

COM 331 Homework #1: Define Rhetoric

This first homework will get us started talking about the nature and scope of rhetoric. In this paper, you will need to generate a definition of rhetoric and use that definition to classify some examples

You need to write a one sentence definition of rhetoric. This definition should adhere to a few rules (adapted from Jim Wellman):

1. A definition should not be broader or narrower than the thing being defined. E.g. “Rhetoric is communication”
2. The definition may not include any expression found in that which is being defined. E.g. “Rhetoric involves rhetorical practices.”
3. The definition should not employ ambiguous, figurative, or obscure language. E.g. “Rhetoric is one of the key magical arts.”
4. The definition should not be stated negatively. It should not define what something “is not.” E.g. “Rhetoric is not philosophy.” *This criterion does not refer to the definer’s attitude toward that which is being defined.*
5. The definition should be an accurate description of that which is being defined. (this one is up to you to do)

You must then provide three examples: one that, according to your definition, is definitely an example of rhetoric; one that, according to your definition, is definitely **not** an example of rhetoric; and one that, according to your definition, could maybe be rhetoric and maybe not. For each example, you must explain what the example is in a few sentences and then spend a few sentences explaining why or why not this is an example of rhetoric. Anything can be an example, from speeches to architecture to greetings on the street. The goal here is to search out some of the boundaries for what we will call rhetoric.

Paper Format:

Name

COM 331—Homework #1

One sentence definition of rhetoric

Example #1 (5-7 sentences)

Example #2 (5-7 sentences)

Example #3 (5-7 sentences)