English 1B Spring 2015 **Rhetorical Analysis of a Web Site**

**Overview**: We have been practicing rhetorical analysis of arguments; now you will apply those analytical skills to a more complex kind of “document”: the Web site a company or nonprofit organization uses to sell its product, promote its project, or both. In keeping with the course theme, we will be dealing with companies and organizations that relate in some way to food.

**Content:** You will **describe** (tell us what’s there), **analyze,** (tell us why the words/visuals/audio bits were chosen and what effect they are intended to have on the audience) and **evaluate** (discuss strengths & weaknesses) of the site. Your paper will cover the following.

* Who seems to be the intended audience and how can you tell? What do they value?
* What is the context for the argument (issues in the world that relate to the product and/or company history)?
* How are the three appeals (ethos, pathos, logos) being used?
* What criteria are emphasized to sell this product or organization and how are they discussed (ethical/legal, pragmatic, aesthetic)?
* How are visuals/audio used to enhance the argument?
* If you are dealing with an organization that has been vilified as a “corporate villain” or as a charity charged with wrongdoing, analyze the site’s defense.
* What do you think are the site’s strengths and weaknesses as an argument that says, basically, “Buy our product (or contribute to our charity) and tell your friends!”

**Warning:** This paper is about the ***argument made on the Web site***, **not about the organization itself**. Do not allow yourself to rhapsodize about how much you love the product, nor rant about the evil deeds this organization has committed. It’s just not that kind of paper.

**Sample Topics—but feel free to pitch another one that you know about**: Make-a-Stand Lemon-Aid, Masumoto Family Farm, Café Alta Gracia, Dean’s Beans, Niman Ranch, Chez Panisse, Red Rooster Restaurant, Monsanto, Nestle, Tyson, Grameen Danone Yogurt, Straus Family Creamery, Divine Chocolate, Three Twins Ice Cream, Endangered Species Chocolate, Newman’s Own, Heifer International, Veggielution, Homeless Garden Project, Farmer Veteran Project, Davis Food Co-op, Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center, Grease Lightning (biodiesel), L.A. Kitchen (culinary classes for ex-cons)

**Specifications**

* **Length/format** 1200 words, typed in MLA format
* **Audience:** your classmates and professor in 1B. This means you can use jargon.
* **Topic Proposal** just tell me what Web site you will do and include the URL
* **Due Dates**: Topic Proposal Rough Draft Final Draft