

RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION II (HONORS)  
FSTY 1313.03  
Fall 2011

MWF 11:00-11:50AM MH 301  
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**Paper #1 An Opinion Column Using Personal Experience**

**Four Copies of a Solid Draft: See Class Schedule for Due Date**

Your assignment for paper #1 is to write a 3-4 page opinion column using personal experience as one (but not the only) form of evidence. The essays “Single Motherhood is Joy, Not a Disaster” (p 79) and “A View from Berkeley” (p 81) in Arguing in Communities are examples of this type of argument. A great way to begin brainstorming would be to fill in the blanks in the following sentence. “Many people think \_\_\_\_\_, but my experience tells me \_\_\_\_\_.”

This paper could take a number of forms. It could start out as a traditional argument with explicit claims and evidence (statistics, expert opinions, etc.) and then you could say something like “my opinion on this issue has been influenced by my life experience.” Then you could relate an experience or two that has led you to take the position you have. OR you could take a more inductive approach, sharing some experiences from your life and then using those experiences to draw conclusions that are supported by mature reasoning and other types of evidence. Use your imagination and adopt the form that is most appropriate for your subject.

Through writing this paper, I hope you will learn the power of personal experience as a rhetorical technique. Personal experience is one of the most persuasive types of evidence because it automatically makes the author a kind of expert on his or her topic. In addition, personal stories are often a good way to bypass readers’ objections to an argument and to appeal to their emotions.

When an author uses personal experience, however, it is crucial to let readers know that one has stepped outside of one’s own experience to consider other points of view, that one is informed about the issue, and that the author has good reasons (other than personal experience) for his or her belief.

Although personal experience will be the main form of evidence for this paper, you must have at least one other form of evidence to supplement your personal experience. Supplemental evidence could come from interviews, surveys, observation, newspaper accounts, scholarly articles or books, studies, etc. In an ideal world your argument would contain more than two types of evidence, but this isn’t a research paper, so I’m only asking for two sources.

Your audience for this essay will be the readers of *Hilltop Views*. You may need to do a bit of research to learn about the demographics and attitudes of the *Hilltop Views* audience.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluation

Essay \_\_\_\_\_, Draft

Highlighted/underlined areas need particular attention.

Comments	Overall Evaluation	Description/Issues for Attention
COMMUNICABILITY & ORGANIZATION	Excellent	Highly fluent and coherent. Clear, forward-moving line of reasoning. Parts of paper tightly cohesive and effectively arranged. Effective use of paragraphing.
	Good	Generally fluent and coherent. Purpose/main idea clear to reader. Occasional problems with paragraphing/logic or sequencing/cohesion between parts of the paper.
	Fair	Problems with focus, coherence and/or fluency. Purpose/main idea frequently obscured by problems with or lack of paragraphing. Introduction fails to structure discourse. Conclusion is redundant or lacking.
	Weak	Serious lack of fluency and coherence. Unclear aim/purpose/main idea. Serious lack of logical sequencing / cohesion between parts of paper.
CONTENT & DEVELOPMENT	Excellent	Relevant to assigned topic. Convincing support of main idea with specific, appropriate examples, evidence and/or reasoning.
	Good	Relevant to assigned topic. Generally adequate support for main idea; however, a few points left too general, abstract, vague and /or unsupported.
	Fair	Paper addresses assignment topic; however, it is weakened by lack of specific, appropriate examples, evidence and/or arguments (reasoning) to support the main idea, or by failure to follow a logical and clear plan of development.
	Weak	Marginally related to assignment at best; Main idea unclear. Little or no specific evidence, appropriate examples, evidence and or arguments.
STYLE	Excellent	Clear, consistent, appropriate writing voice / point of view. Excellent/appropriate vocabulary choices. No redundancy. Suitable /effective tone. Excellent use of sentence variety.
	Good	Stylistic choices generally appropriate for aim, audience, occasion. Generally consistent/appropriate point of view/writing voice. Occasional problems with sentence variety, redundant language, word choices/clichés, and / or overall tone.
	Fair	Stylistic choices not always appropriate for aim, audience, occasion. Shifts in points of view. Inappropriate word choices / tone. Problems with redundant language; lack of sentence variety.
	Weak	Serious problems with the above.
GRAMMAR & MECHANICS	Excellent	Excellent control of grammatical conventions and mechanics. Very few, if any careless errors.
	Good	Generally good control of grammatical conventions and mechanics. Occasional errors resulting from careless proof-reading. Recurrence of

		a particular error.
	Fair	Fair to weak control of grammatical conventions or mechanics. Frequent problems with spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and/ or indentation of paragraphs. Frequent problems with form, function or positioning of language. Specific problems INCLUDE:
	Weak	Little or no control of grammatical conventions or mechanics. Systematic errors in grammar (form, function, position of language), capitalization, and/ or punctuation. Specific problems INCLUDE:

**Grade & Comments:**