

## Project 2: Analytical Assemblage Assignment Sheet

### The Basics:

For this project, you will choose an assortment of existing texts—texts that have already been composed by someone else—and produce **a new text made solely of parts of those texts**. In other words, this new text cannot contain anything (words, images, sounds, etc.) that you've made. Your assemblage should repurpose those texts and relocate them in new contexts in order to make some kind of argument/statement. Accompanying your assemblage will be **a written rationale** that addresses the new contexts, what you took and changed from the original the original and why, and how each text operates rhetorically—in other words, what rhetorical work do these new texts perform? How/why?

### Context:

Jenny Edbauer's ecological model of discourse begins to account for the ways repetition, remix, and repurposing appears to be a fundamental component of writing and composing. However, her example of "Keep Austin Weird" demonstrates that reproducing and repeating tropes does *not* always reproduce and repeat it's meaning; rather reproduction, remix, and movement always entails change. Kirby Ferguson's "Everything is a Remix" shows us that... well... everything is a remix. Kristin and Adam Arrola define assemblage, link it to circulation, and explain the rhetorical power of bare and creative assemblages/repetition. And Dustin Edwards adds a more critical framework for viewing remix and recreation.

In class, we have spent, and will spend, a lot of time tracing the movement of texts, noting how texts are linked together and the rhetorical work that such linkage affords in the composing process. Writing, then, does not exist in a vacuum—texts are always linked to antecedent texts. Thus, this project invites us to critically engage in this kind of composing process and challenge our notions of "originality" that so often dominate discussions of writing.

### Logistics:

This project comes in two parts:

>**ASSEMBLAGE**: You will compose an assemblage, or a group of assemblages, that is constructed from pieces of preexisting texts. This assemblage(s) must be digital, but the digital medium is up to you (it can be a video, a series of images, a song, etc.)

>**RATIONALE**: Using the research and concepts of the course, you will discuss how the texts change as they are stripped apart, reassembled, and relocated in new environments/contexts. In order to appropriately discuss these texts, you will need to use the materials of the class (including readings and terminology). Rationales should be approximately 1000 words & use a consistent citation scheme (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.)

### **Helpful Tips:**

**Central Question or Inquiry**: When approaching this project, I suggest considering some focused but open-ended question that can frame how you design your assemblages and/or how you approach your rationale. For instance, you might consider what aspect of writing this project will allow you to explore. Maybe you'd like to consider the relationship between bare and creative assemblages. Or how texts responding to the same/similar exigence can operate differently depending on the audience the text is speaking to. There are any number of ways to approach this project.

**Making Comparisons**: In your rationales, I would focus attention on how the assemblages compare to, and alter, the original texts—a lot of what you will learn about digital writing will emerge from comparing across each of your texts. You'll want to think about:

- What aspects of the original text are carried into the assemblages? Why?
- What aspects of the original text are *not* included in the assemblages? Why?
- How does the contextual environment of your assemblage alter the meaning of the original pieces? Why? Was it due to changes in audience, purpose, medium, genre conventions?

**Contextual descriptions**: When describing your assemblages, use description as an opportunity to draw your reader's attention to aspects of the text that you think are important. Contextualize your description within your central question or line of inquiry. What I don't want to see is a laundry list of descriptors that do not forward or extend from your central question. You may not be able to describe everything in the assemblage, but that's OK: I'll be able to see it. Again, you want to draw my attention to aspects you think are important—and the aspects that are most integral for your specific argument/statement.

**Research from the course**: I can't stress this enough: **your project must include research from the course**. The wider purpose of the course itself is to help you develop a language and theory

to talk about digital writing. To do that, I'd like to see how you are approaching the theory or research we've discussed in class. There are lots of ways to incorporate research of the class into your project. Here are a few:

- *Framework*: you might use one of the researchers to frame your project. E.g. you might discuss each of your remixed texts using the terminology offered by Edbauer (network, encounter, circulation, affect, place); Ferguson (Copy, Combine, Transform); Arrola and Arrola (Assemblage, Bare and Creative Repetition)
- *Challenge*: you might outwardly disagree with an aspect of a researcher or rather, as you created your remixed text, you noticed that the salience of one of the researchers didn't quite align with your thinking. You might use another piece of research to help you challenge their ideas, e.g. Bitzer vs. Edbauer.
- *Expand*: you might see the value of some parts of the researcher's theory, but may think that the researcher doesn't go far enough. For instance, you may see the value of the idea of "audience" offered by Bitzer, but think that audience doesn't need to necessarily be "mediator of change" in every writing context.
- Maybe using all three different approaches.
- Are there other ways?

### **Examples:**

Look at the assemblages that have been posted on Moodle, and start to ask yourself these questions:

What are the components that make up these assemblages? What is changed, repurposed, revised, or obscured and why? What do the assemblages *do*? What rhetorical work does each text perform? What argument are they making? To whom are they making it?

Consider, for example, the following terms in relation to each text: **context, circulation, participation, network, community, audience, purpose/exigence...**