This is a reflection of the hoax project that I completed for my WRIT 3160 (Argumentative Writing) class. In this, I’m going to talk about the pieces within my portfolio, things that I learned during this process, and my personal philosophy on rhetoric and argument.

Logistics

- Introduction: An explanation of my hoax project
- Hoax Proposal: A written outline of my hoax project to get approved by Dr. Harris
- Rhetorical Analysis: An explanation of the text I chose to analyze with the drafts
- Theory Text: A Feminist Theory text that ties into my Rhetorical Analysis
- Conference Week: An explanation of the meeting with Dr. Harris, including edited/revised versions of the Rhetorical Analysis, as well as the Updated Final Rhetorical Analysis
- Argument Texts: A blog post and infographic arguing my side of the hoax

Reflection on Learning

To be completely honest, when I finished the first draft, I was actually a little nervous that Dr. Harris would rip it apart. When she gave back my draft, her comments were things that I actually agreed with, and really made my piece much better. My draft was a great start, but there was a lot more description that needed to be included, as well as more evidence of my personal
claims that I was making against Bruce’s claims or lack of examples. These were things that would help me better persuade my audience. The specific things I went back to add to can be found in my Revised Rhetorical Analysis piece that I included on my ePortfolio. One thing that I didn’t realize was going to help me with this Rhetorical Analysis was the Riff and Responses.

I’ll try to not go off on a tangent here, but when we first began the R&Rs I was thinking to myself, why are we having us do these assignments? There’s no way that this is actually possible. The first few R&Rs I submitted were all good and bad in their own ways, but then I finally got the hang of it. I felt like the process of doing the R&Rs really prepared me for this first draft of the Rhetorical Analysis. For example, I would pull a particular piece of the rant and then use examples from Heinrichs to prove whether or not he did a good job of persuading his audience. On page two of my Rhetorical Analysis, I used a fallacy that Heinrichs mentioned – false comparison, and found an example of it when Bruce made a very poor or false comparison. It was one thing for me to read about it in Heinrichs, but it was really cool when I was able to pick it out of my rhetorical analysis text. To bring it back to the R&Rs, I am now able to understand why Dr. Harris had us do them – to practice for our Rhetorical Analysis.

For the Theory Text, Dr. Harris told us to find a theory that we thought went best with our hoax. I chose the Feminist Theory and found a great article about it and how it plays along with people being jerks online. For the assignment, I just created a summary of the article and turned it in for submission. When I met with Dr. Harris during conference week, she then challenged me to go back and use the specific points that the author of that text said, and link it back to my rhetorical analysis text – the rant. It was crazy to me because I was able to plug in the points that the author was making and relate it back to potential reasons why Bruce did his rant on the medium in which he chose. For example, Shaw, the author of the theory text, mentioned
that people create these “safe spaces” in which they are comfortable enough to try to humiliate other people, and that’s where this idea of “jerks” or “internet trolls” comes from. I was able to see that reasoning in why Bruce chose to rant on his show – that was his “safe space” and where he felt comfortable. Being able to make a correlation between these two completely separate texts was super cool for me.

At the beginning of the semester, Dr. Harris asked us all to think of some questions that we had about the class. I remember asking her, “will you still be successful in this class even if you don’t know how to argue?” I don’t remember the exact words that she said in her response, but it was something along the lines that you could still be successful. I feel like I have done very well in this course, but I also feel like I have learned a lot. I have applied a lot of things that I’ve learned from this course to my other course assignments. For example, I’ve learned that it’s not sufficient to just make a claim – that goes with almost anything. You have to be able to provide evidence and reasoning to your claim in order to be effective in persuading, in this case, my professors, that I understand whatever it is I’m writing about. Because I spent the majority of this class analyzing Damon Bruce’s rant, I was really able to understand the importance of backing up claims and statements in order to successfully persuade. Bruce was not able to do so, so I was not even the least bit persuaded.

**Philosophy**

I believe that rhetoric and argument go hand-in-hand. Before this class, I never really thought of there being an *art* to arguing, but there most definitely is. There’s a lot of different components that should be considered in the moment of an argument. For example, one of the first things that we learned about from Heinrichs is that you have to keep your audience in mind.
You have to appeal to your audience and figure out what their needs are in order to effectively persuade them into your way of thinking. When Heinrichs started talking about this, I really became a believer that you could really study how to become a better “arguer.” If you think about it, you would try to persuade your professor to change the date of an assignment in a completely different way that you would attempt to persuade your parents to loan you some money. To make it a little more relevant to my project, I had to determine why Damon Bruce chose to use his talk show as the platform as a rant – he had built up credibility with his audience, and knew that they would most likely listen to him because they are fans of the show. In this case, Bruce’s rhetoric of ethos played a part in why he felt comfortable enough to use his show to display his argument. Through the process of doing this project, I really have learned that the components of your argument are really important if you want to be successful in getting others to follow your way of thinking.

I chose to do a blog post for my ePortfolio because my audience is the men and women within the Sports and Entertainment Industry. Many of these individuals are online and are constantly reading blogs and looking for new information. I felt that going to the place where my audience already is would be the best first step in trying to persuade them. I also thought that doing the infographic would be better than doing another type of image such as a meme. I feel like the infographic is a little more serious, but it also plays along with the common statements and phrases made against women within the sports industry. By going and already telling young girls what people are going to say, maybe the people that are saying them will come to realize that they aren’t original anymore and their opinion will no longer matter on this topic.