



Argumentative “Moves” in SSHRC Doctoral Applications

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Outline for the workshop

- Writing processes, theories of writing
- Argumentative “moves” in SSHRC proposals (see last slide for sources on this)
- Style and design strategies
- Further reading
- Samples of argumentative techniques



The writing process

- Idea generation at all stages
- Iterative process
- Drafting
- Revising
- Genre knowledge; genre as social action
- Groups, research teams



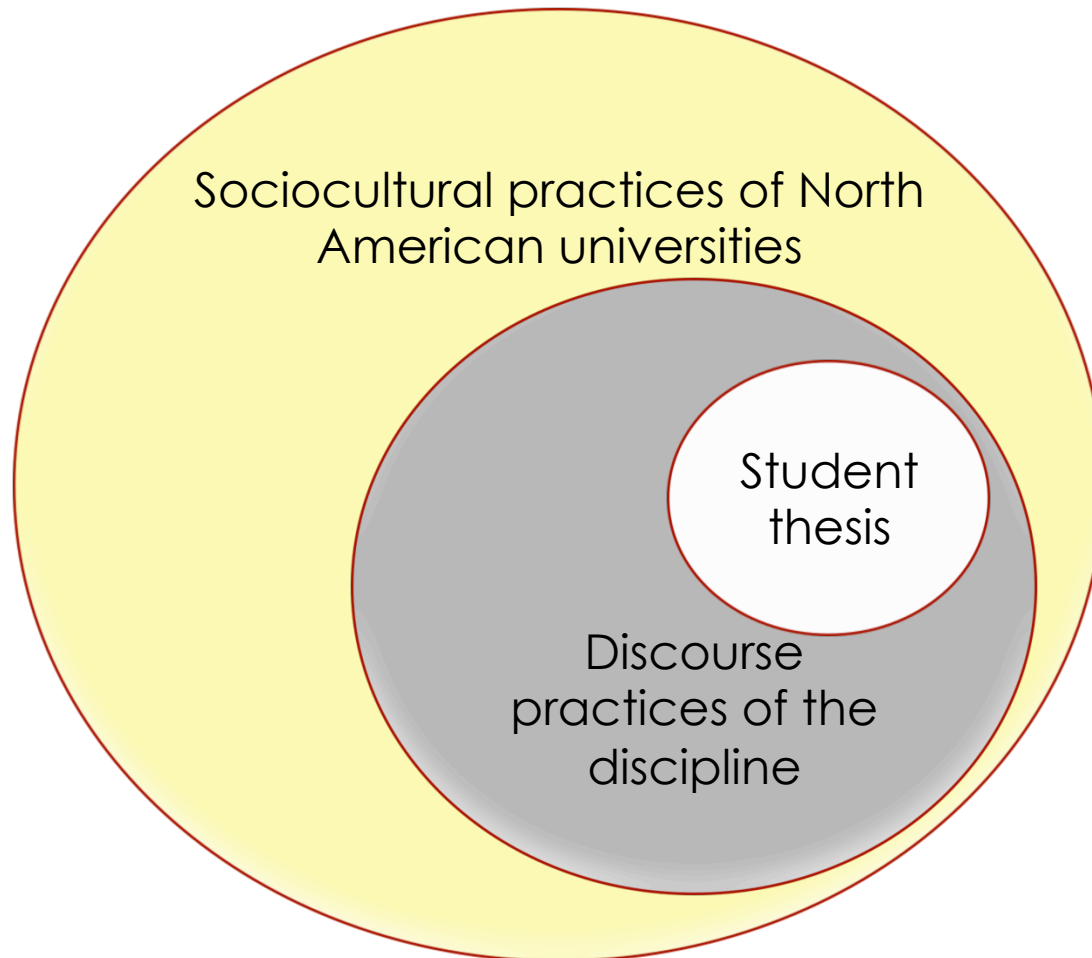
Format/Genre

- Format refers to a description of the look or dimensions of a document: double-spaced, 500 words, 4 citations, APA style
- Genre refers instead to the **communicative function** of the document: to persuade me that your research is worth funding, that you follow acceptable research methods
- Think about assignment descriptions given to undergraduates—they often focus too much on format and offer little guidance about the intellectual task the assignment demands



Writing as social practice

SSHRC = CRSH



Fairclough's three dimensions of discourse, as depicted in B. Kammler and P. Thomson, *Helping Doctoral Students Write Well*, p. 21.



Discourse communities

- Swales (1991) developed the concept of discourse communities to explain the purposes within documents
- His concept of rhetorical “moves” within documents—such as “establish a research territory”—leads to one method for establishing the typical purposes for a document
- SSHRC research grant evaluation committees form into discourse communities for example



Genre sets

- Genres typically do not occur alone but instead as part of a set of social actions within a group
- Graduate students may write a variety of related documents: grant applications, course papers, exams, conference proposals, posters, a thesis



Genre and disciplines

- Genre is a tool or way of thinking about how these discourses of the disciplines work
- Genres are “focused, purposive, [and] highly differentiated task[s]”
- Genres are always situated within a context of power relations: funder/applicant, supervisor/student, FEC/worker

Bazerman, “Introduction.”



Doctoral applications

- **Pre-doctoral:** provide an **outline** of your doctoral thesis proposal, including
 - **research question,**
 - **context,**
 - **objectives,**
 - **Methodology**
 - **contribution to the advancement of knowledge,**
 - and **your special interests** in the proposed area of research.



In-process PhD candidates

Provide an outline of your thesis proposal, including

- the research question,
- context,
- objectives,
- methodology and
- contribution to the advancement of knowledge
- describe what you hope to accomplish during the award tenure and what will remain to be done before you obtain your degree.



Sample 1

Note:
Does not follow
suggested outline

- Paragraph 1: “In the spring of 1712 a new terror held the streets of London in its grip.”
- P. 2: More about the gang
- P. 3: My MA thesis . . .led to a new, broader question
- P. 4: Mohock & colonialism
- P. 5: The introduction to the dissertation . . . Ch. 2 . . .Ch. 3. . . Ch. 4
- P. 6: Rakes as symbols, as literary construction used for political oppression



Note: Follows
suggested
outline

Sample 2

- P. 1: “My dissertation studies concepts of tolerance in contemporary cultural and social theory.”
- P. 2 Background & introduction of key terms: tolerance and compassion
- P. 3: tolerance used 2 contradictory ways
- P. 4: “I argue that no place more compellingly embodies and expresses these contradictions of tolerance than Montreal.”
- P. 5 & 6: Literary landscape & tolerance
- P. 7: Progress to date on PhD degree



Sample 3 & 4

- P. 1: background and context lead in to RQ at end of first paragraph
- P. 2: “Methodology” as heading
- P. 3, 4, 5, 6: outline of methods (mixed)
- P. 7: Links made through this work
- P. 8: Heading: “Program of Study”



- Background and context can be one paragraph or three (3/4 of page)
- Methods can be expansive or 1 paragraph
- All need approx. 12 line degree progress paragraph at the end



Texts and Identity

- Kenneth Burke: rhetoric/persuasion depends upon identification between rhetor and audience
- Texts written by graduate students build their identity as a member of their discipline
- You as a professional are your textual self—or rather, selves: the stories you tell about yourself and your work



Exercise 1

- Write a one sentence claim about your project



Argumentative “moves”

- “moves” are like tacit questions that grant writers answer
- Moves are a way to organize the proposal
- Moves create a narrative



Narrative

“A problem exists of social and research importance (territory). Some research already exists, but there is also clearly an absence of research in a particular area (gap). The researcher(s) is/are well prepared (means) to address the problem (goal) by conducting the following study (methodology).”



Example

- “Recently, Alberta has received much media attention because of its massive drawing power for migrants in a context of unprecedented economic growth (3 references 2007/2006). A less noticed but equally important development is the steady increase of the birth rate in this province, a situation diametrically at odds with the persistent pattern of low fertility in Canada. Most surprising is the apparent lack of scholarly interest to this new development. My study seeks to address this void in the demographic literature”



Exercise 2

- Write two or three sentences that build a narrative about your work.



Territory

- Research territory refers to current research issues or problems
- “Real world” territory refers to social problems or issues
- Connect the two territories: a real world problem exists for which a research area can propose a solution



Example

- “[this study] will also be of interest beyond the academic community. The project grows out of the initial steps taken by the office of the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (TCRM). . . It is essential to know the history of agriculture in First Nations communities in order to understand what the barriers have been and how they may be removed.”



Exercise 3

- Write two or three sentences that connect your research territory to society beyond the university.



Pointing out a gap in literature: Excerpt 1.4

SSHRC = CRSH

“Particularly worrisome has been the increase in adolescent gang membership. A subset of the offending population, estimated at 68% of institutionalized youth, are affiliated with a gang, yet **little research has been done to distinguish gang members from other types of young offenders** (Kratcoski & Kratcoski, 1996); Richter-White, 2003). It may be that young people are turning to gangs for protection from other gangs, as a way to gain respect, to escape from troubled homes, because their friends are doing it, peer pressure, or as a way to earn a living through drug trafficking, illegal weapons sales, robbery, and theft (Lloyd, 2002). However, **the reasons why adolescents choose to join a gang remain understudied with no clear answers.**

–Nicole Kostiuik, *Attachment in Incarcerated Adolescent Gang Members*, 2007.



Gap

- Establishes that a problem exists
- Provides motivation for the proposed study by implying the gap needs to be filled
- “This consolidation appears to be pointing to a ‘two-tiered’ financial system: an increasingly ‘exclusive’ financial world accessible to those with capital and wealth, and high-cost financial practices for those populations who are prevented from accessing mainstream credit (ref. 2005).”



Goal

- States the aim, general objective, chief contribution of the study
- This move responds to the gap or problem identified in the proposal
- “My study seeks to address this void in the demographic literature . . .”



Example

- “The principal goal of my study is to address these and other related questions and to uncover the underlying social demographic and socioeconomic factors responsible for the recent fertility rise in Alberta.”



Exercise 4

- Write a goal statement.



Methodology

- How the goal will be achieved, including descriptions of methods, procedures, plans, or actions and tasks
- Writers demonstrate their methodological competency:
- Presented the specific steps of their study
- Named a theory or method that would enable them to reach the project goals



Cite Sources that Support your Methods

SSHRC = CRSH

“Vaccinia virus (VV) is considered the prototypic poxvirus, and is amenable to **genetic manipulation** through a multitude of available DNA recombination tools (450). VV has also been used extensively as a **gene delivery mechanism**, as its large DNA genome makes it relatively easy to insert foreign DNA sequences for protein expression in mammalian cells (50, 100). Despite the fact that the natural host for VV is unknown, **VV remains an excellent model in which to study virus:host interactions due to its complex genome and vast array of anti-immune mechanisms** (169). In response to the selective pressures initiated by the host immune system, poxviruses such as vaccinia virus encode a vast array of proteins which modulate both innate and adaptive immune responses (Table 1.2) (21, 105).”

John Taylor, *The inhibition of apoptosis and Bax activation by mitochondrial antiapoptotic proteins encoded by vaccinia virus and ectomelia virus*, Fall 2007. (bolding added)



Means

- Addresses writer's credibility and readiness to conduct the research

Strategies:

1. Cite their own past or ongoing research to imply connection between proposed research and their competency
2. Make explicit claims about their competency based on previous research



Examples

- “My own book [title] remains the most comprehensive analysis but the focus was on . . .”
- “To fully address the question on the formalization of fringe finance I draw on ‘cultural economy’ . Cultural economy is an approach influenced by post-structuralism, ‘governmentality’ , actor-network theory and ‘science studies’ .”



Exercise 5

- Describe the methods you will use to perform your research.



Document design/style

- When you have a full draft, we'll get together to talk about style and design considerations
- The following slides give you an idea of what that means
- At this point in the process, however, it isn't profitable to focus on these areas



Objective strategies

- Nominalizations (a verb changed into a noun)
 - We investigated the problem to see . . .
 - A problem investigation showed . . .

Nominalizations remove agency, creating an objective tone

They can improve conciseness.

Warning: Overuse of nominalizations can confuse and bog down a reader's understanding



Passive Voice

- Linguistic construction that places the object in the subject position
 - We investigated the problem (active voice)
 - The problem was investigated by us (passive voice)
- Create objectivity, improve conciseness
- Mitigate blame, emphasize processes over agents
- **Warning**: Overuse can make prose boring or difficult to process



Signposting

- Techniques that provide a framework or conceptual map for the document (headings, bulleted or numbered lists, etc.)
- Help to organize the information for the reader
- Help reader retrieve specific information later
- Writers use SSHRC headings, as well as their own to guide readers



Example of signposting

Research plan/Methodology

1. Historical Context Analysis
2. Mapping Public Discourses of Fringe Finance
3. Narratives of Regulation



Citation

- Citing others: writers build on others' work rather than demolishing it
- Citing oneself: used to enhance writer's credibility



Example

- “Although sources of public data relating to corporate structure have been used to assess levels of corporate regionalization (Rugman, 2005, Rugman 2004) and processes of transnational class formation (Carroll 2004; Carroll and Fennema 2002), they have rarely been used in the critical finance literature.”



Further reading

- http://www.research.uwaterloo.ca/grants/documents/StudyonSuccessfulSSHRCApplications_000.pdf
- <http://www.research.uwaterloo.ca/grants/documents/bibliographyforSSHRCapplicationstudy.pdf>
- <http://www.research.uwaterloo.ca/grants/AboutGGRC.htm#Inservices>



What is presence?

- How do you create “presence” in texts?
- Elements that speaker chooses to focus on

“In the spring of 1712 a new terror held the streets of London in its grip. . .It was a gang of rakes, terrifyingly violent yet possessed of wealth and status.”

“They also slit two persons Noses . . .set other Women on their Heads, misusing them in a barbarous manner”

- Why is *presence* important?
- It helps persuade the audience by making the subject concrete and real (job talks; in-person interviews)



Techniques of argumentation

- **Liaison or associative:** taking two different concepts and establishing a bond between them; connect the starting point with the thesis
- **Example:** connect life to act of abortion; connect quality of life with money—the more money you have, the more improved the quality of your life will be because you can afford to buy yourself labor-saving devices or trendy clothing



Actual gangs linked to gangs as symbols

- “The rakes and libertines became a symbol satirists used to criticize a system that provided sensational news as truth and was supported by a public with interest in the symbol, whatever uses to which they put that symbol.”



Techniques of argumentation

- **Cause and effect:** relationship between elements based on a sequence
- Examples: one thing was the cause of another thing;
- “. . .enforcement of the universal logic of rights, while aiming to preserve political and cultural freedom, ultimately undercuts indigenous autonomy and undermines social difference at the local level.”



Techniques of argumentation

- **Example, illustration, and model**
- **Example:** to create a generalization about something or use one example to reach a conclusion about another example
- **Illustration:** illustrates general belief
- **Example:** smokers suffer ill health therefore smoking is bad.
- **Model:** convince an audience to imitate qualities of a certain person
- **Example:** exemplary teacher: use her or him as model



Example, illustration

- “Recovery from the global financial crisis has proven especially difficult for the economies of Europe’s former plantation colonies—Caribbean nations such as Haiti, Jamaica, and Trinidad—who entered the downturn already heavily laden with debts accrued during or soon after decolonization.”





Kenneth Burke

- “Rhetoric is the attempt to bridge the conditions of estrangement that are natural and inevitable”
- “The use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents.”
- “Change of attitude or action through identification”



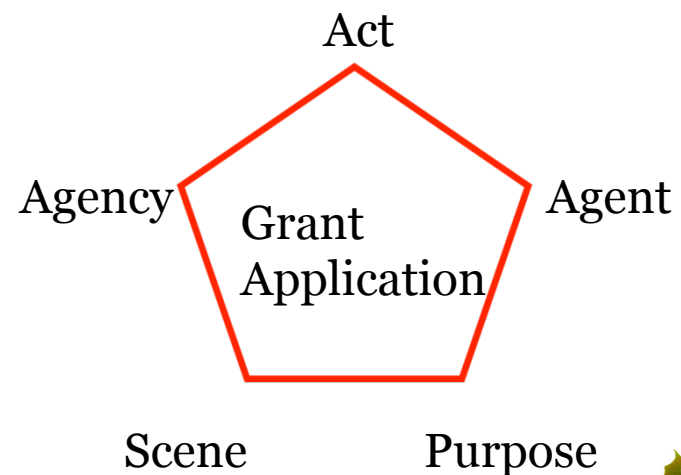
Key Concepts of Burke's Theory

- *Identification*: Individuals form selves or identities through various properties or substances i.e. physical objects, etc.
- *Consubstantiation*: Share substance with whatever or whomever you associate, and simultaneously define yourself against others

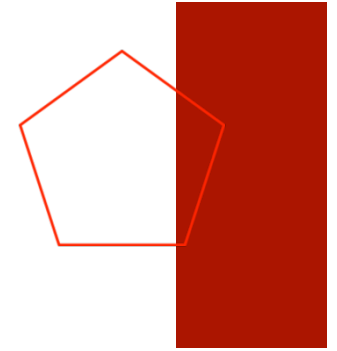


Burke's Pentad

- What is Burke's pentad? (200)
- Reduce statements of motive to fundamental level
- What are the five parts to the pentad? (200 – 202)
 - Act
 - Agent
 - Agency
 - Scene
 - Purpose
 - (Attitude)



Act

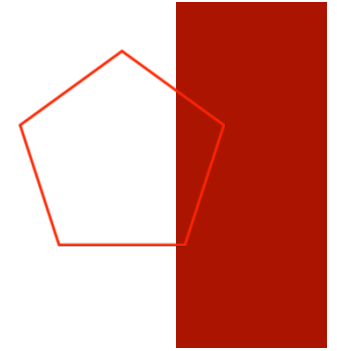


What took place in thought or deed.

- E.g., Antony & Cleopatra (Act 1, Sc 1)
- Defining Antony's character
- Play subject matter/introduction
- Characterize Antony and Cleopatra's affair in a particular way
- Antony rebelling against Caesar
- Affirmation of power
- Characterizes their relationship
- Presents a problem for the Roman Empire; one of the leaders is distracted

Grant context

- Presents a problem to be researched
- “But how does the revitalization of Cree impact Canadian society?”
- “How have nation-states configured citizenship through debt and feelings of indebtedness?”
- “How does whiteness intersect with queerness?”
- “How does the public desire to read rake gang narratives influence and respond to the economic and political agendas of the press in the early eighteenth-century London?”



Agent

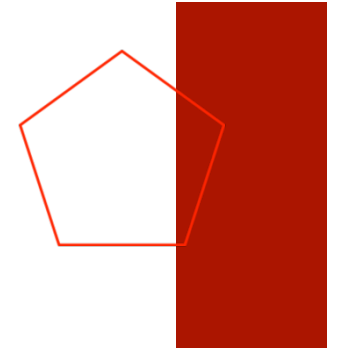
What person or kind of person performed the act?

- Philo is the actor in the first exchange
- Antony: rebelling vs. Caesar
- Cleopatra: manipulating Antony
- Shakespeare: presents the actors, the act, etc.
- Actors who present the play
- Caesar who sends message

Grant context

- How do you present yourself on paper?
Literate? Informed?
Credible?
- “My project asks the question . . .”
- “My SSHRC-funded MA project . . .”

Agency



What means are used to perform the act?

- Words, conversational exchanges
- Gestures, facial expressions, whole gamut of non-verbal communication\
- Messenger—delivers message that causes Antony to rebel

Grant context

- Jargon
- Citations
- Form
- Arguments
- “Theorists such as Audre Lourde (1982), Jose Munoz (1999), and David Eng (2010) have written about . . .”