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## Rationale for the Use of Course Concepts in the Common Good Project, “Neck Ties to High Heels: Bridging the Gender Gap”

**1. Identification:** Kenneth Burke defines Identification as “a communicative process through which people are unified into a whole on the basis of common interests or characteristics,” (qtd. in Palczewski et al. 8). Within our project, we seek to invoke identification by appealing to an audience’s similarities as well as their differences. Of course gender inequality is apparent within a female audience, but how would the idea of bridging the gender gap appeal to a male audience as well? By using identification, we are “creating symbolic action” that Burke says is essential to the validity of a rhetor’s message. Our group wants to appeal to the things that people cannot control. First, our society is contingent on the work force. Most everyone within our society has employment or some kind. Secondly, common interests of everyone is a safe, productive, positive work environment. Identification creates semblance among an audience, thus leading to an acceptance of the rhetor’s message.

**2. Hegemony:** The idea of an accepted idea within society is where hegemony comes into to play. Antonio, Gramsci, and Frank Rosengarten define it is “the dominant ideology of a society, exerting social control over people without the use of force,” (qtd. in Palczewski et al. 29). Our project seeks to break the cycle of the accept forms of gender inequality present in the workplace. Society has not forced women to dress differently than men, but what it has done is alienated women based on a set of principles that are arbitrary, forcing them to assimilate. The jobs available that pay less to women than men is routinely accepted in society as well. It is the same with the issue of sexual harassment within a workplace. This topic is a little more of a controversial nature. The obvious “forceful” nature of this is layered. Not only are victims forced to endure unfair treatment, they can also feel forced to not pursue justice for what happened to them.

**3. Ethos:** This is one of the three appeals defined by Aristotle. The textbook defines ethos as “which is in the character of the speaker,” and “known by the audience because of prior interactions,” (Palczewski et al. 15, 167). Our credibility involved with this project revolves around the fact that all members of the group are actively involved within the class, which means, we are all striving towards a new status quo. We have all learned the skills needed for civic engagement. In addition, the three members of the group are all part of the work force via our unique experiences within our majors. We each have individual experiences to bring with us as well, all of which add to the validity of our argument.

**4. Pathos:** Pathos is “what leads the audience ‘to feel emotion,’” (Palczewski et al. 15). We use pathos within our project by interweaving it with our use of ethos. By including interviews with people, we can add to including a personal approach aside from our own. The inclusion of the media which revolved around the #20percentcounts movement demonstrated how gender

inequality affects real people. The inclusion of real peoples' testimonies brought the argument outside of a set of numbers in order to provide increased evidence surrounding the call to action that we want our audience to become aware of.

**5. Logos:** Logos is "that which relies on 'argument itself, by showing or seeming to show something,'" (Palczewski et al. 15). The use of logic within this project revolves around the inclusion of statistics in both our brochure and the website that we created. Our research directed the group towards the realization that gender inequality in the workplace is a problem that effects much more than one area of a person's life. In addition to making less money which can impede personal lives, such as paying off student loans, or buying a house. In addition, women who make less money for the same jobs as men begin to face discrimination that then blends into the idea of harassment in other areas of their work lives. Sexual harassment is a very real problem that, when added to wage inconsistencies, manifests itself in the form of an unfair dress code. The three areas that we focused our argument around are all related.

**6. Resignification:** This is defined as "a process in which people reject the connotation of a symbol, expose, how the meaning of the symbol is constructed, and attempt to change its connotation," (Palczewski et al. 56). By clearly defining exactly which approaches that the project focuses on, the group is redefining what "gender equality in the workplace" really means to us. Furthermore, this approach to the subject matter helped to shape the audience's understanding of the topic outside of media coverage, which, often times, muddles definitions of key issues within society. "The Issues" section of our brochure sums up what areas we chose to focus on.

**7. Theory of Linguistic Relativity:** Within our project, we sought to explore the theory's appeal to "the structure of a language [which] influences the way people perceive the world," (Palczewski et al. 43). Our goal was to erase the negative stigma that is attached the idea of "gender inequality." There are still people who do not believe that inequalities do not exist at all. It was important to us to not only "resignify" that idea, but to also demonstrate just how a lack of knowledge surrounding the topic is harmful within our society. Our group, comprised of different professional, academic, and gendered experiences allowed us to transcend barriers by both incorporating different opinions into the project that led to its successful completion.

#### Terms Related to the Presentation

**8. Identity:** The presentation of the Common Good Project helps our group establish our identity. It is defined as "the physical and/or behavioral attributes that make a person recognizable as a member of a group," (Palczewski et al. 169). By deciding to dress up in our professional attire, the group displays why we are speaking on issues regarding the workplace.

**9. Rhetorical Audience:** The text defines this as the audience which "consists only of those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change," (Palczewski et al. 202). Since our presentation was delivered to a group of our peers inside of our Active Citizenship Writing class, they are the perfect audience to follow in our footsteps. They would be most interested in taking action and invoking

the same changes in society, using the same skill sets that our group honed over the course of the semester.

10. **Rhetorical Agency:** Karlyn Kohrs Campbell defines this as “the capacity to act, that is, to have the competence to speak or write [or engage in any form of symbolic action] in a way that will be recognized or heeded by others in one’s community,” (qtd. in Palczewski et al. 211). As a direct result of our recognition of who our core rhetorical audience is, we hope that will lead to that audience will enact their civic engagement skills to further educate others on what gender inequality is, how to bridge the gap, and also, why it matters. The inclusion of the website and brochure as rhetorical artifacts show just one way in which social matters can be addressed within a positive nature. Also, our project allowed for us to engage our rhetorical agency as we explored several aspects of gender inequality in the workplace and just how to propose a change.