English 1B Spring 2015 **Short Writing Assignment #1:** **Brief Rhetorical Analysis**

**Overview**: You have learned the basics of rhetorical analysis; now you will practice those skills by writing a short (500-600 word) analysis of a short argument.

**Directions:**

1. **Choose an argument** from *Food Matters*, *Praxis*, or from the course Web site—an argument that we have not already discussed in class (and that we won’t have discussed before the paper is due.) It doesn’t have to be one that I’ve assigned, either, just one that looks interesting.
2. **Write a brief topic proposal:** On a half-sheet of paper (share the other half with a classmate), write down the name of the argument you will analyze with the page numbers, plus your name and section number.
3. The focus will be on explaining how the three rhetorical appeals are operating, but to do that, you must also briefly identify the following in your **introductory paragraph**.

* Who seems to be the intended audience and how can you tell?
* What is the original forum (when and where was the argument published)?
* What is the context for the argument (issues in the world that relate to the argument)?

1. Organize the **body of your paper** into three sections, one for each appeal: **ethos, logos,** and **pathos**. Consult your handout “The Appeals and the Modes” for details about each.
2. **Find examples** from the argument **for each of the appeals** and **discuss** how they would likely operate on the audience.

Example (logos): For his logos appeal, Gabriel Thompson brings in specific evidence of working conditions in the factory that he observed while working there, such as the vending machine stocked with pain-killers and testimonies from other workers about the physical pain they suffer on the job, to support his claim that this is a terrible place to work. This evidence is likely to be effective with this audience because he is writing for people who have probably never set foot in a factory, so they would be inclined to be both surprised by these details and impressed by the fact that Thompson was able to do this work himself, even for a short time.

**Tips:**

* You will find that a lot of **being “right” here depends on** **how you frame your examples**. The passage above could be easily adjusted to make a comment on Thompson’s ethos appeal (because he gains credibility by risking his own body to get the story) or his pathos appeal (since many of his descriptions of the workers’ suffering are likely to affect the readers’ emotions). Just be sure you choose examples for each kind of appeal and explain them appropriately.
* **You don’t need to explain every appeal** used in the argument. This is meant to be a short exercise (500-600 words), just enough to show me that you understand how to recognize the three appeals in operation. Please don’t give me five pages’ worth!

**Due Dates**: Topic Proposal Final Draft