Reading and Preparation for Week 3 – English 202

For Feb. 5: The Declaration of Independence, *Practical Argument* 770-73
With this reading, we’ll begin to get more specific about analyzing the logic, support, and rhetorical strategies of arguments. I like to start here because it’s an example that includes a variety of the kinds of things we need to practice understanding and evaluating. It’s an important historical document, but it also makes an argument. The thesis is that the colonists had the right, even need, to break away from England; in addition to justifying their actions, this argument was also intended to invite others to support the cause (others in America, and other nations such as France). As you read it, think about how the various ideas and information, and the way that they are presented, could help to persuade readers.

For Feb. 7: “Going Green,” *Practical Argument* 267-71, and excerpts from Carl Rogers, “Communication: Its Blocking and Its Facilitation,” posted in D2L
Consider the persuasiveness of the points Shawn Holton makes in “Going Green”: how likely are these to be meaningful to his audience? Also notice the details that he includes to support his points. Where does he have strong support? Do you see any weaknesses?
The piece by Carl Rogers (posted in D2L) is the basis for what our book calls “Rogerian argument,” but Rogers was not an expert on written arguments or oratory: He was a psychologist, and what he offers comes from his experience in helping people deal with conflict in their personal relationships. Consider how his ideas might be relevant to the kinds of arguments we have been talking about.

Continue to notice the points made and the evidence offered to support them. Especially watch for ways that these writers follow Carl Rogers’s approach, or fail to: How well does each seem to understand those who have opposing views? What attitude toward people with opposing views does each writer convey in the way he/she refers to them and their ideas?