

Unit 4: Research Paper on the Rhetoric of a Product or Cause

Due: Tues., Dec. 10th

Length: 5-6 pages, plus a works cited

“Potent, hungry, and expansive, the word ‘war’ captured the essence of the anticancer campaign. Wars demand combatants, weapons, soldiers, the wounded, survivors...victories—and it was not hard to find a metaphorical analogue to each of these for [the war on cancer].” (Mukherjee 172)

In this unit, we read excerpts from *The Emperor of All Maladies* by Siddhartha Mukherjee. This non-fiction book uncovers the history of cancer through stories of the failures and successes of researchers, doctors, philanthropists, politicians, and patients since as early as 2500 BC. It chronicles the metaphor of the exhaustive “war against cancer” that continues today and the faces, such as Jimmy’s, that have represented it through time.

For this research paper, you will research and analyze the way a product or cause (much like cancer) has been strategically positioned for consumption and/or support by the public. Using the rhetorical analysis skills you’ve developed, you will analyze **4-5 texts and visuals** that have been produced for that product or cause over time (e.g., advertisements, websites, brochures, commercials, PSAs, political cartoons).

PICK A PRODUCT OR CAUSE:

- cigarettes/tobacco
- depression medication
- Obama campaign
- breast cancer and “pink”
- AIDS
- aid to Africa
- or your choice (please run it by me)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What predominant advertising or awareness strategies have been used for this product or cause? Have the tactics changed over time?
- What common appeals to ethos, logos and pathos are associated with the campaign or movement?
- What diction, metaphors, slogans, themes, etc. are commonly associated with the product or cause? Analyze them and explain why they may have been persuasive.
- What images, “faces,” colors, etc. are commonly associated with the product or cause? Analyze them and explain why they may have been persuasive.

Write a formal academic essay in which you carry out the following tasks:

- In the introduction, accurately and effectively introduce the focus of your essay and any relevant background information on your focus. Explain how Mukherjee's book provides the foundation for this project and explain the characteristics of the campaign for the "war on cancer" for comparison purposes.
- Establish a clear, specific **thesis** in which you pose an argument about the strategic marketing of the product or cause, setting up a clear structure to your paper.
- In the body of the essay, include quotes, descriptions and other evidence from your sources to support your thesis. This might also include reference to an appendix item, such as advertisement or image. Make sure to incorporate quotation sandwiches and accurately paraphrase and summarize.
- In the conclusion, comment on the significance of your research and the topic at hand.

Criteria for Evaluation:

- Write the paper as if addressing an educated reader unfamiliar with the topic and texts.
- **Underline your thesis** on the final copy you turn in and attach the rubric.
- Effectively incorporate 4-5 credible outside sources.
- Use an effective structure that carefully guides the reader from one idea to the next.
- Use correct MLA format and in-text citations and include a works cited. (You should attach any visuals that can't be found online as appendices.)
- Proofread your paper and use proper grammar. Focus on what we've reviewed in class: comma usage, comma splices, run-ons, fragments, semi colons, wordiness, informal language, etc.