Description: This essay is an image interpretation essay about a photograph or painting. Artistic Images work on two levels: the literal and the figurative. The literal meaning is what is being said at face value. The figurative meaning is the meaning the image is suggesting. For example, a famous photograph of a victim of the Vietnam War was taken to persuade American citizens against the country’s involvement in the Vietnam War. Various aspects all contribute to the figurative meaning, such as the framing, the content captured, repeated images, color or lack of color. Think about what is meant by the image What is the piece expressing? How is the artist expressing this? Your job is not not only look at WHAT the artist is saying, but also HOW the artist is saying it.

Using an image from the pre-selected list, argue an original thesis that shows your interpretation of the piece. Research should support your points but should not be your points.

This essay includes the use of outside sources. Meaning, articles written about your image selected, articles written about how artists create meaning with their medium, articles written about the artist or director, etc.

Requirements

The following is a list of what you will need to have in your paper in order to receive an A.

Your essay should:

1. Be written in third person objective.

2. Be properly formatted, cited, and documented using MLA conventions. This includes in-text citations!

3. Include a works cited page

4. All grammar and spelling errors should be fixed by your final draft. Unedited essays will not receive a passing grade!

5. Apply the corrections you learned from your workshop to your second and final draft.

6. Have a clear thesis and strong supporting evidence.

7. Use a minimum of 2 sources. Sources may be in print.You can use Google, but make sure the source is reliable! JSTOR is an excellent source that you DO have access to. Use it!

8. Any claim you make should be supported either with evidence from the image and/or backed up by a secondary source.

9. The body of your paper must follow the order of your thesis statement.

10. Your paper must look at not only WHAT the artist is saying, but HOW the artist is saying it. This will be the focus of your thesis statement. This paper must discuss the figurative meaning of the image, as well as the technical aspects that add to the figurative meaning. For example, is it the colors of the painting that adds to the meaning? Is the Black Mirrors director’s focus on cell phones saying something about current society?

11. Your conclusion should restate your strongest points, and the significance they add to your paper. We will be going over formatting in class, but if you’re concerned about manuscript formatting and documentation, you can consult the Purdue OWL website which will provide you with a comprehensive catalogue of MLA citations.

Advice:

1. Do two phases of research. First, research to educate yourself about the piece and the topic/artist you are researching. Second, decide on your thesis idea and then do more research on this focused idea. Look for research that supports your thesis. Don’t let research take over your essay.

2. Explicating the piece before deciding on an analysis may be helpful in developing a thesis. For example, explaining the contents of the image, the mood or feelings it evokes may be more helpful before you explain the figurative meaning.

3. Looking at the time period and historical context is helpful for the meaning.

4. Look for interviews with the artist or essays about the artist or particular image. These are both valid sources for evidence or argument support.