

Appendix

Here I provide a sketch of how I use the notion of the public sphere both to scaffold students' introduction to research writing and to create a space that will allow for global perspectives. This approach can help all FYC students, but it may be particularly helpful to students who enter college without a framework for thinking about research as a rhetorical practice. These steps happen over a period of weeks during the academic term.

1. To introduce students to the concept of the public sphere, we begin by reading the first chapter of Alan McKee's *The Public Sphere: An Introduction*. McKee offers an approach that is both accessible and intellectually rich, including attention to Habermas, the historical development of public debate in the West, and prominent critiques of the public sphere concept, including those that bemoan the demise of a unified public discourse and those that celebrate an emergence of diverse publics (two positions he explains in terms of modernism and postmodernism). After we discuss the text in class, students have a new way to conceptualize the practice of public debate and deliberation. This can seem like an elementary notion from a U.S. vantage point, but that should not be taken for granted.
2. As a follow-up homework assignment, I ask students to do the following (which also offers a chance to deepen the rhetorical analysis skills that we have been developing): "In a group of 2-3, find an example of a current conversation in the public sphere, then find at least two specific texts/arguments (written, visual, or other) that participate in this conversation. Read and analyze them, using the strategies we have been practicing, and have answers to these questions: 1) What is the conversation? Do you know anything about its history? 2) Who is participating in the conversation, and why do they care? 3)

Summarize each text's central arguments/claims. In class we discuss these examples together, focusing on the moves through which rhetors engage one another.

3. Shortly after this, I assign a packet of readings on a public sphere topic of my choice. This is meant to model a focused engagement on an issue through multiple texts. In the most recent version of this assignment, I have chosen both popular and academic texts that present arguments on policing and race in the U.S. This is a local issue, but I have found that international students want to engage with it and, furthermore, that students of color are particularly eager to discover arguments around a topic that affects them directly. Our in-class discussion of the readings includes a broader analysis that encourages students to see the various arguments as constituting a public sphere rhetorical ecology.
4. Shortly after this work, students complete a "thesis response" paper in which they choose one of the texts from the packet and engage in dialogue with it. This is the moment when they move from the reading/listening side of research to the dialogic act of arguing/responding. This assignment also gives a space to start practicing citation conventions.
5. When we move into the final research paper assignment, students are allowed to choose any topic and issue that interest them, as long as they demonstrate that there is a current and active public conversation, which may be in English or some other language. At this point, I encourage students to bring in issues from their home countries, since the broad rhetorical model of research we have developed is in no way place- or culture-specific. As a result, I have received papers that explore a diverse range of local and global issues, including the following: evolving attitudes around canine vaccinations in China; the

world's role and responsibility in relation to the Syrian conflict; the rampant representations in the West of Islam as a violent religion; and the possible effects of the recent Two-Child Policy in China. Providing students with a space to explore such topics through research allows them to invest personally in the work and to recognize ways that their pre-college experiences and identities have relevance in a new rhetorical milieu.