What is the *point* of rhetorical criticism?
Foundations of Communication
Criticism

1) Expresses essence of what a person is and what unites a social establishment of people
2) Results from thorough and rigorous thinking
3) Involves acquired thinking, speaking, and writing skills
4) Involves a process of description, interpretation, and evaluation
5) Demands a drive for uncovering the many ways in which rhetorical practices influence us
6) Critics seek to make an argument that interprets and evaluate messages to which individuals and society are exposed.

7) Critics center on the message itself.

8) Critics are able to relate messages to someone other than the author.

9) Critics make an argument (for example: an argumentative essay).
Basic Components of Rhetoric

1) “The faculty for finding in any given situation the available means of persuasion” (Aristotle, *The Rhetoric*)

2) The seven “P’s” of rhetoric (Campbell & Huxman 5-7):
   - Public
   - Propositional
   - Purposeful
   - Problem-Solving
   - Pragmatic
   - Poetic
   - Powerful
Basic Components of Rhetoric (cont.)

3) The purposes of rhetoric (Campbell & Huxman 8-12)

- Creating virtual experience
- Altering perception
- Explaining
- Formulating belief
- Initiating action
- Maintaining action
What is Rhetorical Criticism?

1) Rhetorical criticism is “the process of systematically investigating and explaining symbols and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical processes” (Foss 6).
What is Rhetorical Criticism? (cont.)

2) Three Primary Dimensions (Foss 6):
   a) “Systematic analysis as the act of criticism”
      i) More focused, methodical, and conscientious approach
      ii) More sophisticated views
      iii) More discriminating
What is Rhetorical Criticism? (cont.)

b) “Act and artifacts as the objects of analysis in criticism”

i) The act is “executed in the presence of a rhetor’s intended audience”

ii) The artifact is “the text, trace, or tangible evidence of the act”
c) “Understanding rhetorical processes as the purpose of criticism”
   i) Understand how particular symbols operate
      * Using and interpreting symbols (for example: words, images, physical objects, etc.)
      * Symbols themselves have no inherent meaning and are connected only indirectly to their referents (arbitrary, abstract, ambiguous)
What is Rhetorical Criticism? (cont.)

ii) Discover what an artifact teaches about the study of rhetoric
   * Explanation of how rhetoric works
   * Contributions to the field of rhetorical studies

iii) Become a more sophisticated audience member for messages
Five Characteristics of the Critic
(Campbell & Huxman 22)

1) Knowledgeable
2) Able to communicate clearly and efficiently
3) Passionate about what he/she critiques
4) Able to tell us the “non-obvious”
5) Able to educate and enlighten listeners/readers about a message