Guidelines for Ad Analysis
ENC 1102

- Pick 3-4 points of analysis (strategies) that support your main argument.
  - There may be more, but you don't have space to analyze all of them.
  - If only 1 or 2 aspects support your argument, either draw them out comprehensively, or consider a new argument.
  - When you analyze these visual strategies, decide which rhetorical appeal/logical fallacy is working the hardest. It's fine to include additional appeals, but don't feel forced to draw out all of the appeals/fallacies of, say, a font choice.
- Pick one lens. Although some will overlap (gender and beauty, gender and sexuality, race and marginalization), focus on one.
- If you make a claim about people, history, gender, etc., support it.
  - Bring in **credible** outside sources if you need to (and cite them).
  - Give context to your claim. Instead of writing that "all humans strive for natural beauty," draw out your connections by contextualizing that claim. "According to x, fashion in the mid-90s focused on a 'return to nature,' emphasizing neutral tones, understated sandals, and loose-fitting designs (citation). This definition of beauty is echoed in the makeup ad that features a model running through a field in a brown dress, indicating an appeal to the woman's sense of outer beauty."
- Avoid writing "I think," "I believe," and similar phrases.
  - You are writing this, so your audience knows that you think it. Your goal is not to show me as a reader what you already think but rather to convince me to think it.
  - Also avoid "it is important." Again, hopefully everything you write is important.
- Don't assume that the reader has seen the ad.
  - The reader should be able to imagine what the aspects of the ad you draw out look like.
  - You don't have to describe every detail, but you should describe the parts of the ad you analyze well.
- Play with your introduction.
  - You don't need to write a road map or tell me all about the history of your ad.
  - Possible approaches: historical, narrative, "hook" (creative), rhetorical question, relevant quotation, contextualization (general to specific)
- Do not summarize in your conclusion.
  - Answer bigger questions: So what? What does this mean for the future? For our understanding of the past? What further research/analysis could further support your argument? Why is **this lens** of analysis important to **this kind** of ad?
  - Don't generalize too much. That is, don't say, "all ads are embedded with a gender/racial bias."
  - Be realistic. That is, don't say, "If everyone analyzes advertisements like this one, the world will stop seeing gender roles and it will be a better place."
  - Choose just one approach to the conclusion. You can't possibly cover all questions **and** say anything significant.
- Cite your ad in a Works Cited list!