

Assignment #3: Public Service Announcement (PSA)

Perfecting Eloquence: Jesuit Pedagogy in the First-Year Writing Classroom

DUE DATE

Assignment Background:

In this assignment, you will create what is commonly known as a “**Public Service Announcement**” or a “**PSA.**” PSAs can come in many forms, including radio advertisements, TV commercials, billboards, social media posts, and more. Whichever form they take, they are designed to deliver messages regarding important civic issues to a mass audience. Some examples could be: raising awareness of Black History Month, encouraging teenagers to quit vaping, advocating for people to get screened for various forms of cancer, or reminding citizens to vote on Election Day. By researching a civic issue and composing a PSA, students are invited to **1.)** deepen their understanding of pressing civic and social issues, **2.)** develop skills of persuasion and writing for an audience, and **3.)** practice composing in a popular non-academic medium.

Jesuit Inspiration:

In the past century, Jesuit leaders have emphasized the centrality of social justice in their mission to educate young people across the world. The emphasis on speaking well—which, for the Jesuits, has always been viewed as crucial for converting people to the Christian faith—has been extended into an emphasis on using technology to craft communication that inspires others to act with justice and mercy. As Pedro Arrupe, former General Superior of the Society of Jesus, concluded in a speech on the progress of Jesuit education:

“We must go to a map of the world and point out the critical points—geographical, sociological, cultural—where sin and injustice find their lodgment... To do this, technologies are needed to program analysis and action so that they will actually dislodge and dismantle injustice.”

This aligns with a principle that Jesuits have held since their early work as missionaries in Asia: the need for *adaptability* in their work. Jesuits believe that while the *purpose* of their mission shouldn't change, the way they go about it should adapt to the culture around them. Therefore, it is not enough for a Jesuit class to only teach forms of writing that wider society doesn't typically read (e.g. MLA-format five-page persuasive essays). To be truly “Jesuit,” students and teachers must also adapt to the ways in which citizens of today's world are making themselves heard.

Prompt: Select a non-partisan social or civic issue that interests you. Do some research on the issue (causes, stakeholders, who it affects, who supports/is against it, etc.). Then, compose one of the following:

- A 60-second radio advertisement
- A 30-second television commercial
- A cohesive social media campaign of at least 6 posts

that raises awareness of the issue with a clear and persuasive message.

Assignment Goals:

After completing this assignment, students should be able to...

- Compose to persuade a specific audience (e.g. teenagers, sports fans, smokers, etc.)
- Use techniques of sonic/cinematic/visual composition to create engaging and clear content

- Deliver a clear message with concision
- Craft a clear message that's persuasive and memorable to its audience through humor, fear, pity etc.