FEEDBACK TUTORIAL LETTER

2nd SEMESTER 2017

ASSIGNMENT 2

RHETORICAL THEORY AND CRITICISM

RTC612S
Feedback Tutorial Letter
Course: Rhetorical Theory and Criticism (RTC 612S)
Semester 2: Assignment 2
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Preamble
The majority of students obtained a mark of between 65 and 80%. This was satisfactory to outstanding performance which is quite pleasing as it is evident that students worked closely with the study guide and recommended source materials. However, in some cases, there was an apparent lack of detail and practical examples. I am still worried by students who could not make the grade. My preliminary investigations show that these are those who did not attend the Vacation School. Answers by the group in question lack depth and accuracy in terms of their interpretation of the question’s demands. Some showed confusion and cluelessness. I want to emphasise that at this level critical reading of questions is an indispensable skill. Embrace it at all times. The forthcoming examinations will demand nothing less than a critical reading and accurate interpretation of questions. Below I give a list of critical points that you could have used to answer the question.

Question 1
Explain the tenets of rhetorical theory of Chaim Perelman and show how such views of rhetoric are used in advertising in Namibia.

Answer

In your answer you were expected to clearly state that Chaim Prelman’s rhetoric is based on registering of one’s presence.

You were then expected to dwell on the points given below.

That the audience influences the rhetorician in many ways:

How s/he registers presence is determined by the audience’s perception of reality.

- The rhetorician creates a presence through the use of language.
The rhetor’s duty is that of studying the thinking patterns of the audience and then find ways of meeting such expectations stylistically.

rhetor enters into communion with the audience via a wide range of argumentative techniques.

This will result in the rhetor and the audience acting together.

persuasion as aimed at scoring psychological goals.

The goal is to win the audience psychologically via the linguistic system.

Good speaker is one who thinks like the audience

results in mutual perception and action.

Perelman’s main thesis is that in the development of an argument the audience plays a critical role and the speaker’s duty is that of adapting to the audience’s concept of argumentation.

There are three types of audiences that each speaker deals with: the self as audience; the universal audience and the particular audience.

Universal audience is a mental construct i.e. what each speaker figures out to be the requirements of a particular audience.

However, a particular audience may determine the types of jokes, illustrations, diagrams and examples that a speaker could include in his presentation.

Particular audience can be persuaded, a universal audience stands by its ideals.

Central to Perelman’s philosophy of argumentation.

The audience constructs the argument for the rhetor. Rhetoricians do not construct arguments. Rather they use their intelligence to read through the minds of the audience and come up with the right types of arguments that reflect the thinking of the audience.

The rhetor needs to reduce the minds of the audience into a single mind.

The rhetor thus adjusts his persuasive strategies in keeping with the audience he is addressing.

Quality of minds

Perelman argues that the rhetor should always think about the quality of minds being addressed.

Relevant examples should be given from the Namibian context.

Other techniques that you were expected to explain and exemplify are:

1. Repetition
2. Imperative invites
3. The present tense
4. The use of singular instead of plural
5. The use of demonstratives
6. Figures of speech
7. Exaggeration

Kindly note that you were expected to show how the above are used in advertising in Namibia.

Conclusion

Your conclusion was supposed to show the invaluable contribution made by Chaim Perelman to advertising and other areas of human communication.

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