Rhetorical Reading Response (Required as Papers 1 and 3 in FYW Portfolio)  
(Also the required format for your reading response this semester)

The purpose of this assignment is to encourage rhetorical reading and writing. Rhetorical reading calls attention to the author’s intentions for readers and focuses on how texts work to change readers’ minds. As you read, you’re not just learning about the world; rather, you’re learning about the author’s worldview demonstrated in the text.

**Rhetorical Summary:**

Write a rhetorical précis in your own words with no words borrowed directly from the text:

a. Sentence 1: Name of author, genre, and title of work, date in parentheses; a rhetorically active verb (such as —claims,‖ —argues‖ —asserts‖ —defines‖ —explores‖ or —suggests‖); and a —that‖ clause containing the major assertion, main idea, or thesis statement in the work.

b. Sentence 2: An explanation of how the author develops and supports the thesis (i.e. evidence), usually in chronological order.

c. Sentence 3: A statement of the author’s apparent purpose, followed by an —in order toll phrase.

d. Sentence 4: A description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.

**Personal Response:**

Write your response to the text. Are you confused? Annoyed? Delighted? Tickled? Do you agree?

**Analytical Argument:**

Write an analytical paragraph about the text in which you make an interpretive claim about the way the text is written or the meaning of the text and support it. Use plenty of examples (quotations, paraphrases), citing as appropriate. (Use a question from the book if you need an idea).

**Format:** Academic; be concise and analytical. Choose words carefully, and revise sentences to include the most meaning for the syntax. Type your responses; keep them under 2 pages.

**Tip:** Keep these responses on your computer or a hard copy as these will become the basis of papers. This takes time—academic writing requires you to read, ponder, and
write about source texts—but rest assured, the skills and habits you form will help you in other classes.

**Grading (in addition to grammatical correctness, MLA format):** F—off topic, incomplete; D—complete but sketchy; C—good effort but keep digging deeper; B—you’ve made important observations but develop them more fully; A—I learned something new about your thinking about the essay; thoughtful and well-developed. They’re due in class, on time.

This assignment was developed by Mary R. Lamb, drawing on an assignment by Ann George; *Reading Rhetorically* by John Bean, Virginia A. Chappell, and Alice M. Gillam; and Margaret K. Woodworth, —The Rhetorical Précis,‖ *Rhetoric Review* 7 (1988): 156-65.