Paper #3: Analysis of a Cultural Event
Due April 10 (Weds) by 5 PM. Revision only allowed at Dr. K’s discretion (see Revision Policy)

This paper requires you to demonstrate your ability to use all three tools of critical intelligence (listening/reading, thinking, writing) when focusing on the pitch(es) you hear made in one of the approved cultural events on our course calendar. You will be conducting a standards check on a cultural event you attend and evaluating the effectiveness of the presentation you hear. This paper is due no later than 5 pm on Wednesday November 14 (7-9 full pages, double-spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman font or equivalent, exclusive of Works Cited). Make sure you use 2009 MLA format for the layout of a paper, including headers and page numbers. You must submit an electronic copy by the due date to www.turnitin.com, or no grade will be recorded for the assignment.

What to Do

1. Choose a cultural event from the list of appropriate cultural events for this assignment (not the main CE list!!!!) Don’t wait till the last moment to choose your event; experience has shown that you may need to go to two or three to find the one you wish to write about. And sometimes events are postponed or cancelled--so don't procrastinate. (See the WARNING.) You must choose a cultural event from the list of ones I place on the class calendar; not just any random cultural event will work for this assignment.

2. You will attend this cultural event, take copious notes on what you hear discussed, ask questions of the speaker, and make sure you can articulate the points made by the speaker(s) and the concepts, assumptions, and information those points are based on. (In other words, you need to fill out a circle for him or her or them.) You will probably have to think about the speaker's disciplinary perspectives in order to summarize the points confidently. Try to identify as many of Nosich's elements as you can in the speaker's presentation. Make sure you can articulate the speaker's pitch, his/her moment, and the complaint. See if you think the speaker's discipline has affected the pitch being made.

3. Next, you will determine how well the presentation meets the standards explained in chapter 4 of Nosich by doing a standards check on what you heard/saw at the cultural event. You must demonstrate your critical reading skills by performing some library research (using the library databases, not just easy Internet sources like Wikipedia, Yahoo! and Google) on the question at issue in the speaker’s presentation. Your goal is to enrich your understanding of the context of the Q at I, so that you can evaluate the speaker(s)’s presentation more effectively against the CAIR standards. You’ll need to show that you can find reliable, respectable outside information to help you corroborate or contradict what you've heard. Don't skimp on this part of the assignment! Make sure you explore alternatives to the speaker(s)’s position(s) so that you can consider the possibilities of barriers, alternate concepts and assumptions, potential fallacies, other information, etc. Think of this as "reading against the grain" of the speaker's presentation. I will not set a minimum number of outside sources, but at a minimum, look for at least three or four beyond our textbooks and the presentation itself to enrich the discussion. (Don't just go to the speaker's website--look for other sources of information!) This paper requires correct use of 2009 MLA documentation, of course.
Then, in a well-argued 7-9 page deductive essay that demonstrates your critical writing skills, you will evaluate the presentation you have heard, using the seven standards for clear thinking in Chapter 4 of Nosich. This must be a thesis-driven paper, not reporting. Make sure that you have carefully thought through the ten questions laid out on p. 155-56 of Nosich. You may not write about all of these questions in your paper, but thinking around the circle will help you keep a strong analytic focus throughout your paper. Remember that you are making a pitch, an argument, NOT writing a report on "what I heard at the cultural event."

- Make sure that the essay you write incorporates points a, b, c, and d on p. 156. (Remember that you will have to reorganize the answers you generate to these questions into an essay with a logical flow and sequence; this is NOT simply a report on "What I Heard at the Cultural Event."

- Make sure that the focus of your essay is on your analysis and evaluation supporting the standards check—no more than a third of it should be a summary of the event.

- Use the past tense to discuss the event: "Gordon discussed the women's rights movement in South Africa" or "The speakers answered questions".

- Use the present tense to incorporate your sources. "A story in the New York Times shows that Gordon's statistics were, if anything, underestimating the problem."

- Use the terminology of Nosich and Writing Analytically to analyze the elements and support your assessment of how well it met the standards check; the words clear, accurate, depth, breadth, etc. should show up in your text.

- Bring your context research to bear in making your own pitch and document the outside research you use correctly following the 2009 MLA format.

- As an audience, imagine a group of people who have already taken and passed CRTW201 and are familiar with its terminology.

I'll be happy to look at drafts of the paper if you bring them by my office during office hours. You may use your extension on this paper, but the choice of whether you can revise it if it's a disaster will be up to me. DON'T WAIT TILL THE LAST MINUTE—THAT WAY LIES DISASTER. TRUST ME ON THIS.

Your essay will be evaluated on these criteria:

- Quality, thoroughness, and accuracy of your note-taking on the event and your subsequent research on its context as demonstrated in your essay: 15%
- CRTW rubric: 85%

**WARNING**

It is your responsibility to get to at least one of the scheduled events. Sometimes events get postponed or cancelled, there's bad weather, the projector won't work, the speaker has the flu, etc., so if you procrastinate and suddenly are not able to attend an event for this paper, you obviously won't be able to complete or turn in the assignment—and that means an automatic F for the course (see syllabus). There are typically at least several dozen events over the course of this assignment, so you have plenty of opportunity to complete this assignment successfully. It’s up to you to make sure you attend an approved event, so if you wait till the last minute and something goes wrong, be prepared for the consequences. This requirement applies to all students in the class equally; it’s not fair for me to make special exceptions when everyone else has handled her or his responsibilities appropriately.