**Major Assignment 1: Evaluation Argument**

For this first assignment, choose a web site, a commercial, a print ad, photo, or essay for this assignment. You can choose something that is related to your field, choose something outside of your field that interests you. If you wish, you can also choose something that represents a larger idea or argument that you might pursue for your larger paper. For example, if you think that you might want to research health care policies regarding the illnesses that 911 first responders who got sick from working at ground zero are fighting for, you can choose an image that captures the heart of that issue.

Your essay should start by summarizing the context, content or senario, and goals of the text. What argument is the ad, website, commercial, photo, or essay attempting to make (“You should buy this”, “you should believe that”, you should act”, “you should feel” etc) Write a thesis driven argument in which you develop a set of criteria, and then examine the success or failure of the ad, commercial, web site or essay based on your criteria.

*Note: if you choose a photo that speaks to a larger issue as I described above, you can write something more like an interpretation that will require you to look as closely at details as you would if you were doing an Evaluation Essay*.

Use the strategies for evaluation outlined in *RRW*, Ch. 8, to write your essay. Seyler’s discussion of rhetorical strategies in Ch. 3 might also help you evaluate your chosen topic as might the guidelines for reading photographs and advertisements in Ch. 5 if you chose to evaluate an ad, photo, or commercial.

A successful essay will:

* **Context, Content, Claim**: Provide the context of the chosen print ad, essay, commercial, photo, or web site, summarize the content of the ad, essay, commercial, photo, or website, and then present a clear claim (thesis) for the rhetorical effectiveness, or for an interpretation. Keep in mind that a strong claim (evaluation) is contestable (reasonable people might disagree) and predictive (provides your promise or direction for the reader).
* **Criteria**: Create and clearly state the criteria that you use to evaluate the print ad, commercial, essay, or website, and develop your main points around that criteria. Focus on how the ad, commercial, essay, or website makes its argument, not on whether or not you agree with its overall message or argument. Remain objective about the ideology behind the argument, and focus on the argument itself. Criteria that you can use to evaluate the argument are logo, ethos, and pathos, or you can look at other persuasive strategies, like audience, tone, design, or purpose.
* **Support**: Support your points with concrete evidence from the essay text, ad, commercial, or web site. Evidence might include direct quotes, visual features such as color, background, facial expressions, etc, plot points in the case of commercials, and reasoning.

**Requirements**

* Essay must be **3-5 pages long**, double spaced with 1 inch margins
* While research and sources are not encouraged for this essay, if you do use source material, it must be documented properly using MLA.
* The essay **must contain at least one image**