

The Rhetoric of Knowledge Communities

Dates and Deadlines:

Complete [Personal Knowledge Communities – Student Handout](#):

Complete 300-word summary of Interests and Goals:

Complete Knowledge Production in Your Community:

Complete Community Profile:

Draft Workshop (**required**):

Final Rhetorical Analysis due:

Task:

This assignment asks you to start getting to know, or to better know, the community you are now a part of as a college student in the state of Iowa. For this assignment, you will begin exploring organizations that work in and around the state. By focusing on a single community/group/organization, you will be able to consider some of the issues that are relevant to that group's interests and goals. You will seek an in-depth understanding of the community's position in its wider social context and its real and desired public image.

The most important part of the assignment will be your presentation of a rhetorical analysis in which you explain the importance of the rhetorical qualities of a text that represents the public image of the community/group/organization you've chosen. Such an analysis will include the rhetorical terms that we are discussing in the class, that have been presented in lectures or on handouts, and that are included in our textbook. A skilled rhetorical analysis focuses on specific aspects of a text and points out their rhetorical qualities, as well as their intended effects on their intended audience.

When choosing a local community, you may decide to focus on a nonprofit, a school, a volunteer organization, a church, a club, a philanthropic organization, a cooperative, a collaborative, an academic department, or any group of people that acts together in Iowa City. Do not choose a business.

The text related to this community's public image may be an article, a mission statement, a web page, an advertisement, an image, a song, a statue or other piece of art, a building, or even a park bench. The requisite qualities of your chosen text are that it must reward an in-depth rhetorical analysis and that it must be used by your chosen community to represent its public image.

Process:

1. Personal Knowledge Communities

Complete the information literacy [Personal Knowledge Communities activities](#) (1-4). These activities can be found on the IDEAL website's [Information Literacy page](#).

2. Local Communities and You

Now that you have examined the communities you have been part of in the past and considered how they generate knowledge, you will explore new communities you could join during your university education.

Explore new opportunities for joining a community on campus or in the local area. Communities you might consider joining include an academic major, a student group, a political organization, a fitness group, an arts workshop, a local non-profit organization, a faith group, a career network, an academic club, or etc.

Write: compose 300 words about your interests and goals for college. What do you want to learn about? What skills do you want to develop? How do you want to help others? What can you contribute to the University and the local area? How do you want others to remember you after you graduate? Look for groups that will support your goals and interests. You might start by searching <http://csil.uiowa.edu/pickone>

3. Knowledge Production in Your Community

Choose as your focus for the rest of this project one of the communities you identified as relevant to your goals and interests in your 300 word writing exploration (above). You should select a knowledge community you would like to know more about and would consider being part of. Write: describe two examples of each of the following types of activities in which the community produces knowledge.

- Social activities - these are types of knowledge gained through understanding values and attitudes of a particular community (e.g., expectations about keeping a shared workspace clean)
- Physical activities - these are activities that involve actions of the body and/or interactions with physical materials
- Textual activities - these are activities that incorporate texts of some kind (i.e., books, magazines, blogs)

Using specific examples of the community's activities, answer the following questions:

What purposes does the community want to achieve?

How does it communicate those purposes?

4. Community Profiles

Compose a brief profile of your chosen community. For each of the points below, write a paragraph of description and include at least one image (with proper attribution and citation).

- Who are the members? Describe the people who compose the community.
- Determine how to join the community. List and describe the ways new members of the community can get started.
- What do new members need to learn or know in order to become fully part of the community?
- What are the community's major activities? How could you take part in an activity that would allow you to learn more about the community?
- What contributions does the community make to the larger society?
- List and describe the community's knowledge activities (from step above)

(Optional) Contribute your profile of this community to the University of Iowa's institutional repository, [Iowa Research Online](#). If you are interested in sharing your profile in this way, email IDEAL staff at ideal@uiowa.edu

5. Rhetorical Analysis

Once you have profiled the local community you might wish to join, find a text that is related to its public image. In approximately 1200 words, present an in-depth rhetorical analysis of the text. The rhetorical analysis must demonstrate that you have understood the context into which the text fits, and this will require you to learn as much about the organization as possible. The rhetorical concepts covered in your reading, in lectures, and class discussions should play a prominent role in your analysis.

Requirements:

- Evidence of a rigorous analysis:
- Support your claims with details and justification
- Use the rhetorical concepts introduced in the course appropriately and prominently in your speech
- Use sufficient research to present the context of the text you are analyzing
- Cite the sources of your information using APA style
- Display images and visual aids in the blog post
- Here's an example that can help prompt your thinking: [Example Project – Rhetoric in Knowledge Communities](#)

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