

CREATING AMERICA

Reading and Writing Arguments

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JOYCE MOSER • ANN WATTERS

CREATING AMERICA

Reading and Writing Arguments

THIRD EDITION



JOYCE MOSER *and*
ANN WATTERS

Stanford University



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For Tom, Andrew, and Mike Watters
For Tom Moser; Fredrika, Rick, and Lucy; Tom, Jr.,
Cathy, and Polly

Preface



We developed the third edition of *Creating America* to provide a book that focuses on argumentation and persuasion in the context of American history and tradition: a book that brings together materials revolving around issues that have always concerned Americans. This edition maintains the focus of the previous two on argumentation in context, but with some major additions. The chapter formerly called “War and the Enemy” is now “War and Violence,” to allow for a consideration of a wider range of materials and experience. Part I, Contexts for Reading and Writing Arguments, is now four separate chapters. Chapter One, “Arguments in American Cultures,” is an overview of the historical scope, design, and intent of the book. Chapter Two, “The Art and Craft of Persuasion,” is a three-part assessment and analysis of distinct persuasive components. The first part of the chapter, “Persuasion and Audience,” provides the rhetorical underpinning for argumentation, with explanations and examples of the relationship between rhetor and audience, the purpose and effect of Aristotelian appeals, and common uses and abuses of logic. The second section in this chapter, “Persuasion in Diverse Genres,” discusses specific genres included in the text—essays, legal cases, fiction, poetry, film, advertisements, speeches, and so on—and illustrates the persuasive elements they share as well as those advantages that are unique to each of them. The final part of the chapter, “Elements of Persuasion,” concentrates on those components that all writers use to some degree, such as assertions, examples, assumptions, definitions, and refutations, and that constitute the practical continuum of those underlying rhetorical assumptions discussed in the first part of the chapter. Chapter Two also contains two new student essays as illustrations: an analysis of visual persuasion in a famous Vietnam War photograph, and an analysis of refutation in the Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Chapters Three and Four are devoted to different but related aspects of essay writing. Chapter Three, “Writing Essays,” moves students

through the whole writing process, from strategies for pre-writing to developing a thesis, organizing an essay, and shaping an argument. In order to concretize these suggestions, we have also included, under the sections which discuss expository, analytical, and argumentative writing, examples of each kind of essay, followed by discussion of their rhetorical and developmental strategies. The expository essay, from the 1920s, is a paean to New York energy by a Korean immigrant—"A Korean Discovers New York." The analytical essay is a student's deconstruction of a well-known Vietnam anti-war poster which plays off the very famous James Montgomery Flagg World War I poster of Uncle Sam. And in the argumentative essay, a philosopher makes the case for "Affirmative Action in Context."

Chapter Four, "Research," is about integrating research into writing. Building on Chapter Three, it guides the student through all the steps of the research process: approaching a topic and gathering information (including on-line information); strategies for internet research, search engines, ways of evaluating web-based information, and sample web sites; detailed discussions and samples of library sources; and sections on drafting, revision, and documentation.

Teachers integrating the rhetorical material with readings, as well as teachers wishing to use the readings alone and teach with a different model of argument, such as the Toulmin model, will find a rich range of materials in Part II, "Argument in the American Tradition." Part II offers textual and visual arguments for analysis and discussion. Chapter 5, "Identities," includes a range of materials from early discussions of what is uniquely American to contemporary struggles of building community yet maintaining cultural identity. Chapter 6, "American Dreams," includes selections on both political and material dreams and success. Chapter 7, "Images of Gender and Family," offers different perspectives on what makes a family and what constitutes the particular roles and rights of men, women, and children; Chapter 8, "Work and Play," looks at the business of America—business; and at the business of play, or contemporary American sports. Chapter 9, "Justice and Civil Liberties," brings together core readings and images of American freedoms and the struggles that precede and accompany them. Chapter 10, "War and Violence," offers visual and textual arguments about how we idealize our friends and demonize our enemies. Chapter 11, "Frontiers," analyzes both the idea and the reality of the frontier and the West.

Each chapter includes an introduction to the core theme or issue. Selections follow, with headnotes for context and background information; journal prompts to guide reflective writing; and questions for discussion and writing, with a focus on analysis and argumentation. In each chapter we include a recommended film that should be available as a video rental in most colleges or communities. Most chapters also include at least one student essay, generally written in response to a chapter writing suggestion; inclusion of these essays is based on the premise that student writing is an appropriate focus for analysis and discussion.

Creating America, third edition, is designed for use in a first-year course in composition, particularly one emphasizing argumentative writing. The underlying pedagogy is based on an Aristotelian model, but it is informed by the theories of Kenneth Burke, Carl Rogers, and feminist critics. Our premise is that people use, to quote Aristotle, "all of the available means of persuasion" to argue a point; therefore, we do not treat argument and persuasion separately. Rather, we focus on the appeals to ethos, pathos, and logos, introducing induction and deduction under logos as the basic principles by which to evaluate and through which to develop arguments. The selections represent a range of arguments, from rather combative debate to more dialogic, narrative explorations of difficult questions and complex issues.

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Above all we thank our students, who continue to challenge and inspire us, and we offer a special thanks to our families.

Joyce Moser, Stanford University
Ann Watters, Stanford University

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