

## **Back to the Future: Cicero's Five Canons as an Assessment Framework**

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*Responding to an external mandate to engage in program level assessment, an assessment ad hoc committee within a large and broadly focused communication studies department invokes the Five Canons as the framework for an imbedded assessment process. The article explores the challenges that the Five Canons helped resolve and the unique organizational and curricular advantages that the Five Canons offer.*

### **Introduction**

As an illustration for the importance of teamwork, Lucas (2000) raises the example of program assessment: “. . . outcomes assessment begins with developing a shared vision and aligning resources with that vision. . . . Together, faculty must determine what knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values students show have acquired when they have completed a major, or a single course, and then develop procedures that measure the degree to which students have achieved these criteria” (p. 15). Her succinct summary of the challenge of assessment captures the ideal outcomes well. What is missing is admission of the significant communication challenges many departments face while creating rubrics and procedures. Despite such challenges, the faculty in the case reviewed in this article engaged in an inclusive and creative process that offers some materials, lesson and insights worth sharing.

The Department of Communication Studies at University of North Carolina Wilmington offers a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies and houses 600 majors and 20 full-time faculty. Over 80 courses in performance studies, digital media production, integrated marketing communication (including public relations and advertising), health communication, political communication, interpersonal communication, organizational communication, intercultural and interracial communication, conflict resolution and negotiation, research methods, and rhetorical and communication theory are available for undergraduate majors and non-majors. This generalist degree program emphasizes the Aristotelian idea of *praxis*, or theory-informed action, as an ideal outcome for reflective and theory-infused practice.

In addition to public speaking, the department requires five core classes populated exclusively by majors: introduction to communication studies, communication research methods, rhetorical theory, communication theory, and the discipline capstone). These courses were developed to provide a solid core for a generalist undergraduate program in communication studies that honors our discipline's humanities and social science roots. The introductory course and communication research methods serve as a sequential gateway to the major; students must earn a B or better in these courses to become a full Communication Studies major. These two courses then serve as a foundation for upper-level

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coursework in the sub-disciplines outlined above. The two theory classes at the 300-level provide a deeper understanding of the theoretical bases of the discipline that will be encountered throughout a student's experience in the major. The discipline capstone, taken in the last year of a student's coursework, connects the theories to practical application in the student's post-graduate life.

### **Problem and Theoretical Rationale**

Similar to many institutions, the university mandated program-level assessment for all academic departments. Instead of meeting the challenge with pushback, the communication studies faculty reframed the requirement as a chance to clarify the curriculum and common goals of the department. In addition, assessment of program-level student learning outcomes (SLOs) became the driving force behind the task of searching for an appropriate and applicable assessment framework. While the department is considering adding additional program level learning outcomes, the current outcomes are as follows:

1. Capacity to construct and deliver an effective oral argument or performance of text, based on thorough audience analysis and clear rhetorical objectives.
2. Capacity to construct effective written argument or media product based on thorough audience analysis and clear rhetorical objectives.
3. Capacity to conduct original primary research, locate and critically evaluate secondary research, and integrate such information into new communication products.
4. Capacity to analyze and critique messages in all forms and across objectives from an informed, critical perspective.

When faced with the challenge of engaging in program-level assessment there were common challenges faced by many larger departments: having multiple instructors teaching the same courses, having a wide range of courses across humanities, social science and applied areas, and connecting program-level learning outcomes to broader assessment initiatives required by the university and the regional accrediting body. However, this challenge sparked productive conversations about what common ground 20 full-time faculty teaching a broad, large (over 80 courses) curriculum might have. Initially, the faculty became frustrated trying to create completely unique rubrics for each SLO. The unique rubric approach did not provide focus, clarity, or guidance for either the committee or to the faculty who would ultimately administer it. The emerging rubrics/assessment instruments would also not be helpful to students, who already struggle to see connections between individual courses and the major as a whole.

### **Research Question**

What is an appropriate and effective assessment framework that can be used and embraced by a generalist undergraduate department? Guided by this question, the ad hoc committee and department debated what assessment methodology could reflect the communication discipline and departmental SLOs while being flexible enough to use across a breadth of courses.

### **Data Collection Methodology**

As noted above, the faculty discussion of the research question initially resulted in mechanisms that were either controversial or overly complex. By pushing through the frustrations the committee landed on four commitments that guided these efforts:

- 1) The assessment process and materials must be sustainable. This was to become an ongoing requirement with annual reports to outside auditors. That meant that assessment must be embedded into existing curriculum, structures and processes.
- 2) Distinguish between equivalent and identical. A useful starting point for courses with multiple sections and instructors was the phrase “equivalent assignment and identical rubric.” The committee drafted a model assignment but instructors could modify this as long as it was deemed equivalent but the rubric for assessing the assignment in light of SLOs remained identical so that data could be combined across sections.
- 3) Use the mandate for assessment as catalyst for conversation. Even though the requirement comes from outside the department and the reporting requirements focus on external accountability, the faculty reframed the challenge as an opportunity to have productive conversations about teaching and learning and ideal outcomes. Department leadership worked hard early in the process to frame the mandate as a “required opportunity” to have conversations many faculty are often too busy to have.
- 4) Push for reliability, validity, *and* simplicity. The chair of the department was also strongly committed to the concept of parsimony (also known as Ockam’s razor): “If two theories are equally valid, the one with the simplest logical explanation is said to be the best” (Littlejohn, 1999, p. 37). Practically, this meant that if the rubric or assessment process needed more than 10 minutes to explain, it wasn’t a good rubric or process. If a faculty member was teaching three different classes and had completely unique rubrics and processes for each SLO across those classes that would not work. This “bias toward simplicity” (Audi, 1999, p. 628) was critical in convincing faculty that assessment could deliver desired outcomes with initial outcomes.

Such a commitment often does not sit well with full-time assessment directors, or even faculty members who may be drawn to assessment, because of potential pre-existing commitments to models of procedures, independent evaluators, extensive instruments and so on. While the faculty certainly wanted instruments and procedures that produced valid and reliable results, the ongoing participation by faculty and students required a strong commitment to parsimony.

Because of the commitments above, the ad hoc committee found that attempting to create an approach and rubrics that would not be interpreted as instructor-specific assessments, or require that a video production class that was assessing SLO1 use a different rubric than a political communication class that was assessing SLO1, was challenging. What was needed was a framework and lexicon that transcended sub-disciplinary particulars but was still specific, behavioral and measurable.

## Results

The solution to these frustrations emerged from Cicero’s Five Canons as a concise list and a viable approach to of the discipline in terms of measurable outcomes for a communication studies major. “Emerging” is appropriate because the decision not occur in a single moment in time. The committee explored the canons rather tentatively to attempt to address one SLO and found a good fit. In a process similar to theory testing, the committee

attempted to find an application of this assessment framework that would not be appropriate for a course in communication. However, the committee found that regardless of sub-discipline, a communication studies major would (and should) be able to meet the obligations of the Five Canons. The versatility of the Five Canons held up across the broad curriculum, even in translation to digital media and other contexts. The Five Canons provided not only a starting point for assessment rubrics but a common vocabulary to present to students throughout the core and elective courses.

In one of his earliest works, *De Inventione*, Cicero explains the Five Canons as ideas that did not originate with him – they were written about earlier by others such as Aristotle – but Cicero divides and defines each canon:

And these are the divisions of it, as numerous writers have laid them down: Invention, Arrangement, Elocution, Memory; Delivery. Invention, is the conceiving of topics either true or probably, which may make one's cause appear probably; Arrangement, is the distribution of the topics which have been thus conceived with regular order; Elocution, is the adaptation of suitable words and sentences to the topics so conceived; Memory, is the lasting sense in the mind of the matters and words corresponding to the reception of these topics. Delivery, is a regulating of the voice and body in a manner suitable to the dignity of the subjects spoken of and of the language employed. (*De Inventione*)

The committee replaced the term “elocution” with the more common usage of “style” or “expression” (Herrick, 2013, p. 95). Students grasped the Five Canons from their exposure in the introductory and public speaking courses. The challenge, then, was to develop rubrics that translated to written and multimedia artifacts as well as oral communication assignments. For example, submitting error-free written work was addressed within the canon of delivery since that is largely an issue of careful execution of the planned communication rather than conceptual work. For additional examples of the adaptation, please refer to the Appendix. Once faculty and the department director of assessment saw how the canons could be consistent across courses work and yet manifest differently for each assignment, implementation moved in earnest. The department found that, for example, the canon of arrangement had a clear definition yet was still highly adaptable to website design (spatial), arguments (sequential), and formal presentations, relating to everything from the order of ideas to the physical arrangement of speakers and space. That a single set of concepts could become the basis for each SLO rubric also impressed the university assessment director, which resulted in the recognition of the credibility of these assessment efforts *and* the communication discipline because the canons can be considered some of communication's foundational concepts.

### *The Benefits of the Five Canons*

To build support across a broad department required the committee to carefully think through what Walter Fisher describes as “good reasons” (1987) for using the Five Canons as the overarching assessment framework. It could not come across as a “hostile takeover” by the department rhetoricians.

First, while clearly grounded in rhetoric, the canons are relatively uncontroversial and have withstood the test of time. Cicero's words have been debated and accepted as

foundational in the communication discipline for over 2000 years. As much as any part of the communication discipline can be, the canons will not be outdated after 10 years nor will they be discarded for a newer communication theory after they've been disproved. However, they are not stagnant, which is the second good reason for using the Five Canons: they can still provide a hermeneutic entrance into a conversation about communication, rhetoric, and what it means to be human at basic and advanced levels. The canons are not arbitrary; they are flexible enough to be applied across the sub-disciplines while providing structure and focus on the key variables of intentional communication in all its forms.

Third, they met department criteria and commitments. The Five Canons are sustainable; they've been in place for over 2,000 years as core concepts within the field of communication studies. The Five Canons are flexible; they could be applied to equivalent assignments with identical rubrics. Finally, the Five Canons are parsimonious; by virtue of being five clear concepts that worked across assignments in all 80 courses, they met the faculty's goal of parsimony. The face validity of these efforts came when the conversations moved from frustrating to motivating as faculty began to explore creating the rubrics and assignments with the Five Canons in place. During the process of creating an assessment instrument, the department was careful to remain continually open to other possible theoretical models or sets of variables. By focusing on the utility rather than the origin of the Five Canons, the canons shifted from a rhetorical to a foundational communication model for assessment.

While clearly an ancient concept, the canons also focus on what Paul and Elder (2002) call strategic thinking which focuses on such questions as "What is actually going on in the situation?" and "What are your options for action?" (p. 280). Their questions are quite consistent with historical and current understandings of rhetoric and yet offer some translational work that can help translate these efforts to assessment directors and other outside auditors.

The example in the appendix shows a sample course assignment to be implemented across all sections of rhetorical theory that can be coordinated across assignments and rubrics to meet assessment goals.

### **Discussion on Implication of Results on Instructional Practice**

At the program level, this rubric, first implemented in the required discipline capstone, has been adapted and used across the two core theory courses (rhetorical theory and communication theory). Each course focuses on a different SLO: SLO 4 in rhetorical theory and SLO 3 in communication theory. The external requirements for assessment dictate such distinct measuring points, and this approach allows these courses to meet those requirements. In addition, this rubric can be adapted to be used to assess students' experiences beyond the classroom: study abroad, internships, independent studies, and honors thesis projects. This effort positions the department for upcoming university-wide requirements in the areas of applied learning. The department has been using some form of these rubrics to assess program learning outcomes for four years, and continues to compile data across semesters and classes to establish the validity of the instrument.

#### General Benefits

First, the canons have offered an articulate point of unity across a broad and expanding curriculum. This has helped provide some level of common ground for both

faculty and students. For example, the instructor for the TV Studio Production class has students create a PSA for the Five Canons as an early ice-breaker assignment. The students then connect the dots while designing a PSA requires addressing each of the Five Canons.

Another benefit is that many instructors have embraced the idea of assessment through the Five Canons in their own courses even though they are not involved in the formal SLO assessment process. These courses include strategic writing, public speaking, integrated marketing communication, public relations, performance studies, organizational communication, media production and research methods. Such efforts demonstrate the reality and centrality of the assessment concepts and standards as well as provide greater coherence to the program across individual courses and subdisciplines.

While some faculty have not gone so far as to create formal rubrics around the canons, they have integrated the canons into class material and assignment descriptions and discussions. The canons are also strongly emphasized in both gateway classes (including test items) to prepare students to embrace these terms and explore connections as they move through their core and subdiscipline courses. These efforts tap into the approach offered by Huba and Freed (2000) who argue that the best assessment efforts should not only *focus* on learning (rather than teaching) but *foster* learning, not just reveal what has been learned. Grounding an assessment framework in foundational concepts of the discipline has made this dimension of assessment much easier to integrate.

A third benefit can be seen in acculturating junior faculty through this assessment philosophy. With the four most recent hires in this department being methodologically diverse (one qualitative, one quantitative, two interpretive), this rubric provides some commonality as these faculty apply the rubric across their individual subdiscipline courses.

Through designing and assessing assignments through Cicero's Five Canons, new faculty members have a means to easily put their courses *in communication* with the department's curriculum, even when graduate trainings and coursework (from a mass communication, social science, or cultural studies backgrounds) did not focus on the communication discipline's rhetorical roots. Through a common versatile and overarching framework, students and colleagues can immediately see how a new professor's courses reference other courses across the curriculum. Despite the different skill sets courses offer (from designing a health campaign, to enacting a marketing communication plan, to performing a story for children), the ability to construct and evaluate an argument transcends all human interaction. This commonality can be highlighted within syllabi and assignments without disrupting a new faculty member's specific course content. This is of particular advantage to new faculty who may be looking for ways to "fit in" to existing curriculum and culture.

This connection to the curriculum is especially important in the performance and storytelling sequence. Due to these courses' artistic focus and historic relationship to theatre and English curriculum, students often do not readily see how the content relates to either communication studies or practical skills. In turn, these courses which center upon community outreach through performance and are valuable components of the curriculum are often at risk of low enrollment. Through constructing assignments focused on the interpretation and evaluation of performances around the Five Canons, the importance of audience analysis and effective persuasion within artistic expression becomes more apparent and helps faculty advisers explain the value of these courses to students who are not necessarily interested in live performance after receiving their degrees.

The use of the Five Canons can also promote relevancy and accessibility in courses students may interpret as relevant only to those considering graduate degrees. By

constructing evaluation around the Five Canons, faculty can help students see how Advanced Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods are at their core concerned with audience, context, and effective communication of messages (e.g. the design and results of an experiment) to a specific audience. In turn, much like the more traditional rhetorical theory course, these new additions to the curriculum will enable them to better interpret their world and effectively communicate across cultural contexts even if they do not intend on conducting formal research after graduation. In summation, Cicero's Five Canons can discourage any particular elective course sequence (and potentially the corresponding faculty member) from being ghettoized or moved to the periphery of the department because it appears unrelated to "the discipline" in the eyes of colleagues or "real life" in eyes of students.

### Two Illustrative Examples

For example, on the first day of class in performance studies courses, the students begin to construct their responses to and interpretations of both professional and peer performances around the Five Canons. Students learn that each story/performance has a message (Invention), a structure (Arrangement), a tone or vibe (Style), the need for conscious preparation (Memory), and artistic expression (Delivery) for an audience and context. As they take on the role of performance and audience member, the centrality of communicating a message to an audience, (whether that be empathy, a specific emotion, or larger overarching view of a culture) becomes a conscious, strategic effort. In turn, students include their performances of stories and analyses to demonstrate that they are not only skilled at oral communication, but conscious of audience and context through their analyses. This valuable positioning may not be apparent to the students, or in turn their prospective employers, without the use of the Five Canons across the curriculum.

In the strategic writing for integrated marketing communication course, the use of the Five Canons assists students in understanding the relationship of form to content in such writing conventions as memos, brochures, newsletters, press releases, and advertisements. The Five Canons underscore the importance of style *and* substance: without invention, a message is devoid of content, and without the remaining four canons, a message cannot resonate with its audience. By providing justification for the seemingly arbitrary form of a press release or a memo, the Five Canons encourage students to see form not as an afterthought but as a set of deliberate choices made by the speaker or author to connect with his or her audience.

### Responding to the Data

Bartanen (2006) rightfully notes that "one of the most critical functions of assessment is the process of benchmarking and quality improvement" (p. 39). Anecdotal evidence supports the emphasis on the Five Canons as becoming imbedded into the organizational language of the department. It is common for questions about the canons to come up when students engage in exam review activities. And it is not uncommon for the student speaker at the department graduation ceremony to make a joke referencing the canons—and the student audience gets the joke! More systematically, review of the data again provides a catalyst for discussion and program-level changes.

Three brief examples are worthy of inclusion. First, it quickly became clear that citing sources was a systemic problem that, prior to assessment, was thought to be an individual

instructor's lament. A renewed commitment to both oral and written citations was addressed in the gateway course lectures and throughout the curriculum in assignment descriptions and grading rubrics within the canons of invention (handling ideas) and style (adopting conventions of formal papers). Second, public speaking was not adequately integrated or enforced. The department responded by encouraging faculty to require more formal presentations in class and to frame them as continuations of the skills first taught in COM 101: Public Speaking, and as a vital component of invention from which an argument emerges. Finally, the department has begun to engage in "curriculum mapping" (Liu, Wrobbel, Blankson, 2010) to understand how individual courses relate to SLOs and to each other. This has resulted in revision of prerequisites, course renumbering and description changes.

### **Discussion of Implications for Higher Education**

In this historical moment, discussions about the public good of higher education are becoming increasingly fraught with suspicion and cynicism (Arnett et al. 2009). As Arnett et al. (2009) state, narrative structures matter: "Narratives require agreement from a group of people that moves a story into communicative background that offers interpretive guidance for decision making—in this case, communication ethics." Without being grounded in the narrative of a given university or even a given discipline, any form of assessment could be totalizing and utilitarian, as Furedi (2012) describes, "This utilitarian ethos encourages irresponsibility because what matters is whether the formal outcomes have been achieved, not what students have actually experienced or learned. It promotes a calculating and instrumental attitude where responsibility becomes equated with box-ticking." Furedi makes a strong argument against any type of formal learning outcome because the push for formal learning outcomes came from a desire to hold institutions accountable. The authors recognize that in this climate, where administrators and public officials are calling for institutions that produce career-ready graduates, a nuanced approach to assessment and learning outcomes that is grounded in the narratives of institutions and disciplines may seem almost impossible. However, in the communication discipline, engaging in assessment through a heuristic such as the five canons is a tradition that spans millennia. To completely reject any form of learning outcomes is as untenable in this historical moment as requiring every institution and discipline to use identical assessment frameworks.

The approach the authors espouse in this essay reflects the narrative of the communication discipline as it is enacted in a specific department. While the five canons approach may work for some departments in some institutions, and it is certainly adaptable across disciplines and institutions, it may not be appropriate for every situation. For example, if a communication department has no emphasis on rhetoric and instead emphasizes organizational communication, theories from organizational communication scholarship could start a conversation about appropriate assessment measures. A historically black college/university (HBCU) might look to the narrative of the founding of the university to begin conversations about what assessment in an HBCU in this historical moment could look like. Departments, disciplines, and institutions must meet this historical moment with a rhetorical sensitivity to discern the possibilities that can emerge from a given narrative.

### **Conclusion**



This approach is not without its detractors even within the department. Many faculty were not exposed to the rhetorical tradition during their graduate education and, therefore, experience somewhat of a learning curve. Some faculty see the canons as only a rhetorical/humanities construct because of its origins and are resistant to explore connections with the more contemporary curriculum. That said, the majority of faculty have either experienced an “aha!” moment upon understanding how the canons summarize our common challenge, or, at the very least, note their utility for assessment. Leaming (2007) has noted that it is important for faculty to develop the assessment processes and feel like the process is “their own” (p. 114). While the conversations were at times frustrating, the payoff of having an assessment framework that the majority of the faculty understands and embraces has been extremely helpful moving forward.

While creating a simple, versatile rubric has moved the assessment process forward in significant ways, it is not the only challenge. Policies and procedures require careful attention to definitions, responsibilities and procedures (Page, 2004). These details must be addressed with an ongoing commitment to parsimony, sustainability, reliability and validity. As Seidman (2007) has noted, “[organizational] culture is the way things *really* work, the way decisions are *really* made . . .” (p. 218) and, as such, these assessment efforts are an attempt to express what the department *really* is and what it aspires to be.

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## Appendix

### Basic Assignment Template for Assessing PLO 4 in COM 301

The assignment that follows should serve as a *basic* guide for the type of assignment the instructor should construct to assess the abilities of the students regarding the learning outcome. While the assignment need only be equivalent/similar, the assessment rubric that follows must be used as is since we must be able to aggregate the data collected.

#### COM 301: Communication Analysis Project Assignment Summary

##### Assignment Abstract

Conduct an original analysis of a communication artifact from the list below. Demonstrate a clear application of concepts from COM 301 in order to describe and evaluate the rhetorical dimensions and features of the artifact you choose to analyze. This assignment is worth 50 pts.

##### Goals

To gain competency in and appreciation for rhetorical/critical research.  
To understand the value of secondary research within rhetorical/critical research.  
To increase competency in APA style and formal academic writing.  
To increase competency as a critical thinker generally.

##### Core Skills

Intellectual curiosity: you will need to demonstrate curiosity about people and issues  
Critical thinking: this will be needed not only to figure out what needs to be done but also what you have found out through the analysis that goes beyond common sense or basic understanding  
Praxis: you must put the concepts in our text into practice and adequately reflect on that process

Key Steps: The basic process of research by any method can be understood in four stages: preparation, engagement, reflection and analysis, and expression. Below is a brief discussion of how those steps apply to this assignment.

#### Preparation

1. Find an artifact worthy of analysis given the goals of this assignment. You can choose from among the following options:
  - a. A speech of historic significances such as those in the Great Speeches collection
  - b. A contemporary speech from more recent archives such as C-Span, YouTube or the American Rhetoric site (<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/>)
  - c. A popular cultural artifact such as an advertisement (old or new).
  - d. A popular culture artifact such as a movie that clearly makes an argument.

2. Engage in a brief analysis of the artifact to identify a likely angle or focus for your analysis. For example, in a given advertisement you might decide that *credibility* is a key reason why the ad is effective.
3. Conduct secondary research to further understand the artifact and the key concepts you will likely use in your analysis. You are required to integrate at least 7 quality sources into your paper. The textbook will likely be cited as well but does not count as one of the sources.

### Engagement

You'll engage the artifact by asking good questions fostered by the critical concepts you've chosen to use in the analysis. Let's look briefly at the kinds of questions you might ask if you chose to analyze an advertisement. First, you'll have the assumption that everything in the ad is intentionally there for potential rhetorical effect. Then you might consider issues such as the following which are arranged within the Five Canons.

Invention related issues:

- What is the target audience for the ad? Both men and women or primarily one sex? What age range? Income level? Educational level? Regions? Life Style?
- What seems to be the primary goal of the ad? Ads are designed to sell the product but sometimes they may have additional goals such as repositioning the product in the market or changing the image of the product.
- What are some key strategies used by the ad? For example, some ads directly compare the product to competing brands. If your ad does so, what do the comparisons involve? Price, quality, efficiency, scarcity, novelty, beauty, stability, reliability, simplicity, utility, safety? The comparisons function as the logos or logical appeals in the advertisement.
- What needs are appealed to? Basic needs of health, hunger, security, and sexual appeal? Or higher needs such as psychological well-being by increasing self-esteem, stimulating creativity, leading to success. How does the ad appeal to these needs? How does the ad make use of ethos, pathos, logos? Does the ad use photographs or drawings? How are the photos or drawings captioned?

Arrangement related issues:

- Look at the layout of the ad: What is the attention getter? What is the eye drawn to first? What is emphasized? How does color function in the ad? How is white space used in the ad? How is text used? Are there lists and bullet points?

Style related issues:

- What is the general tone of the ad? If the ad contains humor, how is it used? Is the style realistic? Fantasy? Whimsical? Serious? What fonts are used and how do they contribute to the rhetorical effect?

Memory related issues:

- Does the ad invoke any references to other ads, events, popular cultural artifacts—what memory does it require of you to “get” the ad? How does the ad work to make itself memorable?

Delivery related issues:

- Where is the ad positioned in the overall larger artifact of the magazine or newspaper? What is the production value of the ad and quality of paper, etc. and does that have rhetorical effect?

### Reflection

You've done a lot of hard work engaging the text but now you've got to reflect on what really matters. How can you "essentialize" your findings to a focused argument about the key reason(s) why this artifact is rhetorically effective? It's a bit like panning for gold. You'll sift lots of stuff away to find and focus on the smaller piece of gold that you've found worth sharing.

To do this you will invoke a more specific rhetorical concept or method such as fantasy theme analysis or Bitzer's rhetorical situation, pathos or something similar. You will likely write something like the following in your essay: "While many rhetorical features of this cologne ad are effective, this paper focuses on the interplay between the scene and the cologne as agent to explain the key reasons why this ad is rhetorically effective."

### Expression

You now must articulate your findings so that they are understandable to others. To do so you will draft and revise an essay that follows the basic outline below. This essay should offer a formal distillation and expression of key insights to your reader.

Make sure it is error free in both form and substance and makes every effort to adhere to APA style.

Review essay through the lens of the grading rubric. The essay should meet all the explicit criteria expressed in that rubric as well as meet a holistic sense of excellence.

### Key Resources

The grading rubric: It offers clear sense of obligations, priorities, and standards. If you don't understand any part of it, ask questions!

Our textbook: Can you connect the dots between what you are reading and what you are doing?

APA Style Guide: Don't just look up how to cite stuff in the reference section. It has models for how to cite within the body of the essay and formal writing in general.

Secondary Research: Use this early and often to see what good critical work looks like.

### Basic Outline

1. Introduction: gain attention, establish topic and importance/significance of your topic and focus.
2. Information about artifact: descriptive analysis, relevant literature on artifact
3. Method: discuss and define key critical concept to be used in analysis of artifact
4. Analysis: application of critical concepts to artifact focusing on key insights

5. Conclusion: reconnect specific analysis to larger themes and issues and bring paper to graceful end.
6. References in APA style
7. Appendix as needed (copy of print advertisement for example)

## Communication Studies Assessment Rubric PLO 4

PLO 4 *Capacity to analyze and critique messages in all forms and across objectives from an informed, critical perspective.* While each canon is significant and distinct, each element in the essay is evaluated with respect to how well it supports the overall analysis and argument the student offers in the essay. Ideally, instructors may explore *memory* more directly with discussions or presentations of the paper in impromptu or extemporaneous formats.

Evaluation Standards: The following standards will be used when evaluating your work.

1 = absent or significantly deficient when compared to basic expectations for an upper level COM major

2 = moderately below expectations for an upper level COM major

3 = meets basic expectations for an upper level COM major

4 = above basic expectations for an upper level COM major

5 = well above expectations and demonstrates mastery of course material

Evaluative Dimension	Examples of Dimension	Standard Achieved
Invention	Insightful description, inference, analysis and evaluation are present in the essay. There are clear distinction between the student's insights and the sources used to support them. There is evidence of strong secondary research that is well integrated. In addition the student has gone beyond these sources and offered an original argument.	1 2 3 4 5
Organization	The essay adheres to standard organization of an analytical essay. Within that basic template, the student shows strategic organization of main points, sub-points and the progression of ideas.	1 2 3 4 5
Style	Student demonstrates mastery of formal "voice" for purposes of this essay. Essay integrates appropriate use of course vocabulary without sounding artificial or wordy.	1 2 3 4 5
Memory	Essay reads as the student's own work. Beyond specific citations of sources there is a sense that the student has broader sense of the issues and themes of the course and major generally as they might inform the essay.	1 2 3 4 5
Delivery	Essay adheres to APA style and is delivered largely free of typos and other mechanical errors of presentation such as stapled, and in the correct order, etc.	1 2 3 4 5
Basics/Misc.	It is submitted on time and in complete adherence to other assignment requirements.	1 2 3 4 5

Comments (insights to guide PROGRAM/CURRICULAR assessment):