Reading and Preparation for Weeks 1 and 2 – English 202

For January 24: “An Introduction to Argument,” Practical Argument 3-9
Where is this chapter echoing things we talked about in class on Monday? What concepts or points? What ideas or points come up that we did not talk about Monday? Have at least one of these in mind to share: something that you find interesting, important, surprising, unclear (or worth discussing for some other reason).

For January 26: “Why I Am a Nontraditional Student,” Practical Argument 402-404
The authors of the textbook have annotated this essay in the margins, pointing out the thesis (position or main point) and the supporting evidence in this argument, so these should be easy to recognize.

Think about why this thesis is arguable rather than factual: Why does the writer need to support the claim that he is a nontraditional student? Also consider the motivation for the argument: Why does the writer care? What difference does it make if he is recognized as a non-trad or not?

Also notice where the writer’s information comes from. What is derived from personal experience? From observation? From research? Can you think of other kinds of information that would be useful to seek out to further support the writer’s position?

You’ll notice that this essay has annotations in the margins to help you see its points and structure; notably, the thesis statement is identified. In each of the body paragraphs, see if you can find a sentence that sums up the point of the paragraph; if not, try to state that yourself.

Notice that our book gives us an annotated version of “When Life Imitates Video,” to model active reading strategies. It also appears on pages 65-67 with additional notes. Feel free to draw on these, or ignore them, as you identify the author’s main point (or thesis) and the major supporting points and evidence.

“Are Colleges Doing Enough” is also annotated to identify its thesis and structure. Identify the supporting points made and think about how these work to support the thesis. How does the purpose of this essay compare to the one we read last week about non-traditional students?

For February 2: “Bad to the Last Drop,” 662-64.
Think about what the main point (thesis) is, and try to state this in your own words. (Write this out ahead of time and be ready to share in class.) What points are being made in the supporting paragraphs? Which ideas or information should be included in a summary of this article? If you were writing a summary of each essay, what ideas or information would you not include?