Activity: Rhetorical Analysis of Texts across Cultures

I. 15 Minutes
Getting to Know Teams in a Cross-Cultural Context
Location: Small group rooms (designated by letter) at http://switchboard.stanford.edu.

Introduce yourselves to your group.
- About yourself: Share your name and age, describe where you grew up, what you’re studying at school, and your weekly study routine.
- About your school: During the introductions, also briefly describe the class you’re taking and what your university is like to the members of the group from the other country.
- About your cultural identity: Show each other the cultural artifact or item that you brought with you to the session and explain why you chose it as embodying your cultural identity.

II. 25 minutes
Rhetorical Analysis of Tourism Ads

Discuss the two tourism commercials that you watched in preparation for our session today (for easy reference, they are linked through the CCR Workshop page at http://ccr.stanford.edu/workshops/2011.10.html).

Perform a rhetorical analysis of the commercials, touching on the following:
- How do the commercials define Australia and Australians? How do they define America and Americans? What parts of the commercials create these definitions? Do these definitions seem at all problematic?
- Are there any elements within the texts intended to persuade by misrepresenting/exploiting/ignoring elements of Australian or American culture?
- Alternately, think about audience. How is the Australian ad imagining what would appeal to an American audience? How is the American ad imagining what would appeal to an Australian audience?
- Identify the rhetorical situation and rhetorical appeals as intended by the authors/directors. Rhetorical appeals might include
  - Logos (an appeal to facts or reason)
  - Pathos (an appeal to emotion)
  - Ethos (an appeal to character or authority)
  - Kairos (an awareness of appropriateness for a specific time and place)
- To what extent did the appeals persuade you? Why?
- Do you find any rhetorical fallacies in the commercials? These might include stereotyping, exaggerations, and unfair appeals to emotions. Why would an author/director deliberately use a fallacy?
- To what extent do these commercials make arguments that might be persuasive across cultures?

III. 10 Minutes
Collaborative Reflection and Writing

Together (both Stanford students and Sydney students), talk about the following:
- What did you learn about cross-cultural rhetoric from your analysis of the two commercials?
- What did you learn about intercultural communication from the discussion with your group?
- What was the most interesting/memorable/surprising moment from your conversation?

Use the Marratech whiteboard to write down a summary of your answers to the above points; make sure that both sides contribute to the writing and editing of this piece. Then, post this summary of your group’s
reflections as a comment to the CCR blog post at
http://crossculturalrhetoric.wordpress.com/2011/10/10/stanford-sydney-connections/. Be sure to include the
names of all the members of your group in your blog comment! For fun, you might want to give your group a
name or a mascot or a slogan to distinguish your reflection from the other comments on the blog.