



VISUAL ANALYSIS

Final Essay | Assignment Description

Due: June 20, by 6AM, on Canvas

Deliverables: One digital file on Canvas

Save As: Lastname_VisualAnalysis.docx

Value: 30 points, 15% of overall grade

Description and Rationale—As a culminating project to this course, this is your chance to synthesize the broad spectrum of visual communication perspectives we have addressed in class by analyzing a visual artifact of your choice and making an argument about it.

Assignment—For this assignment, you will need to do the following:

- 1) Select a visual of some kind (this could be a painting, photograph, advertisement, political cartoon, or any other visualization). For the purposes of this assignment, you will need to select a visual that you can research its origins and intents.
- 2) Research the visual and its purposes. Consider the following questions:
 - a. Genre: How does this piece fit into the genre in which this artist is generally categorized? Does it fit the conventions of this genre, or does it break some of these conventions? How does this affect the audience's reception of this piece?
 - b. Artist: How does this piece fit into the artist's oeuvre (body of works)? Is it typical of the artist's style, or does it mark a shift or break with his or her conventional presentation?
 - c. Medium: How well does the artist's choice of medium help or hurt his or her argument? Is there another medium that would have been more appropriate?
 - d. Audience: Who is the artist's audience? How receptive has this audience been to this message? How does the artist attempt to establish a connection with his or her audience?
 - e. Variations: Have other versions of this image been produced? Is this the original, or is there a pre-existing version? Which is more "authentic"? How does the existence of this/these other version(s) affect the viewer's or listener's experience of this piece?
- 3) Narrow your research findings and identify the guiding argument of the visual and how the author/artist/organization constructed the visual to make that argument effective.
- 4) Identify visual communication theories/perspectives (from in class and from without) that either support or negate the actual effectiveness of the visual.

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- 5) Write a well-developed essay in which you synthesize your research and argue how well (or not) the visual meets its communicative needs and intentions.

Scoring Standard and Guidelines—Your paper should range between 7 – 10 double-spaced pages (using MLA formatting guidelines) and include a title “works cited” page. You should have at least 8 sources cited. The content and argumentation should reflect Master’s-level writing, exhibiting the following characteristics: a clear well-developed thesis and argument; specific, thorough, and relevant citations; complex sentence structure and effective grammar usage; appropriate academic voice, tone, and language; and clear and effective organization, including a strong conclusion.