Critical Reading and Writing
Frame Analysis

Introduction
As we have discussed in class, frames or terministic screens are a necessary component of human motivation, judgment, and action. Frames allow us to make sense of and to organize experience and to act and decide within those experiences. Frames also move us in particular directions instead of others: frames are not neutral or value-free. Indeed, the next unit explores the consequences of competing frames in collision. That being said, we should not assume that this makes frames inherently bad and thus something to avoid: a “frameless existence” is one without meaning and action.

Prompt
As you read “Evolution versus intelligent design controversy” pay careful attention to the dual way in which frames are at work. First, examine how the controversy itself is a question of frames. Second, notice how the author of the piece uses frames (or, perhaps, a “meta-frame”) to attempt to resolve the conflict. Additionally, and to aid you in this examination, have the following questions in mind:

1. How are the competing frames different and why?
2. How do these differences show-up in the key terms and claims of each side?
3. What alternative frames does the author provide? Why?
4. How might this alternative frame work and why? Why not?

After you have analyzed the text with the above framework, compose a 600-word essay focusing on the work of frames in this column. That is, working from the above questions, discuss how frames are employed, to achieve what ends, and with what possible effects. Use evidence from the text to support your assertions, citing any and all course readings so far (in particular, Lakoff and Burke).

Rationale
This assignment provides an opportunity to investigate how frames work in a specific text. It also allows the development of a more general understanding of frame-work. This analysis also allows me to see how students have integrated a key course concept into their thinking.

Rubric
The following rubric is used to assess your frame analysis.

A. Outstanding essays provide specifics from the article (i.e., specific passages and quotes) and apply specific language and key terms from course readings. The relationship between the two sources should be symbiotic, with each shedding light on the other. Additionally, outstanding essays might incorporate outside sources (i.e., current events, film, television, music) to add depth and relevance to their analysis. Outstanding analyses also explore the broader implications of frames and screens in general. The prose is clear and organized and reflects the sophistication of the argument. They also meet all specifications for the assignment.

B. Essays performing significantly above the basic requirements do all the required tasks but with a level of sophistication and specificity above the basic requirements. This means well chosen and specific passages linked together in a thoughtful manner. In many regards, they look like an outstanding essay but with less sophistication of prose and analysis.

C. These essays meet the basic requirements as described above. They draw specific passages from the assigned text and course readings in an attempt to make detailed claims about the work of frames. They do not merely summarize what a frame is and what the readings say. The prose is clear and the essay logically organized.

D. Such essays merely summarize readings and define key terms with no attempts to integrate the two through thoughtful analysis. Essays earning this grade also lack focus in organization and clarity of prose.

F. Simply put, these essays fail to make even the most basic requirement. They fail to understand the prompt, discuss any assigned readings, or attempt to forward some thesis about the work of frames.

Document Specifications

- 600 words, 1 inch margins, double spaced
- 10-12 point font, legible typeface
- Name, course and section number, date, and assignment name in top left corner, single-spaced. Title centered above body text.