

The Assignment: African American Rhetorical Analysis Essay

Assignment Description

This assignment requests that you perform a rhetorical analysis using the purposes, principles, and canons of Afrocentric rhetorical theory to a small corpus of texts. You should draw knowledge from the course reading assignments and the lecture notes to help frame your analysis with these elements appropriately.

This analysis will require you to apply the canons of Kemetic rhetorical traditions as you may be accustomed to with Aristotelian traditions. This means that your essay will need to demonstrate ...

- Silence - effective use of quiet and rhetorical listening to learn
- Restraint - demonstrate eloquence with what not to say
- Fluency - exhibit verbal dexterity and deep comprehension of topic and message
- Good timing - deliberate use of time to strengthen effect of the message
- Truthfulness - privilege the truth in rhetorical communication

More on how you might exhibit these canons in the Assignment Instructions.

This assignment will also call on your attained knowledge of African American rhetorical themes to analyze your chosen corpus.

Assignment Instructions

Compose an extended African American Rhetorical Analysis of a corpus of three texts. Your analysis will use the frameworks of Afrocentric rhetorical practice and African American rhetoric you have studied in ENC6335 to present an argument about the Afrocentric rhetorical practices within your corpus. To demonstrate the reach and versatility of Afrocentric rhetorical philosophy, your corpus of primary sources must include **2 texts from Black American** rhetors or authors and **1 text from a non-African** rhetor or author. The selected texts can come from any genre, but they must result in a *rhetorical* analysis not a literary analysis.

[This file is supplemental material to Jamila Kareem, *Expanding Graduate Student Rhetorical Knowledge: African American Rhetorical Analysis*, prompt 10.1 (2026), doi: 10.31719/pjaw.v10i1.238]

In 10-12 double-spaced pages, your African American rhetorical analysis will examine the *tep-heseb en medet neferet* through the presence of (or not) African American or Afrocentric rhetorical themes, purposes, or behaviors in the texts of your corpus. You will present and support an argument about the workings of **one of the following** African American themes, purposes, or behaviors:

- Themes:
 - The dignity and rights of the human person
 - The reciprocal solidarity and cooperation of humanity
 - The integrity and value of the environment
 - The well-being and flourishing of community
- Purposes:
 - Building community
 - Communal deliberation
 - Reaffirming human dignity (reaffirmation)
 - Enhancing the life of the people (possibility)
 - Liberation
 - Resistance
 - Show the truth
 - Bring good into the world
- Nommodic rhetorical behaviors (manifestations of nommo) (Woodyard):
 - Rhythm as a frame of mentality
 - Lyrical approach to language
 - Call and response of participation
 - Reliance upon mythoforms
 - Use of indirection

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- Repetition for intensification

To **perform this task effectively**, you are asked to complete the steps below in your essay.

- **Respond to the guiding questions:** How does the application of particular themes, purposes, or behaviors in these texts reflect or represent African American rhetorical traditions or not? How effective are the themes, purposes, or behaviors in the corpus texts? What practices does the author use that demonstrates that theme, purpose, or behavior? What is the *magara* of the use of the rhetorical concept?
- Demonstrate **restraint**: Provide a detailed introduction that introduces and gives a good overview of the rhetorical concept you are analyzing.
 - Explain focus of the essay and specify elements under analysis.
 - Stay within assigned task length and time constraints.
- Demonstrate **silence**: Provide a discussion of secondary research sources and their perspectives on the topic.
- Demonstrate **fluency**: Provide historical and cultural context for the discussion of your corpus texts and rhetorical concept.
 - Perform a close and critical analysis of three texts (see requirements above) only.
 - Use carefully selected diction and syntax in construction of writing.
- Demonstrate **good timing**: Employ effective organization throughout the structure of your essay.
 - Show an understanding of when to introduce new ideas and transition across discussions.
- Demonstrate **truthfulness**: Frame and support your analysis with concrete, specific evidence from primary sources of your analysis and with the thoughts and theories of others through your secondary research.
 - Incorporate insights from 6-8 relevant secondary sources, at least half of which are scholarly and peer-reviewed and two of which were assigned in ENC6335.

Audience and Venue

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Your target audience for this essay are the editors and readers of an academic journal in rhetorical studies (community-centered rhetorical practice). Select from one of the venues below:

- *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*
- *Philosophy and Rhetoric*
- *Peitho: The Peer-Reviewed Journal of the Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition*
- *Rhetoric Review*
- *African American Review*
- *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*
- *constellations: a cultural rhetorics publishing space*

You should craft your analytical essay with the expectations, needs, and goals of the target audience in mind.

Submission Requirements

1. Select a rhetorical concept to frame a rhetorical analysis of a corpus of three texts from three separate authors per the required elements detailed above.
2. Illustrate understanding of the canons of Kemet rhetorical traditions per the expectations described above.
3. Responds to the guiding questions.
4. Appropriate use of secondary sources, per the expectations above.
5. Audience-aware (community-conscious) choices demonstrated through fluency, timing, and restraint.
6. On-time submission in the Webcourses assignment space.

Due Date

Friday Week 5.

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