Your argument:

* Shows a mastery of the language of rhetorical analysis;
* Is specific, clear, and evidence-driven: for example, you will have to articulate a particular (detailed!) audience that the hoax is meant to target, and then support your claim with evidence from the hoax;
* Demonstrates a nuanced understanding of the interrelation of the various elements of rhetoric and rhetorical situations: purpose, audience, genre, stance, medium, evidence, counter-arguments, etc.; and
* Is strengthened by acknowledgement and refutation of counter-arguments.

Your introduction:

* Presents your artifact to the reader—by the end of the introduction we should know what you’re talking about and why it is interesting (take care to only give relevant summary or context so you leave yourself plenty of room for your own analysis); and
* Includes a compelling and concise thesis in which you argue for the purpose, audience, and effectiveness of the hoax. When I finish reading your thesis, I should know who is trying to convince whom of what, how do they do it, and how effective it is.

Your paragraphs:

* Each present a claim, supported by evidence, that supports your thesis;
* Begin with topic sentences that A) preview the claim of the paragraph and B) show how it relates to your overall thesis;
* Include concrete, detailed evidence;
* Thoroughly analyze that evidence in order to make a claim about rhetorical strategies and effectiveness; and
* Transition smoothly from the previous paragraph and smoothly to the one that follows.

Your conclusion:

* Summarizes your main point and zooms out to the bigger picture—why does your analysis matter?

Your tone and style:

* Establish you as an academic writer—your prose is formal (though don’t assume this has to mean awkward or stilted), free from grammatical errors and typos, and uses language precisely; and
* Demonstrate graceful and fluid mastery of prose that is enjoyable to read: sentences vary in length and syntax, vocabulary is well chosen and clear, active verbs are favored over passive ones, and so on.

Technical details:

* More than three and less than five pages long
* Provides a link to the hoax you are analyzing
* 12-pt Times New Roman font
* 1” margins on all sides
* Last name and page # in the upper-right hand corner