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Rhetorical Rationale
Project 1

I created two separate blogs and posted from the perspectives of Plato, Gorgias, and Aristotle. All three schools of thought are explored individually. (Aristotle is grouped with Plato/Socrates but he has his own personal space on their blog "*we speak Truth*" called "*Aristotle's Corner*.") I put the three schools in dialogue with one another in the comments – Gorgias comments on Plato's posts and vice-versa. They express their thoughts/opinions regarding the other's epistemology/ideology.

The two blogs have roughly the same structure – an introduction to the blog and several posts addressing the primary aspects of their ideologies. Initial posts describe their epistemologies (truth/knowledge) and then move into their beliefs regarding the study of rhetoric. I thought it was most important to cover the main ideas – absolute truth vs. relativism and the philosophers' opinions of the necessity/role of rhetoric.

Since the blogs focused on basic topics, I really didn't find it necessary to conduct much additional research. Everything I needed to know about the three schools of thought was explored in depth in our textbook and in our readings. I did, however, find quotes/images/videos online which I included on the blogs to add more of a visual/interactive element.

Every choice regarding the content/design of the two blogs was made with my audience (novice EWM students) in mind. I did my best to give each philosopher his own distinct voice, in order to accurately portray their worldviews, attitudes, and personalities, and how their overall character affected their ideologies. I definitely exaggerated a bit, because I wanted my audience to identify Plato and the Sophists as the two extremes and Aristotle as the middle-man. Plato's posts are somewhat stuffy, while Gorgias is snarky and pompous. I also thought subtle humor might appeal to my audience (at least I hope it's humorous). This is why the philosophers use memes to poke fun at one another.

While I could have achieved something similar using a different medium, I chose to create Wordpress blogs for several reasons. First, I thought blogging was a great way to reach my audience, because we're into media and we increasingly rely on the web for information. I synthesized/condensed what I learned in class and reformatted it for the web, adding hyperlinks and embedded video and images. Presenting the information as blog posts allowed me to break down the three schools of thought into manageable chunks. Each post builds on the one before it, adding to/exploring in increasing depth a previous thought. And it gave me an opportunity to be more colloquial/informal.

Also, I'm very familiar with Wordpress and so I felt comfortable designing the blogs with this platform. As I mentioned before, I made many conscious design decisions. Each philosopher has his own color scheme – Plato uses garnet to highlight important concepts/phrases, Aristotle purple, and the Sophists red. Plato

and Aristotle's blog is simplistic while the Sophists' blog is bigger/bolder (their site title is more prominently displayed in all-caps).

Like traditional blogs, the posts displayed at the top of the page are the most recently published posts. To start at the beginning, the reader must scroll down through the posts to reach the philosophers' introductions. While the posts may seem wordy, they are not particularly lengthy and are fairly easy to read. The conventions of blogging support short sentences and frequent indents rather than blocks of text. Also, key phrases and concepts are bolded, italicized, or in color. This is so the reader can easily identify what's important in the text.

I learned a lot from this project, but particularly how the philosophers' ideologies are related and how they influence each other. At first I was worried about the part of the project which asked us to put the schools of thought in dialogue with one another. And then I realized this was actually intrinsic, as the schools of thought actually complement one another. For example, it's difficult to understand Plato's skepticism of rhetoric without knowing how he felt about the Sophists and their use of rhetoric. If I'd had more time, I would have liked to publish more blog posts. Also I would have liked to add more biographical info. Unfortunately I felt like I had to sacrifice this as I had a difficult time figuring out how to include it when I was writing from the philosopher's perspectives. (I couldn't include their death dates because, according to the blogs, they're supposedly alive.)

I actually really enjoyed this project. I put a lot of time/thought into it and I hope that shows. I thought it was interesting and sort of fun to put myself in the shoes of these great philosophers.