RHETORICAL ANALYSIS
Evaluating how effectively a writer argues his or her point

What is the difference between content analysis and rhetorical analysis?

Content: **what** the author is arguing; information | **Rhetoric**: **how** the author is arguing; methods

CONSIDER...

LOGOS: AN APPEAL TO LOGIC
- How effectively does the author follow a logical progression of thought?
- Does the author present evidence (statistics, data, studies, etc.) to support his or her claims?
- Does the author make contradictory or unsupported statements that hurt the appeal to logic?
  - **Effective:** The U.S. needs to make health education a top priority because 33% of Americans are overweight.
  - **Not effective:** People with blonde hair are stupid.

ETHOS: AN APPEAL TO AUTHORITY
- How well does the author establish his or her own credibility (do you trust the author)?
- Is the author choosing effective, credible sources to support his or her argument?
  - **Effective:** Nine out of ten dentists recommend this brand of toothpaste.
  - **Not effective:** Nine out of ten plumbers recommend this brand of toothpaste.

PATHOS: AN APPEAL TO EMOTION
- Does the author consider who the audience is/ what that audience's values are when forming the argument?
- How well does the author use charged language and connotations to appeal to the audience?
- Does the author's argument provoke the right emotions?
  - **Effective:** Every year, thousands of innocent farm animals are ruthlessly tortured and slaughtered.
  - **Not effective:** McDonald's restaurants sell millions of hamburgers each year.

YOU SHOULD ALSO EVALUATE THE AUTHOR'S RHETORIC BASED ON...

- The degree to which the author managed to influence your opinion;
- How well the argument is organized, and how clearly it is conveyed;
- Rhetorical devices used, such as repetition, metaphor, or hyperbole;
- The author's choice of tone (formal/ informal) and how appropriate it is for the argument being made.

The thesis (main idea/argument) of your rhetorical analysis will address how effectively the author made the argument, not what the author was writing about.

Remember the difference between content and rhetoric when writing your analysis!
Use content only to give background to the essay and to support your claims about rhetoric with evidence from the piece you are analyzing.