Background
In this unit, we discussed how writers and readers play an active role in constructing texts and making meaning. We read Grant-Davie’s exploration of *rhetorical situations*, and Haas and Flower demonstrated that understanding the rhetorical situation is central to actively engaging and creating texts. We then also discussed how meaning is created by looking at commercials, ads, and political cartoons (remember the President sketches and Jersey Shore cartoons?).

After this initial introduction, we discussed how rhetorical situations apply to writing constructs, which Downs and Wardle define as “mental frameworks that people build in order to make sense of the world around them” (35). We read articles discussing constructs such as plagiarism (Parry; Porter; Wittacker), and discussed how these constructs are so embedded in our education that they may seem “natural” or inevitable.

By combining your ability to read and write rhetorically with your understanding of constructs and rhetorical situations, this assignment asks you to *rhetorically analyze* (using Grant-Davie and Haas and Flower) 2-3 texts discussing one writing construct. In class, we will develop a list of constructs. As we do, you may consider jotting them down here:

Objectives
- To understand how readers and writers construct texts
- To recognize and understand common misconceptions about writing
- To analyze misconceptions about writing through what we learn in this unit regarding rhetorical situation and constructs
- To practice using scholarly sources to construct an argument
- To synthesize your ideas into a nuanced analysis

Fig. 1.1: The Rhetorical Triangle
**Steps to Follow**

In order to complete a successful analysis of the writing construct you have chosen, you will first demonstrate that you understand rhetorical situations and rhetorical reading by establishing centrality in your paper (remember this term from class and from your DC ethnography?). This will require you to cite terms and concepts from our textbook to show what you have learned.

Then, you will introduce the writing construct that you plan to explore, and will reference 2-3 articles or texts (these can be a mix of videos, pictures, and writing) from different sources that discuss this construct in various ways (Remember Parry and Wittacker and the WPA Document that discussed plagiarism?) You will then develop an argument about these 2-3 articles to explain how they represent your construct differently. You may consider looking at the rhetors, audiences, constraints, and exigencies in each of your texts to help you develop an argument about why your construct is represented differently by each source. Remember that this is the purpose of your paper, so it’s not enough to just discuss each term without explaining why these terms are relevant.

Lastly, you will want to discuss if and how learning about rhetorical situations and rhetorical reading helped you to think differently about the construct that you explored. You may also discuss how your own conceptions about this construct have developed throughout this unit.

**Evaluation and Formatting**

If you choose to present your analysis in a paper format, you may find it helpful to use headings and sub-headings to organize your ideas, like we did for the discourse community ethnography. Also, be sure to follow MLA guidelines for the citing of your sources and formatting of your paper, including 12pt. (readable) font, parenthetical references, and a works cited page.

You may suggest other ideas for presenting your analysis, such as a video or other format, but you must be able to meet all of the content criteria for the assignment in addition to mastering your alternate presentation. Please see me to discuss other alternatives, if you are considering this option.

As always, my goal is that you meet the objectives of the assignment by discussing scholarly sources on rhetorical situations and writing constructs, and that you present an argument about these concepts using texts of your choice. Keeping these objectives in mind, we will develop a more specific rubric for evaluation together as a class.

As always, I am available to help you outside of class. Please come by and see me during office hours (T/TH 3:00-4:15pm, W: 12-4pm) or make an appointment so that we can talk about your paper!