



## **Informal Assignments/Activities for Speaking and Listening**

There are several informal assignments within this “unit”.

### **1. The Place Game (informal assignment for participation grade)**

W.11-12.3a-e, 4

SL.11-12.1- 4

L.11-12.1-3

- In this game, student groups will develop and perform the same skit within different ‘environments’
- Typically, I have several student groups ask for money from their grandparents (in their grandparents house), from their parents (in their dorm room or apartment), and from a friend in a bar.
- *Note: This is a fun exercise for students. It offers an opportunity to think about how place affects requests, discourses, etc.*

### **2. Reading Responses**

W.11-12.1a-e, 2e-f, 4-8

SL.11-12.1- 3

L.11-12.1-3

RI.11-12.1-6

- Reading responses range from one paragraph to one page.
- These responses should offer analysis that takes into account the assigned readings or informal assignments for the day.

### **3. Speech Workshop (informal assignment for daily participation)**

W.11-12.1a-e, 2e-f, 4, 5

SL.11-12.1, 2, 3

RI.11-12.1-6

- I have students team up and evaluate another pair's speech.
- This includes "grading" the other team's outline. Further, I have the pairs deliver their introductions and conclusions for another team.

### **4. Essay Workshop (informal assignment for daily participation)**

W.11-12.1a-e, 2e-f, 4, 5

SL. 11-12.1, 2, 3



L.11-12.1-3  
RI.11-12.1-6

- I have students pair up and write written evaluations of another person's paper.
- These evaluations include writing on the paper itself and filling out a 1-2 page evaluation form (included with this unit).

**5. Designing a Mall (informal assignment for participation grade)**

W.11-12.1a-e, 2  
SL.11-12.1, 2, 3  
L.11-12.L.1-3  
RI.11-12.1-6

- Materials Needed: one piece of paper per group
- This activity has students get into groups. Students then design a mall for a particular audience. The group should determine the audience age group, income-level, interests etc. The groups should draw out their design and goals. The first part of this project should take approximately 20-25 minutes.
- Student groups will design their mall with a theme or premise in mind and be able to explain the audience and theme to the rest of the class.
- After student groups have designed their mall, groups should trade designs with another group. The new group should use rhetorical terms to analyze the design of another group's mall. Groups should think about the assumptions evident in the design, what activities are privileged and the consumer aspects of the mall. Each group should present their findings. The second half of this project should take approximately 20-25 minutes.
- *Note: This is an excellent activity to push students to question a strictly linear relationship between rhetor and audience. Mall designs typically have multiple "rhetors" through multiple stores and different usage spaces. Additionally, students seem to enjoy this activity and are quite energetic about it. Further, this activity is excellent for having students move beyond a deterministic rhetorical model of space. In other words, there is more to the rhetoric of space than simple construction, other players are also important.*

**6. Synthesis Day (informal assignment for participation grade)**

W. 11-12: 1a-e, 2e-f, 3  
SL.11-12.1, 2, 3  
L.11-1.1-3  
RI.11-12.1-6

- During a synthesis day I typically structure a debate between the various authors the class has read.



- First I divide the class into teams. Then each team is to select an author from the readings assigned.
- Each group is to begin by diagramming the article using the rhetorical triangle. (This should be very familiar as I typically do this at the start of many class discussions.)
- Next, I write a set of questions on the board:
  - How does this author think or use the idea of space?
  - What is the audience asked to believe through this piece?
  - What types of arguments would this author use to redesign this classroom (or building, or campus, etc.)?
- I give each group approximately 15 minutes to think about these questions. Then they must present a brief speech on what the author would suggest about changing the environment of the classroom based on his or her article. (This activity might be more or less difficult depending on the authors used, but with some prodding, most groups proceed easily)
- Next, the other groups must counter the ideas of the others by proving their solution as the best.
- Finally, we vote on which solution seems the best.
- *Note: While you may never achieve a plurality in the final vote, this is good for bringing students back to the authors we have read, as well as making sure they have the rhetorical dimensions of these articles "hammered out." Additionally, this activity is great for introducing variant opinions about spaces that will lead into a controversy. Finally, this activity is great for having students engage with what "space" might mean throughout these readings.*

**7. Building Fieldtrip (2 day assignment; can be formal or an informal participation grade)**

- For this field trip I invite students to meet for class at a building on campus. This might be the Museum of Natural History, the Art Museum, the library, the Jefferson Building, Old Capitol, etc.
- Tour guides will lead students through the building. If no tour guides are available, I will lead students through the space.
- On the second day of this assignment I have students complete a 15-20 minute in-class writing response to the building. Next, we discuss the rhetorical elements of this space including arrangement, placement on campus, size, posturing, etc.
- *Students are not too fond of wandering through buildings. Yet, if you give them "insider" information, they tend to be more excited. Also, I think that they are able to perform a rhetorical analysis better once they've physically visited a space.*

**8. Deconstructing an Online Museum and/or Website (informal assignment for participation grade)**



- During this exercise I take the students through an online tour of either a museum website or another website. I recommend the [MUVA El Pais museum website](#) or the [Smithsonian Institution website](#). However, many websites would work including Nike, FBI website, etc.
- The second day of this informal assignment I quickly go through the website again. Then, I have students write for 15-20 minutes informally about the rhetorical impact of the website. Afterward, we discuss the rhetorical tools employed and how the class might analyze the website. We also discuss how rhetorical terms may or may not be ill-equipped to deal with websites.
- I collect the writings and grade them as part of the assignment.
- *Note: Students usually do really well with this activity. They think of elements to analyze that I would never even have considered. Often, they will bring in examples of other websites after this exercise is over.*

## 9. Speech: Space and Place in Housing

The Basics:

**Length:** 10-12 minutes

**Due:** Full sentence outline due on [date]. Speeches will be delivered in class beginning on [date].

**Teams:** This speech will be given in teams of twos. This means you will be graded together! So, if you have trouble with your partner 'slacking off' please let me know ASAP.

### Topic:

In the previous unit we spent time analyzing the content of articles, advertisements, and even names to understand the different meanings or types of authenticity they might forward. In a sense, the previous unit gave you the basic tools to analyze various texts or artifacts. In this unit, we will spend a long time thinking about how space is produced. In other words, you will analyze how different spaces might make various 'arguments.' Neighborhoods and subdivisions don't just appear they are created for different reasons. Your job will be to make an argument about what a particular neighborhood does through its arrangement of space, the types of houses it has, the images used for promotion, or the rules residents are expected to observe.

### What to do to get started:

Find one of the following (we'll talk about how to find these in class):

- A website for a neighborhood/subdivision
- A list of covenants or rules for a neighborhood/subdivision
- Pictures or images from a neighborhood/subdivision
- Housing 'blueprints' for houses in the neighborhood/subdivision

### What am I supposed to talk about?

The goal of this speech is for you to argue what a particular space does through its promotional images, structural arrangement, or rules of inhabitation. To do this you need to:



1. Tell us what documents/images you are using. Where are these from? Who produced them? Who is the audience for these materials?
2. Give a brief summary of the content of these materials. What is in these documents? Why were they created?
3. Analyze these materials. What do they do? To whom? For whom? WHY? Some questions to ask **could be**:
  - a. What types of appeals are in these documents? How are spaces structured for certain activities?
  - b. What types of people are in the images used for promotion? Does this indicate a particular audience?
  - c. What rules are discussed, if any, as covenants to be followed?
  - d. What is promoted about this neighborhood and what might be hidden?
  - e. What activities are promoted in this neighborhood and what activities are prohibited?
  - f. Who do you see inhabiting this space? Is there a particular person that 'fits' — why?

**Organization:** Of course, your speeches should be wonderfully organized. Here is a sample:

**Topic:** The traditional neighborhood of Greenbelt, WI assumes women are *only* housewives.

**Intro:** Introducing the neighborhood you are looking at in a creative way; announcing the 'blueprints' you are looking at; stating thesis; preview

**Body:** Analyzing the layout of the house and how it assumes women work inside the home. This includes the placement of the laundry room, the location of an 'office;' the organization of the kitchen. These things assume the 'mother' works inside the home.

**Conclusion:** restating thesis, summarizing main points, and leaving us with some amazing closing remarks.

**Research:** In this speech you will need to correctly cite the materials you use. We will discuss how to do this in class. ALSO, you must cite at least **2 supporting sources** (excluding dictionaries and encyclopedias). These sources might be documents from other neighborhoods, to compare ideas. You might also use: newspaper articles, books, websites, class readings, etc.

**Visual Aids:** You may choose whether or not to use a visual aid for this speech. If you choose to look at rules, VAs may not be necessary. However, certain topics almost assume a visual aid will be used (i.e. images used in promotion). So, use your own best judgment.