

# Re-Genre: The Assignment

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The re-genre assignment involves the following:

1. You will choose an assignment you wrote earlier in the semester and revise it into a genre that uses *at least* one other mode of communication in addition to writing (audio, visual, spatial, gesture).
2. The choice of a new genre will be based on a rhetorical decision. You will define the purpose of the re-genre (see table below), and from this you will identify appropriate audiences to accomplish those goals. This will in turn lead to a choice of which multimedia genre is best for the project. We'll look more closely in the
3. section about how to do this rhetorical analysis (see "Planning the Re-genre") but for now think it this way: *What do I want a particular audience to think or do with respect to my topic? What form is best suited for accomplishing that goal?*
4. As part of the assignment, you will write about your experience with this kind of revision, and a class blog (or other platform) will be set up for this purpose. (See "Inquiring into the Details: Re-Genre, Re-Flect" for questions to explore in your blog).

Now for a reality check: There is too little time in a course like this to become expert with any multimedia genre. (It's hard enough to develop expertise in writing in a single course, and writing is something we've all done much of our lives). But this assignment is a great learning opportunity—you'll develop new perspectives on revision, genre, and rhetoric—and in the process be introduced to some powerful new ways to communicate. That's why the writing you do about doing this is as important as the multimedia project you design.

## Three Goals

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The assignment will involve identifying which of the three rhetorical goals below will drive your repurposing effort.

Goal	What?	Who?
<b>Dramatize</b>	What dilemma, idea, problem?	Audiences who might be most receptive to the story?
<b>Persuade</b>	To do what? What action or behavior?	Audiences whose action on the problem is needed?
<b>Inform</b>	About what? What information will be most relevant and useful?	Audiences who can <u>use</u> the information?

## Writing about the Experience

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A major part of this project (in some ways the most important part) will be the metacognitive (reflective) thinking you do about what you're learning (see table below). What is the assignment prompting you to think about genre, rhetoric, or your sense of yourself as a writer/designer. What are you learning that might transfer

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to other situations—other classes, other jobs, etc.? Every week, you'll put up a blog post of at least 300 words that focuses on some of these questions. Later, we will integrate these into a cover letter for your final portfolio.

Thinking about your thinking while doing this project will both maximize your learning and help you to transfer what you learned to other situations. Here are some things to think and write about:

1. **You experience.** Tell the story of what you understood when you began the project and what you're starting to understand now. Update this narrative regularly.
2. **Rhetoric.** How does the shift in purpose and audience change things (e.g. language, treatment of topic, ethos/pathos/logos, approach to persuasion?)
3. **Genre.** What do you notice about how the genre shift influences how and what you see? Can you identify how "conventions" change (e.g. rules of evidence, types of questions asked, voice, structure, roles writer/designer and audience).

Write regularly about these questions, posting your thoughts to the class blog.

### *Assignment for Wednesday, Nov. 5*

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#### RE-GENRE PITCH

If you want to sell a film idea, you make a pitch. It should be thoughtful—suggest there is a plan behind it—but also relatively brief and to the point. Here are the key parts your re-genre pitch should address:

1. What earlier writing assignment would you like to re-genre? Why? Is there something about this topic that you find interesting? That might need more attention? That lends itself to a multimodal approach?
2. Which one of the three rhetorical goals seems most relevant? What is it about the topic (or original genre) that lends itself to that goal?
3. Who might care? What are potential audiences for the re-genre?
4. What level of content seems appropriate for the project (See "Inquiring into the Details: Levels of Content")?
5. Finally, what multimedia genres (see next section) might be suited to reaching one or more of those audiences? Which seem most likely to accomplish your goals?

#### **Inquiring into the Details: Levels of Content**

Graphic designer Bill Shander argues that an essential part of design is thinking about how much information you'll include, and this depends on the main purpose of your communication. He believes there are essentially "four levels of content":

1. **Level One:** This level uses the least amount of information because it's an "attention grabber," meant to dramatize a topic (rhetorical goal #1) and help it to find an audience. A short video, or photo essay might be great genres for level one information.
2. **Level Two:** Once you've got the attention of an audience, some of them will be more interested, though not yet particularly invested in learning a lot more. They'd be game for a brief conversation, the kind that you facilitate with a blog, or an infographic, something with a little more information.
3. **Level Three:** Audiences that are engaged with a topic will be actively information seeking. You can provide it with multimedia genres like brochures, or slide presentations.
4. **Level Four:** There are people who are passionate information seekers on a topic. They're convinced it's important and relevant and would gladly dig into a web page with multiple links and documents.