Rhetoric and Multimedia

Definitions—
“…rhetoric might be understood as the study and practice of shaping content” (Covino and Jolliffe 4)

“Rhetoric is a primarily verbal, situationally contingent, epistemic art that is both philosophical and practical and gives rise to potentially active texts” (Covino and Jolliffe 5).

Rhetoric includes not only oral and written text, but also visual images, graphics, videos, and sounds—essentially all of the components of multimedia. Since each of those components shape content and often incorporate oral or written discourse, we can use rhetorical terms and concepts to understand how various forms of media operate individually and collectively to present a certain view, perspective, or story.

Key Concepts—

Kairos
Sensitivity to the timeliness and suitability of the production; timing

Rhetorical Situation
Exigence—the motivation for the production
Text—the production or product
Writer—the composer or team of composers
Audience—the intended recipient, user, or consumer (must have some kind of vested interest)
Constraints—the beliefs that lead the audience to accept the writer’s ideas (and vice versa)

Audience
Primary or immediate
Subsidiary or mediated

Proofs, or means of persuasion
Logos—appeals to systems of reasoning that the rhetor and audience share
Ethos—appeals to the authority of the rhetor
Pathos—appeals to the emotions of the audience

Canons of Rhetoric
Invention—generating effective material for the rhetorical situation
Arrangement—ordering the material so it is most appropriate for the audience and purpose
Modes of Discourse: Exposition
Description
Narration
Argumentation
Style—constructing the composition so as to make a favorable impression
Memory—remembering the composition
Delivery—presenting or displaying the composition