

Assignment: Analyzing the Rhetorical Choices of *Adam Ruins Everything*

Each episode of *Adam Ruins Everything* is an argument wherein host Adam Conover tries to persuade his audience to accept his claims. As a class, we are not interested in the content of Adam's argument—whether he is right or wrong does not matter here. Instead, we are interested in the choices Adam has made because of the combination of his medium, message, and audience as well as how the show's medium, message, and audience influence each other.

For this assignment watch at least two episodes of *Adam Ruins Everything*. As you watch the episodes, think about the questions and take notes in the spaces below. Put yourself in Adam's shoes and think through his decision making process. After watching, type answers to the questions and explain your thinking.

- 1) Is Adam engaged in academic discourse or public discourse? Explain.
- 2) What is Adam's message, broadly speaking, regardless of the episode? Why might that message be a bad premise for a TV show, as they acknowledge in the first episode?
- 3) What is the medium, specifically, through which Adam delivers that message? (Hint: the program appears first on TruTV before moving to streaming services. TruTV exists in what medium?)
- 4) Who is Adam's audience for his message, and how does the medium determine that audience?
- 5) How does that audience influence Adam's message? (think about the kinds of topics he's *not* talking about)
- 6) Adam has a specific appearance. Why did he make those choices?
- 7) Adam plays a character with a specific personality. Explain that character's defining features and why he has chosen to be that character.
- 8) In each episode, Adam "ruins" the day of another person. Why are they there? What is the role of that character in each episode? How do they serve Adam's purposes?
- 9) Why does Adam have a guest expert in each episode?
- 10) Why does Adam cite his sources with pop-ups throughout the episode?
- 11) Why is the show a comedy?
- 12) What are some other choices Adam has made in his design of the show, and why do you think he made them?