Aristotelian Artistic Proof Speech

Purpose:

To give you practice in developing and delivering an oral argument focusing on one of Aristotle’s artistic proofs. The choice of rhetoric and accompanying proof is yours.

Your goal is to achieve your stated purpose and, in doing so, keep your audience interested.

NOTE: Check the Assignment Specifics sheet for requirements as to time limit, oral footnotes, bibliographic entries, etc.

Procedure

1. Find a good piece of rhetoric! It could be a letter to the editor, a comic strip, an advertisement, a speech, etc. You must be able to describe it AND analyze it in the time allotted for the speech.

   For example, you might want to analyze a SuperBowl commercial focusing on ethos (personal appeals), or a presidential speech focusing on logos (appeal to logic and reasoning), or a well-known persuasive movie focusing on pathos (appeal to emotions).

   If we have already selected debate topics, your speech cannot be on a topic we are using.

2. NOTE: This must be a (slightly) persuasive speech, with an emphasis on analysis. You will be “proving” whether the artistic proof is used effectively or ineffectively in the rhetoric. In the process, you are helping us better understand the proof and the rhetoric.

3. Review the textbook and lecture notes on Aristotle’s three modes of artistic proofs (ethos, pathos, and logos) to make sure you really understand them. Then pick the proof that seems to apply most effectively to your choice of rhetoric.

4. Make an argument for one of the following positions:

   • The rhetoric was effective because it used ethos (or pathos, or logos—whichever you have chosen) very well.

   • The rhetoric was ineffective because it did not use the artistic proof well, or excluded it completely. (If you choose this position, you should include a statement of how they might have used the proof more effectively to strengthen their argument).

   You will, of course, need to provide examples and analysis to support your position.

5. Prepare a speech that meets the following criteria:

   a. Meets the requirements identified in this assignment sheet, in class, and on other class materials (adhering to time limits, evidence requirements, topic/approach, etc.).
b. Is organized and easy to follow (see Organization and Outline sections below).
c. Is easy to understand and is engaging for the audience (see Delivery section below).
d. You will also prepare a simple outline to use as a delivery outline and to turn into me (you will make two copies: one to turn into me and one to use as your delivery outline).

Organization

Basic Organizational Structure

Organize the speech in a manner similar to that described below:

**Introduction** (please make this somewhat attention-getting; not a "Hello, my speech today is on XXX")

**Preview Statement:** One sentence providing a roadmap of your main points—choosing a position as to whether the rhetoric was effective or ineffective based upon your analysis.

**Body:**
I. What are you explaining?
   A. *Rhetoric* (Here you give us a basic description of what you are analyzing.)
   B. *Artistic Proof* (Don't just state it; explain it.)
II. Analysis (Here you give examples, then apply the artistic proof so we can see how it works in this piece of rhetoric.)
   A. *Example 1* (What did they say, and how does the proof apply.)
   B. *Example 2* (What did they say, and how does the proof apply.)
III. OPTIONAL: How the rhetoric could have been improved.

**Summary Statement:** One sentence reminding us of what your main points were, and reinforcing your position of whether the rhetoric was effective or ineffective.

**Conclusion:** Final statement of closure

Thesis/Preview/Summary

Many students have difficulty with the thesis, preview, and summary statements.

a. The **thesis statement** is your argument:

   Example: "The Budweiser SuperBowl advertisement featuring the friendship between a cute little puppy and a Clydesdale horse is an effective use of pathos."

   The rest of your speech should support this argument.

b. The **preview statement** is a "roadmap" of your main points, telling us what you will cover in the order you will cover it. Think of it as telling us what your points will be so we can write them down, then check them off as you cover them.

   Example: “In order to understand how pathos is used in the ad, we first have to know what the ad is, then we can look at some examples of pathos in the ad, and, finally, talk about how the advertisement could be improved.”
Note that the three main points in the sample outline above are mentioned in the preview statement.

The preview may contain your thesis, but it is not your thesis.

c. The **summary statement** is the flip side of the preview statement, where you remind us of what your speech’s main points were.

Example: “Now that we’ve described the ad, and looked at some examples of how it used pathos, as well as some suggestions for improvement...”

Again, note that the three main points in the sample outline above are mentioned in the summary statement. The summary statement can be finished with a conclusion that reinforces the thesis: “...we can see that Budweiser is very accomplished in using pathos to persuade us to drink a product, beer, that has nothing to do with puppies, horses, or friendship.”

**Delivery**

If your delivery detracts from the presentation, your audience won’t listen to your message and your arguments fail. Spend time on delivery, paying attention to the following:

- **Energy/Confidence** – You need to look like you want to be delivering this speech and know what you are talking about. If you sound bored (or like you are just reading off your notes), we won’t listen to you. A soft voice, a speech pattern where you sound like you are questioning yourself, etc., all contribute to the appearance of lack of confidence and authority.

- **Eye contact** – In Western culture, eye contact is often associated with trustworthiness.

- **Fluency** – Strive for a fluent delivery, avoiding choppiness and excessive use of vocal disfluencies/filler phrases (“ah,” “um,” “you know,” etc.).

- **Gestures** – Make these as natural as possible; some audiences equate lack of gestures with lack of enthusiasm.

- **Posture** – Show your confidence with good solid posture.

Use an **extemporaneous delivery style**, which is very conversational. You should be speaking off an outline and NOT sound like you are reading or memorized word for word.

Practice this speech (preferably in front of others) before you present. Time it to make sure it fits the time limit. Remember: You get penalized for being under or overtime.

**Outline/Speaking Notes**

You must develop an outline using the organizational style noted above. No need to show sources, unless you cite outside sources.

Please use a standard outline form (a link is provided on the Schedule Links document to help you with this).
Grading Considerations

What I will be looking for when grading your Aristotelian proof speech:

- Appropriateness of topic for the type of speech assigned
- Clear, discernable preview and summary statements (don’t make me have to look for them!)
- Good organization (a clear attention-getting introduction, well-developed and organized body—appropriate for the speech type, distinct conclusion)
- Emphasis on analysis, not just on providing information
- Adheres to speech requirements (notes, time limit, etc.)
- Good development of points (analysis)
- Creativity, style in content and delivery
- NOTE: This is an oral communication class. Delivery skills count heavily in your grade. Make sure you have practiced your speech several times, in front of an audience, so you perform with an enthusiastic/confident delivery, good inclusive eye contact, natural gestures, good posture, fluency (no filler phrases), smooth use of presentation aids, etc.
- Appropriate physical appearance (clean, presentable, “a step above from your audience’s attire”)