing my argument off of what the audience comes to see when viewing the posts for that account.	The media and platform affected the visual I chose in paper 2 by supplying me with a whole amount of visuals to choose from, so they affected me by opening my possibilities.
Student 7	Instagram and tiktok can use visuals far more easily because that is what they are built for.	I made sure to cover similar points of the book as other posts on the account.	I was searching exclusively on The Weather Channel instagram page, so I knew that I would end up with a photograph.
Student 8	Certain medias can have the advantage of telling people facts and they believe it while others people might just think is fake. The effect it has is that people might use one more than the other.	I formed an argument in paper 1 by doing research to see what social media platform best supported my argument.	The media platform I chose for my visual was very generic which in turn made my visual something that everybody knew and it did not leave much to the imagination.
Student 9	Some medias may pertain to a certain group or a certain type of audience. SO certain social media platforms may better to use than others as you can reach a broader or more specific audice.	My chosen account focused on books that dealt with social issues and injustices, so this book went perfectly with the account. Considering how the book, tackled racial injustices and inequalities within the judicial system.	The platform that I found my visual was tiktok and and the media pertaining to it was more so about how the imagine could take on different meanings to many different people.
Student 10	Some medias are more commonly used, and usually medias cater to a specific demographic, like different ages. Older generations tend to use Facebook, and media like that, while younger use Tiktok, Instagram, and	I wrote my argument speaking to an Instagram account, which was dedicated to a cause similar to the equal justice initiative. I figured that this parallel to the book would make it easier to relate to the audience on this level.	I chose an infographic that I found on Instagram. The image really spoke to me and because I was interested in what the info had to say, I figured that my peers would probably be as well, which is why I took the opportunity to write on it. The infographic

	Snapchat, so the goal is to find which media has the audience that you want to communicate with.		was primarily an image, so I really tried to focus on what made it significant and relevant to me, and how this could relate to a wider audience as well.
Student 11	Different social media platforms play different roles. For instance, Instagram allows you to post what has been going on in your life. People are often more engaged and pay more attention to an instagram post rather than tik tok. Twitter can best suit most arguments or claims because that is where users go to argue with others, and you don't have to post who you really are.	I used an account that I have seen post things like paper 1 before.	I used instagram to find my visual. I follow a lot of sports accounts on instagram which led me to choosing a picture relating to sports.
Student 12	Some are a lot more popular, for example, Instagram is a lot more popular and there are more people on it than Twitter, so they have a bigger and more diverse audience. because there are so many people involved, there are more opinions spreading around and different feelings about the argument or claim.	I said that my audience should read the book Just mercy because they were from a law college, that devoted much of its time to racial justice. The student studying law should read this book to see the consequences of injustice, that maybe one day they can help diminsh.	the media was a melancholy video of the desctruction of a hurricane posted by a mom of a couple kids, who was struggling to make ends meet after losing her home. It was just ery touching to me, and I could see that she needed help through the visual without her even saying so.
Student 13	Certain medias are more accessible to the masses. For example, with social media, it can be assumed that any type of person can see a post as long as they have a cell phone or laptop. With newspapers, for example, people have to go out of their way to access it. In terms of a writing advantage, I think certain platforms allow writers to have a litte more freedom in their writing. They do not have to just stick to a formal academic writing. With social media, writers can focus more on being less	I tried to talk to the audience by placing them in the prisoner's shows and by using phrases like "readers of this account." I realize now though I should have focused more on forming a unity with the audience. I did not need to place them in the prisoner's shoes because I could have assumed they would have cared about the issue since they followed this specific Instagram account.	Media and the platform where I found the image indicated to me how the image was supposed to be eye catching. At quick glance, the image just looked like a cartoon but the more a person looked at they can see how it had a much deeper meaning.

Student 14	formal and focus more on what is going to grab the viewer's attention. Because of this, social media is best suited for quick news and headlines. It is really great for peaking a person's interest in a certain topic. Some advantages that certain medias have over others is some medias can reach a wide variety of people as their audience, others are fairly specific on the topic they are talking about, and some medias analyze and include evidence differently from others. The effect this has on what social media platforms can best suit an argument or claim is that it becomes very specific on certain choices of arguments for each social media platform. Each type of media allows for a certain age-grouped audience to be reached. For example, if you want an older audience to pay attention then a newspaper is smarter than posting it on Twitter. This affects which social media platforms can best suit a certain argument or claim because as time progresses different social media platforms become "older" and then when you want a new rising audience, then you have to look for a new app. (Facebook --> Instagram --> TikTok, etc.)	I formed my argument in paper 1 with the audience of my chosen social media account in mind by clarifying a lot of terms on racial injustice and the prison system that many people fighting for racial equality might not know about and including evidence from Just Mercy to exemplify the struggle that many prisoners might be dealing with currently if the prison system is not fixed.	The media and platform affected the visual I chose in paper 2 by having to choose an image that is both current and can be seen from different points of view. When I chose the image of the Ukrainian soldier walking through a cloud of smoke, I saw the image as a way to show the struggle that the soldiers and people of Ukraine have faced and yet still stand strong and move forward, no matter if it costs them their life.
Student 15		I used my own knowledge of the book and just kept the social media account in my mind as I was writing to bring the writing back to the account. Within the paper, I would include phrases like "as followers of this account know," to refer back to the audience to group them back in.	The media for my paper 2 was a comic strip, which is different than what I am used to writing about. I found the image on Instagram at first, and then found the original website it was published on and was able to find other visuals like the one I chose. This helped me write my paper and incorporate the characteristics of the visuals that stand out.
Student 16	If its more popular like TikTok	I understood what the problem was	
Student 17	The advantages that certain medias have over others is the audience.	I was able to form my argument in paper 1 with the audience of my chosen	The media and platform affected the visual that I chose in paper 2 because

The effect this has on what social media platforms can best suit a certain argument or claims is how it is received and how that certain media can help strengthen your argument based on its audience. Social media is widely used by all demographics, so it has more of an advantage over other medias such a newspaper or even the news.

social media account in mind by coming up with points in my paper that I knew the audience would be able to relate to somehow.

the platform did not give much context behind the visual so I had to do extra research to find the context and why it was so important.

Student 18

I formed my argument with audience in mind by forming evidence based on evidence that will convince them.

Student 19

Some medias directly talk about specific problems which is beneficial because that specific audience will tend to go to their platform to see that

I made my argument in paper 1 directly talking about unfair treatment in the criminal justice system since my Instagram account was in support of reform in the system.

The media and platform affected the visual I chose in paper 2 because I was looking for something where it showed the emotion through the image and women from all over could see.

Student 20

Some medias might be more credible if they are more recent. If they are more credible, it'll make our argument stronger. Print and online are the traditional forms for college essays since they are meant to be formal. Audio clips or visual presentations are better to grasp the attention of a less formal audience like fellow students.

I spoke based off of other people's account on their experiences and tried to emphasize things that were important to them.

It created more of a connection with me and the experiences I went through.

Student 21

Instagram and Tiktok are more visual apps that would provide better illustration while Twitter is known for journalism and news. The requirements for the essay can determine which one is used.

I chose an account that was known for submitting posts about racial awareness and the flaws of the justice system. I then chose the main themes of the criminal justice system and the prison system and pointed out the injustices occurring in both.

The colors and visual tones can represent a message based on previous uses of the colors. It had a bold setting with illuminating colors. Bolder elements could be conveying a stronger message. Twitter represents news while Instagram and Tiktok are known for videos or visuals. Since it was meant to be about a national issue, I used an artist's image from Twitter.

Student 22

Some platform medias have different content. Although many people repost things on all social medias now, there is still different content and a different environment in different medias.

I spoke up on my opinion and what I believe was right, then came in with solid facts and quotes on what I read which made it easier to form my argument.

I chose my image on instagram and if I wasn't into what I wrote, which was black lives matter and other the topic of the image, then I would simply not have written about that topic. And instagram has a lot of pictures similar to what I

			chose, because it's something quick to look at and keep scrolling for.
Student 23	Some medias attract a different audience then others. For example Tiktok can reach every group, facebook would primarily be for an older generation, etc. I feel tiktok had the most advantage over others because it reaches a bigger and wider audience type.	I formed my argument with paying attention to the backlash and attention the post received about the specific issue and using it to support how this problem needs more attention brought to it.	I used an instagram account which I felt was for a more targeted audience because instagram seems more personal in terms of a smaller community who's more specific to the issue would find the media.
Student 24	The advantages that certain medias have over others is that it can make a writing more effective or the opposite. The effect this has on social media platforms that can best suit a certain argument or claim is that if it is expressed in a popular platform where there are an audience with the same thinking views, the claim will prosper. However, if there try to make a certain argument and are unsuccessful it can lead to lost of credibility of an author and make others not aware of an issue.	In paper 1 with the audience from the chosen social media account in mind I formed my argument by really trying to focus on the individuals who would read the novel and at the same time be a follower or a consistent reader from a particular blog that dealt with the criminal justice system.	The media and platform affect the visual I chose in paper 2 because I tried to focus on a platform where many individuals are interactive on and tend to express their opinions or anything on the app. The image style focused on a very strong issue that still exists today in society and has existed for a long time now. Seeing these two things allowed me to see that this visual would be the best to write a paper on because I had a good idea of the issue and it was very easy to create the paper.

	Social media has helped my understanding of rhetorical terms such as audience, genre and medium	Going forward, I anticipate thinking about rhetorical terms and strategies when trying to understand whether or not an argument on social media is effective.
Student 1	agree	agree
Student 2	agree	agree
Student 3	agree	somewhat agree
Student 4	agree	somewhat agree
Student 5	agree	agree
Student 6	agree	agree
Student 7	agree	somewhat disagree
Student 8	somewhat agree	somewhat agree
Student 9	agree	agree
Student 10	agree	agree

Student 11	somewhat agree	agree
Student 12	agree	somewhat agree
Student 13	agree	agree
Student 14	somewhat agree	agree
Student 15	somewhat agree	somewhat agree
Student 16	somewhat agree	agree
Student 17	agree	agree
Student 18	somewhat agree	agree
Student 19	agree	agree
Student 20	agree	agree
Student 21	agree	agree
Student 22	agree	somewhat agree
Student 23	somewhat agree	agree
Student 24	agree	agree

Figure 9. Excel Student Response Distribution

Percentage distribution of responses to 'Going forward, I anticipate thinking about rhetorical terms and strategies when trying to understand whether or not an argument on social media is effective.'

Percentage distribution of responses to 'Social media has helped my understanding of rhetorical terms such as audience, genre and medium'
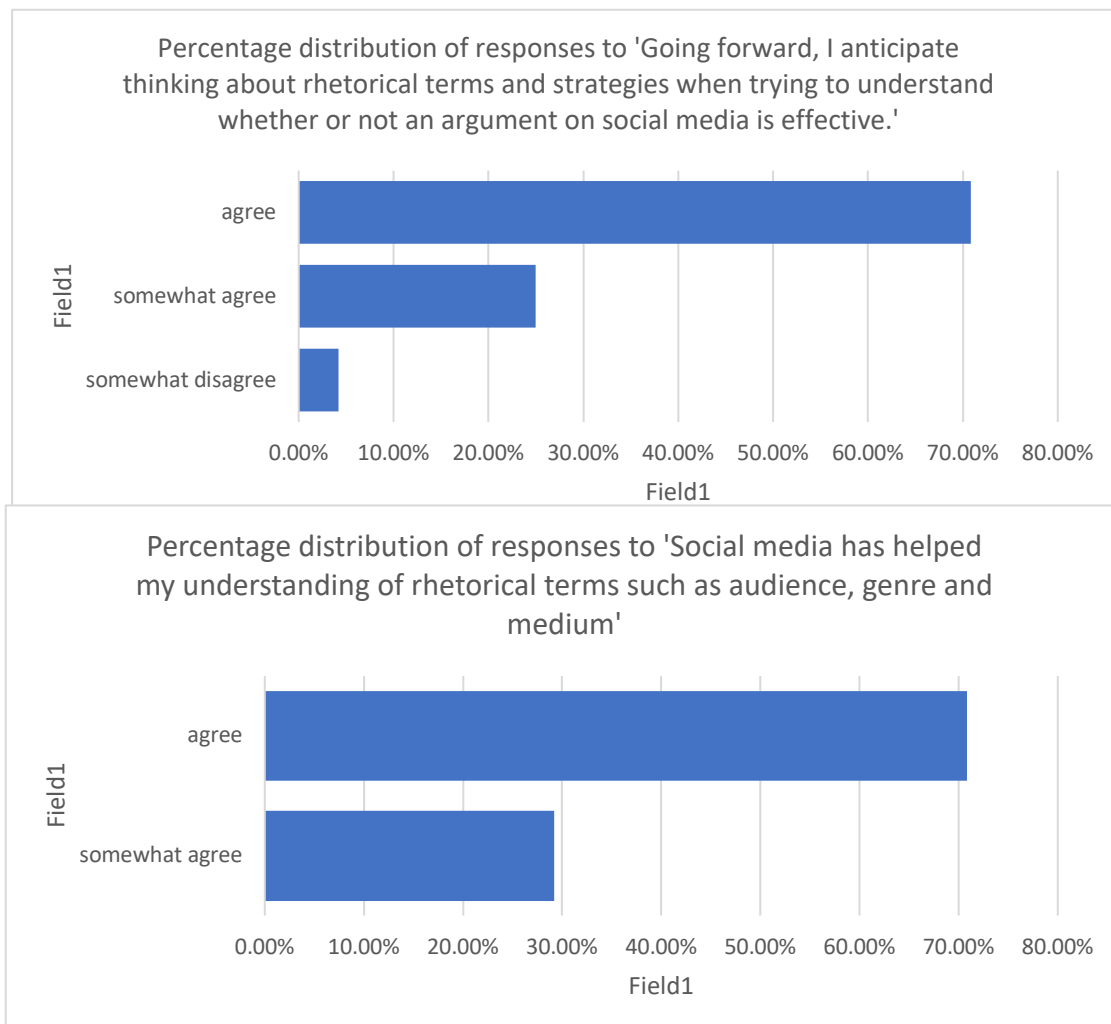
Figure 10: Welch T-Test for Statistical Analysis

Likert Scale Question: Social media has helped my understanding of rhetorical terms such as audience, genre and medium.

SET 1 (AI):

Mean = 4.9

Standard Deviation = 0.316

SET 2 (AO):

Mean = 4.5

Standard Deviation = 0.5

$t = (x_1 - x_2) / \sqrt{(s_1^2/n_1) + (s_2^2/n_2)}$

Where "t" is the Welch t-test statistic, x1 and x2 are the means of the two groups, s1 and s2 are the standard deviations of the two groups, n1 and n2 are the sample sizes of the two groups:

$t = (4.9 - 4.5) / \sqrt{(0.316^2/11) + (0.5^2/11)}$

$t = 1.86$

$df = ((s_1^2/n_1) + (s_2^2/n_2))^2 / ((s_1^2/n_1)^2 / (n_1 - 1) + (s_2^2/n_2)^2 / (n_2 - 1))$

$df = ((0.316^2/11) + (0.5^2/11))^2 / ((0.316^2/11)^2 / (11 - 1) + (0.5^2/11)^2 / (11 - 1))$

$df = 20.86$

Figure 11: Welch T-Test for Statistical Analysis

Likert Scale Statement: Going forward, I anticipate thinking about rhetorical terms and strategies when trying to understand whether or not an argument on social media is effective.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of the two sets of data.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a significant difference between the mean scores of the two sets of data.

Mean of SET 1= 3.45

Standard Deviation of SET 1= 0.91

Mean of SET 2= 3.38

Standard Deviation of SET 2= 0.78

Test Statistic (t) = (3.45 - 3.38) / sqrt((0.91^2/11) + (0.78^2/13)) = 0.32

Degrees of Freedom (df) = ((0.91^2/11) + (0.78^2/13))^2 / ((0.91^2/11)^2 / (11-1) + (0.78^2/13)^2 / (13-1)) = 21.19 (rounded down to 21)

For a two-tailed test at a 5% level of significance with 21 degrees of freedom, the critical value is ±2.080.

0.32 < 2.080, so we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Works Cited

Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). "Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and

Implementation for Novice Researchers." *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-559.

Gleason, Benjamin, and Sam von Gillern. "Digital Citizenship with Social Media: Participatory

Practices of Teaching and Learning in Secondary Education." *Journal of Educational

Technology & Society*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2018, pp. 200–12.

Krippendorff, Klaus. (2013). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (3rd ed.).

Sage Publications.

Liu, Leping. "Quantitative Content Analysis Methods in Instructional Technology Research:

Defining, Coding, Analyzing and Modeling (DCAM)." *Journal of Educational

Technology Development and Exchange (JETDE), 15*(1), 19-46, 2022

Lunsford, Andrea A., et al. *Everyone's An Author, 4th Edition, with Readings*. W. W. Norton &

Company, 2019.

Mehsi, Dar, Diana I. Tamir, and Hauke R. Heekeren. "The Emerging Neuroscience of Social

Media." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences,* vol. 19, no. 12, 2015, pp. 771-782.

Mervosh, Sarah. "Learning Loss in the Pandemic: How Schools Are Trying to Make Up for Lost

Time." *The New York Times*, 2022.

Montine, Olivia. "ENGL1201 Syllabus," 2022.

Park, Chang Sup. "Do Social Media Facilitate Political Learning? Social Media Use for News,

Reasoning and Political Knowledge." *The Journal of Social Media in Society*, vol. 6, no.

2, 2017.

Richards, J.C., & Miller, S.K. (2005). *Doing Academic Writing in Education: Connecting the

Personal and the Professional* (1st ed.). Routledge

Richtel, Matt. "Growing Up Digital, Wired for Distraction." *The New York Times*, 20 Nov. 2010

Selfe, Cynthia L. "The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning: Aurality and Multimodal

    Composing." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 60, no. 4, 2009, pp. 616–63.

Stake, Robert. E. "Qualitative Case Studies." In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook*

    of Qualitative Research (3rd ed., pp. 443–466). Sage Publications, 2005.

Stewart, Olivia G. "Using Digital Media in the Classroom as Writing Platforms for Multimodal

    Authoring, Publishing, and Reflecting." Computers and Composition, vol. 67, 2023.

Student A. Personal Interview. 5 March 2023.

Student B. Personal Interview. 12 April 2023.

Usher, Alexandra. "6. What Nontraditional Approaches Can Motivate Unenthusiastic Students?"

    Center on Education Policy, 2012.

Velleman, Paul F., and Leland Wilkinson. "Nominal, Ordinal, Interval, and Ratio Typologies Are

    Misleading." *The American Statistician*, vol. 47, no. 1, 1993, pp. 65–72.

Writer 1. "Book Review Paper." 2023.

Writer 2. "Book Review Paper." 2023.

Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (5th ed.). Sage Publications, 2014.

"Social Media Fact Sheet." Pew Research Center, Washington D.C. 2021.

    https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/?menuItem=f13a8cb6-

    8e2c-480d-9935-5f4d9138d5c4

. "Generation Z." Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed., Oxford UP, 2021.

"Information: What is Literacy?" *National Literacy Trust*, literacytrust.org.uk/information/what-

    is-literacy/.

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

1 8 5 6

December 6, 2022

Olivia Montine
Seton Hall University
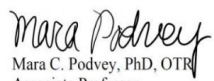
Re: Study ID# 2023-386

Dear Olivia,

The Research Ethics Committee of the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved your research proposal entitled "The Role of Social Media in Students' Understanding of the Rhetorical Situation" as resubmitted. This memo serves as official notice of the aforementioned study's approval as exempt. Enclosed for your records are the stamped original Consent Form and recruitment flyer. You can make copies of these forms for your use.

The Institutional Review Board approval of your research is valid for a one-year period from the date of this letter. During this time, any changes to the research protocol, informed consent form or study team must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

You will receive a communication from the Institutional Review Board at least 1 month prior to your expiration date requesting that you submit an Annual Progress Report to keep the study active, or a Final Review of Human Subjects Research form to close the study. In all future correspondence with the Institutional Review Board, please reference the ID# listed above.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mara Podvey

Mara C. Podvey, PhD, OTR
Associate Professor
Co-Chair, Institutional Review Board

Office of the Institutional Review Board
Presidents Hall · 400 South Orange Avenue · South Orange, New Jersey 07079 · Tel: 973.275.4654 · Fax 973.275.2978 ·
www.shu.edu
W H A T   G R E A T   M I N D S   C A N   D O

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY
1 8 5 6

Title of Research Study: *The Key Role of Social Media in Students' Understanding of the Rhetorical Situation*

Principal Investigator: Olivia Montine

Department Affiliation: English, College of Arts and Sciences

Sponsor: This research is supported by English Department, College of Arts and Sciences.

Brief summary about this research study:

The following summary of this research study is to help you decide whether or not you want to participate in the study. You have the right to ask questions at any time.

The purpose of this study is to assess whether there is an increased understanding of the rhetorical situation in college students when social media is used as a framing factor for rhetorical terms such as audience, genre, purpose, and design.

You will be asked to participate in brief surveys during class time and, if desired, individual interviews outside of class time.

We expect that you will be in this research study until the end of the semester.

The primary risk of participation is minimal.

The main benefit of participation is to assist in the furthering of knowledge about how social media affects our understanding of the rhetorical situation.

Purpose of the research study:

You are being asked to take part in this research study because you are a student in Professor Montine's ENGL1201 class.

Your participation in this research study is expected to be until the end of the semester.

You will be one of 33 people who are expected to participate in this research study.

What you will be asked to do:

Your participation in this research study will include:

-Completing surveys about your understanding of social media and the rhetorical situation in class

-Having anonymized samples of your writing used for research and analysis

-Participating in an optional interview with Prof. Montine with more in-depth questions about your social media use and your understanding of the rhetorical situation

Your rights to participate, say no or withdraw:

Participation in research is voluntary. You can decide to participate or not to participate. You can choose to participate in the research study now and then decide to leave the research at any time. Your choice will not be held against you.

The person in charge of the research study can remove you from the research study without your approval. Possible reasons for removal include missing study visits, non-compliance with the study procedures, or desire to withdraw.

Potential benefits:

There may be no direct benefit to you from this study. You may obtain personal satisfaction from knowing that you are participating in a project that contributes to new information.

Potential risks:

The risks associated with this study are minimal in nature. Your participation in this research may include the risk of your privacy due to the fact that emails and writing samples will be collected.

Confidentiality and privacy:

Efforts will be made to limit the use or disclosure of your personal information. This information may include the research study documents or other source documents used for the purpose of conducting the study. These documents may include your writing samples and essays. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that oversee research safety may inspect and copy your information. This includes the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board who oversees the safe and ethical conduct of research at this institution.

This survey is being hosted by Google Forms and involves a secure connection. Terms of service, addressing confidentiality, may be viewed at [https://www.google.com/forms/about/#:~:text=We%20use%20industry%2Dleading%20security ,minimizing%20risk%20to%20your%20devices.]. Upon receiving results of your survey, any possible identifiers will be deleted by the investigator. You will be identified only by a unique subject number. Your email address, which may be used to contact you to schedule a study visit will be stored separately from your survey data. All information will be kept on a password protected computer only accessible by the research team. The results of the research study may be published, but your name will not be used.

Data sharing:
De-identified data from this study may be shared with the research community at large to advance knowledge. We will remove any personal information that could identify you before files are shared with other researchers to ensure that, by current scientific standards and known methods, no one will be able to identify you from the information we share. Despite these measures, we cannot guarantee anonymity of your personal data.

Any audio recordings will only be listened to by the primary research team. Any recordings will be stored in a password protected folder in a secure USB drive on a personal laptop, and the USB drive will be stored in a locked file cabinet and destroyed following the end of the study.

Cost and compensation:
You will not be responsible for any of the costs or expenses associated with your participation in this study.

There is no payment for your time to participate in this study.

Conflict of interest disclosure:
The principal investigator and members of the study team have no financial conflicts of interest to report.

Contact information:
If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about this research project, you can contact the principal investigator Olivia Montine (montinol@shu.edu), advisor Dr. Kelly Shea (Kelly.shea@shu.edu), or the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board ("IRB") at (973) 761-9334 or irb@shu.edu.

Audio and/or video recordings will be performed as part of the research study. Please indicate your permission to participate in these activities by placing your initials next to each activity.
agree   disagree

The researcher may record my [audio or video] interview. In understand this is done to help with data collection and analysis. The researcher will not share these recordings with anyone outside of the study team.
_____   _____

I hereby consent to participate in this research study.

_____   _____
Signature of participant   Date

_____
Printed name of participant

_____   _____
Signature of person obtaining consent   Date

_____
Printed name of person obtaining consent