Project2: *introduction*

Rationale

In Project1, we explored representations of people and concepts. In Project 2, we will focus on an institution that we all implicitly endorse: the university. I'd like you to explore what you think the purpose of a university education currently is and what it should be. What function(s) does the university and a university education play in your life and in the lives of others? What role does it play in society and public life? Should universities be involved in professional training, or should universities be reserved for something else? What would that "something else" be?

As we explore these issues, we will utilize the work of others on this subject. Aronowitz, Readings, and Florida each address this issue in our class readings. You will come to a conclusion that states your contention about **what a university should be and what purposes it should serve**. This will be the thesis that guides your work. In order to prove your thesis, you will have to examine **who** the university serves, **what** its functions are, and **how** it operates.

To give shape and direction to your work, you will **come up with a descriptive metaphor for the way you see the university**. For example, Aronowitz titles his chapter, "Knowledge Factories." Bill Readings describes the university as a corporation, serving its customers and the bottom line. Florida labels his new class "creative," and then defines how this ambiguous term applies to the university. You will produce a metaphor that represents the university as you see it. **Always keep in mind that you are not simply agreeing with or comparing your sources; you are producing your work, and they are your evidence**.

Assignment

You are responsible to deliver **three components of this project:**

1. An oral presentation of your work **(delivered in class between Oct. 26—Oct. 29)**

2. An online presentation of your work **(due Nov. 9)**

3. An academic research paper of approximately five pages **(due Nov. 9)**

These three sections will be covered in greater detail on the accompanying sheets.

Project2: *oral presentation*

You will deliver your oral presentation between Oct. 26 and Oct. 29

In your presentation, you will **tell your audience your thesis and provide support for it**. Do not just talk "about" your subject; we all have the same subject, what makes your work unique?

Tips for oral presentation:

1. **Speak to your audience; do not read to them**. Do not bury your eyes in notes. Talk to your audience in much the same way you might talk to a group about a movie you have seen—through conversation, not recitation.

2. **Visual aids are helpful for both the audience and the presenter**. The audience will be better able to follow along with your presentation and understand the main points if you use a visual organizing aid of some sort. Also, you will be less likely to "blank out" if you have a visual reminder of the sequence of your presentation.

3. **Make eye contact with your audience; do not glare at your instructor**. Make eye contact with individuals; do not just sweep the audience. If you get freaked out when looking at someone in the eyes, look at the space right between his or her eyes. People will not be able to tell you are not looking at them and you will not get nervous. I had to do this at my wedding.

3. **Be prepared to respond to questions after your presentation**. You will have to know what you are talking about and you will have had to think about the ramifications of your thesis.

3. **If you need technology, such as a projector for a Powerpoint presentation, you must notify me beforehand**. Even if you want to use technology, have a back-up plan in case the technology does not function as desired (a frequent occurrence).

Your presentation should be between 3-5 minutes. You will respond to questions afterward. **The oral presentation is a necessary component of Project2, but it is not assessed with a letter grade; think of the oral presentation as a way to make your ideas concrete and as a means to receive audience input**.

Project2: online presentation

You will provide your online presentation on Nov. 9

For the online presentation component of Project2, you must produce a webpage or series of webpages that **delivers your information in an online medium to an online audience**. We will learn how to use different tools to produce webpages. Your online presentation will be linked to our class website.

Your online presentation will deliver much the same information as your oral presentation and your academic research paper, but you must be aware that you are using a different medium and targetting a different audience. The World Wide Web is a very visual medium, so you will likely employ many of the skills in visual representation you explored in Project1.

Probably, you will want to present your university metaphor in some visual way, but of course you must make certain that you are supporting your choice of metaphor appropriately, so written text also will be important. **Look at the websites you find interesting and discover how they are able to balance representation through visual rhetoric and written words**.

If you have exceptional difficulty with the online presentation, you may discuss with me the possibility of constructing your work visually and having me scan your products and assemble them online.

There is no length or word count requirement for the online presentation. **The online presentation is a necessary component of Project2, but it is not assessed with a letter grade; think of the online presentation as a way to explore communicating essentially the same information from your oral presentation and research paper to a different audience through a different medium.**

Project2: academic research paper

Both a print and electronic version of your paper are due on Nov. 9

For this component of Project2, **you will propose a statement of what the university should be through a descriptive metaphor**. Your paper of approximately five pages will support this assertion through evidence, including external sources. In creating your argument, you will engage with the work of Aronowitz, Readings, Florida, and any further research that is relevant to your claim about the purpose of a university education. Refer to specific ideas and arguments in your essay by choosing relevant and significant quotations from Aronowitz, Readings, and Florida. Make sure that you weave your quotations (or paraphrases) into your essay smoothly and meaningfully and that you document them correctly. Most importantly, **make sure that your paper remains your paper**. The ideas you bring in from other sources are ways in which you can discuss your own ideas.

Your academic research essay will be in MLA format, including page layout and documentation. It should be approximately five pages plus a "Works Cited" page. You will use Aronowitz, Readings, and Florida as sources, as well as any other applicable research. **Visiting the Purdue writing lab at least once is mandatory for this paper. Make certain to schedule your appointment early.** Remember that both a print and electronic version are due on Nov. 9. You must bring the print version to class. You may email me the electronic version later.

Project2: *grading*

The three sections of Project2 are assessed separately, but the project will be assigned a cumulative grade. Specific guidelines for each component follow:

1. **Oral presentation**—Excellent oral presentations will demonstrate that the presenter has thought about the relevant issues and determined a specific perspective about what the university should be. The presenter's perspective should take the form of a guiding metaphor. Excellent oral presentations will be conversational, not recitational, in tone. The presenter will make eye contact with the audience. The presenter will be able to respond to questions about her work, demonstrating that she has thought about the ramifications of her choices.

2. **Online presentation**—Excellent online presentations will communicate the author's specific comment about what the university should be in a way appropriate to an online audience. Excellent online presentations will make use of both visuals and written words to present a specific point.

3. **Academic research essay**—Excellent academic research essays will propose a descriptive metaphor for how the university should be perceived and then support that assertion. Excellent essays will make use of the work of Aronowitz, Readings, Florida, and other relevant research as evidence, but not simply agree with the readings or compare them. Excellent essays will be organized logically and thereby present a compelling argument in support of their theses. Excellent essays will conform to MLA guidelines, both in page layout and documentation rules.

Be aware that the oral presentation and online presentation are necessary components of Project2, but they are not assessed with letter grades. Think of them as generative tools rather than evaluative products.

If you have questions about any facet of Project2, I encourage you to discuss your work with me during conferences and office hours. Purdue's writing lab is also an excellent resource, particularly for the academic research paper. As always, I can be reached through jtirrell@purdue.edu.