

WRD 111

Public Service Announcement (PSA) Campaign

Overview

The major team project for this class will be a PSA campaign that you will research and deploy as part of your team. Throughout the semester there have been individual assignments that will scaffold your experience with PSAs so that you could begin to learn the vocabulary, the genre, and the culture surrounding public service campaigns. The larger project has also been separated into various assignments due throughout the term so that you do not have to do everything all at once. This will also make it possible for you to continue to deepen, focus, and become increasingly familiar with your subject. In other words, every assignment for this class will exist to help you toward your PSA project.

As you have learned, PSAs have been around since about World War II, and we are all well acquainted with them whether or not we are able to recognize them as such. They began as ways for the government to get out particular kinds of messages to the public with the goal of mobilizing people in certain ways. These campaigns usually stem from activist roots: a group or organization sees a need, a problem, or concern within society and desires to advocate for particular changes. Sometimes these advocacies can be general (such as the anti-smoking “Truth” campaign) or more targeted (like the famous “Duck and Cover” films from WWII). What they all have in common is a strong rhetorical element that has an exigence (there is a problem here), identifies an audience (this group needs to hear this) and deploys the best means to advocate for a solution (this is what needs to be done in this way).

You will be doing the work of PSAs by firstly researching particular communities, spaces, or even social problems you are already aware of and identifying something that needs attention. This will be your issue, the concern you take up to build your campaign. The end result will be various media and modes that address the issue you choose and offer awareness and even some solutions to the issue. Every group will be required to create a video as part of the PSA campaign. Along with the video you will be required to deploy two other modes for getting your message out to your audience. These modes can be anything from posters to websites, but they need to take both your subject and audience into consideration. All components of the project are of a rhetorical nature; that is, they will, to the best of your ability, account for exigence, audience, and purpose.

Project Sections

1) Weekly Campaign Reports

As part of a team, you have chosen your topics and you will be working collaboratively for the rest of the term. You will have to decide within your groups how you will divide work and what your individual timelines will be. Group work can be extremely challenging for all involved. But it can also be very rewarding. In order to make sure you are continuing to have positive experiences, each student will be required to turn in a weekly report that briefly outlines what you accomplished on the project, and each team will be required to attend a conference with me

at some point during the term. Some weeks you will have more to report than others, but you should always be working on something. These reports will begin on week 6 and be due on the Thursday of each week until week 15, for a total of 10 reports. Each report is worth 10 points each, and altogether the reports are worth 10% of the final grade.

2) PSA Video

The portion of the project that every team will provide will be the PSA Video. The video will need to address the audience and subject of your project very clearly, but it must also be contained in some kind of format specific to your project. In other words, your team will need to decide what venue your video would most likely be viewed: on Youtube, a website, on network TV, before a movie at the theater, etc. There will be several steps involved in creating your video, as well as a first cut due to elicit feedback from the class to make the video the best it can be. This part of the project will be broken up into two parts:

a) *First Cut of Video*

All kinds of writing must be continually revised, and this is no less true of video projects. Most likely your first draft will be bulky, long, meandering, and lack focus. Audiences will have confused reactions. This is all part of the process. It is a good thing your producers are here to suggest ways to revise your work so that it reaches that audience better. With that said, this can be a work in progress, but it must be a complete and cohesive work in progress – in other words, **it must be at least half the length of your final cut, it must have a clear beginning, middle and end, a clear focus on a particular issue of concern, and it must include interviews and other source material.** Please realize that it will be drastically altered by the critiques of your classmates, your instructor, and yourself. We will all give you feedback for this draft so that you can make it the best you can for the final. Make sure to pay attention and take notes to the feedback you receive from the instructor and your peers. The First Cut is worth 10% of the final grade.

b) *Final Cut*

The final project will be turned in at the beginning of the last week of class. It should take into account the critiques performed earlier and be drastically refined from the previous draft. You will present the project to the class (your adoring audience) and be ready to answer any questions. The finished documentary should be between 8-12 minutes, with a target time of 10 minutes. Anything over 12 minutes will have points taken off half a letter grade per 30 seconds. The Final Cut is worth 10% of the final grade.

3) PSA Campaign Components

In addition to the video, your team will need to create and deploy two other modes and tactics to get out the message of your PSA. These will also need to be presented at your final presentation and their effectiveness assessed. These components can range from pamphlets, posters, magazine advertisements, movie trailers, shorter versions of your longer video PSA, etc. The most important part of these components is that they are part of a campaign. In other words, they are not one-time creations. They need to be utilized as an actual PSA campaign. So if you decide to

use bumper stickers, you will need to create these and give them out. Then there needs to be an assessment of their effectiveness (did folks actually use them? How many did you give out? Etc.). These results need to be reported during the final PSA report. Each component of the campaign is worth 10% of the final grade for a total of 20%.

4) PSA Report and Assessment

As part of the final project, each team will create a formal presentation that will be included as part of a course exhibition of class research. Each team should prepare a brief formal demonstration of their campaign as well as answer questions from an audience of their peers. Using the research that you completed, you will present your PSA and explain your revisions. The purpose of this presentation is to explain your work and present your video, as well as answer questions. You will also be required to report on the effectiveness of both your video choices and the other components that your team chose to create. Each presentation should run about 20 minutes (including the presentation of your final cut) and is considered a formal speech assignment. Each member of the team will be required to have a brief speaking role. The Formal Presentation is worth 10% of the final grade.

5) Project Response Essay

All work should be considered always under continual revision. It is a good idea to take a step back from any work you do to evaluate your successes and failures and take inventory of how you would approach your work if you were to revise once again. A reflection paper will be required from each student. This 1000-word essay should outline the student's use of peer and self-critiques to refine the PSA, explain and defend the choice of medium and how it supports the argument of the composition, and a note on further refinement (if you had another month with this project, what would you do). Also, the essay must reflect on how the student used various ideas, concepts, theories, and class discussions in the development of the PSA project. This means I expect you to cite at least three sources and refer to other readings and discussions as you think through your work. This essay will be turned in as part of your portfolio of writing at the end of the semester.

Due Dates

Weekly Campaign Reports: Every Thursday by end of class

First Cuts of Video: Tuesday, April 15 (Uploaded to YouTube)

Final Cuts of Video: All due Tuesday, April 29 (Uploaded to YouTube and embedded in blog)

PSA Reports and Assessments: Begin Tuesday, April 29

Project Response Essay: Thursday, May 1

Portfolios Due: Thursday, May 1