



Diane Arbus, Child with Toy Hand Grenade,

AH 331 Point Tally			
		Earned	Points Possible
Writing Assignments 45%	Essay 1	out of 50 points	225 points
	Essay 2	out of 50 points	
	Essay 3	out of 50 points	
	Group Essay	out of 25 points	
	Museum Analysis	out of 50 points	
Exams 30%	Exam 1	out of 75 points	150 points
	Exam 2	out of 75 points	
Final Presentation 10%	Presentation Plan	out of 20 points	50 points
	Final Presentation	out of 30 points	
Class Participation 15%	Contributions to conversation	out of 25 points	75 points
	Voluntary report on assigned reading	out of 25 points	
	Visual Thinker Lecture series	out of 25 points	
Sub Total			
Extra Credit			max 25 points
Total			out of 500 points

Art historical scholarship is rooted in analytic and theoretical writing. In keeping with this foundation, we will begin a writing practice that makes mindful use of art historical methodologies and that builds a critical thinking muscle through the writing of essays that will convey important information and understandings as they apply to key works of art discussed in class, reading assignments, and other materials. You will be offered multiple assignments to choose from that will ask you to write visual analyses of specific works of art, or develop a critical response to readings on relevant works and art historical issues.

One of the required writing assignments will ask students to visit an exhibition featuring works made from the prehistoric period to the middle ages in person, and write a collaborative critical response to the exhibition and works on view.

Additionally, on at least one occasion, students will form small groups to write short essay responses to critical thinking prompts given during class. The date that these writing groups will not be announced ahead, and the assignment may not be made up.

Marjorie Munsterberg's website, writingaboutart.org and Laurie Schneider Adam's "Approaches to Art" from *Looking at Art* at, <http://www.theslideprojector.com/pdf/files/approachesart.pdf> are resources that should help you significantly with your writing assignments in this class.

Essay Checklist

To earn full credit on writing assignments, essays should:

- Be 4 to 5 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, and 1" margins on all sides;
- Identify works of art with artistic attribution, underlined or *italicized* titles, and dates (in that order), when possible;
- Attempt to address most questions from the essay prompt;
- Include two or more properly formatted Chicago Manual of Style footnote citations to credible, scholarly, college level materials. (Works of art should not be cited unless a point is being made concerning different versions or installations of the work.);
- Present a clear thesis and offer visual and/or scholarly evidence to support your claims;
- and Offer personal insights that demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the subject & reading materials.

Your instructor is always interested in proposals for subjects to write about. If the given writing prompts do not spark your interests, please feel free to propose alternative questions to consider at least one week before the assignment due date.

Essay 1

Due Monday, September 18

50 points

Read Pennell's *Is Photography Among the Fine Arts?* and consider the following.

Choose any photograph in your textbook that piques your interest and using this image, consider arguments for and against the artistic merits of the photograph. Define "art" and identify what characteristics any work must have in order to be identified as art. Discuss particular visual elements of your photo in support of your position. Use sources to further develop your argument.

Consider that photographers had to argue the place for photographs in art, and that to this day, photographs are sold for less/have less monetary value than paintings and sculpture. What biases are in operation in this circumstance? Discuss Victorian views on the nature of art and art making, and how that perspective marginalized photographic media well into the modern period.

- or -

Using the website links provided, create one of the following photographic devices. Document your creation with a photo of your device/print, and attach to your essay.

Camera Obscura

Follow the directions at <http://www.howcast.com/videos/387145-How-to-Transform-a-Room-into-a-Camera-Obscura>, to create a room-sized camera obscura, or at http://www.exploratorium.edu/science_explorer/pringles_pinhole.html to create a camera obscura out of a Pringles canister.

Sun Print

Purchase "sun print" or "cyanotype" paper from a craft/ art supply store. (You can also find directions at http://www.ehow.com/how_2063489_make-cyanotype.html to create your own, but use caution!) Alternately, you may use construction paper to create a sun print, using the directions at http://www.ehow.com/how_5668084_make-sun-prints-construction-paper.html.

Pinhole Camera

Follow the directions at <http://www.kodak.com/global/en/consumer/education/lessonPlans/pinholeCamera/pinholeCanBox.shtml> or <http://www.instructables.com/id/How-To-Make-A-Pinhole-Camera/>, to make a photograph using a pinhole camera.

Zoetrope

Follow the directions at <http://www.groeg.de/puzzles/zoetrope.html> or <http://www.randommotion.com/html/zoe2.html>, to create your own zoetrope.

Describe the photographic device you made and how it works. Explain the process of making an image, difficulties encountered, and your reaction to the image produced.

Essay 2

Due Monday, October 23

50 points

Read Allan Sekula's *The Body and the Archive* and respond to the following.

In *The Body and the Archive*, photographer Allan Sekula argues, "photography came to establish and delimit the terrain of the other, to define both the generalized look-the typology-and the contingent instance of deviance and social pathology." Briefly define the concept of The Other, and how it developed from early uses of photography to diagnose illness and mental instability. Consider the influence of Positivism in early scientific uses of the photograph, and other records of human

physiognomy. What traits of the photograph led Victorian scientists to trust in the accuracy and truthfulness of photographic images? (more on next page)

Compare and contrast Alphonse Bertillon's anthropometric photos with Francis Galton's composite portraits. Explain Sekula's point that, "The projects of Bertillon and Galton constitute two methodological poles of the positivist attempts to define and regulate social deviance"? Relate what you have learned in Sekula's essay to a contemporary photograph dealing with law, order, criminality, and/or surveillance. Describe how your photograph presents its subject as an Other. What problems are inherent in such subjective uses of the photograph?

- or -

Read *Games of the Doll* and answer the following questions.

What characterizes surrealist photographs? How do the psychoanalytic theories developed by Sigmund Freud at the turn of the century relate to surrealist art? Why are Bellmer's photographs often described as surrealist? In other words, what surrealist characteristics do the images utilize?

Compare and contrast a photograph from Hans Bellmer's *La Poupee* series (1936-1938) with Gertrude Kasebier's *Portrait of Miss N.*, c. 1900, and Hannah Hoch's *Dada Dance*, 1922 using psychoanalysis and biography as methodologies for understanding meaning. Consider how life experiences and personal/creative/political/identity struggles may have influenced each artist's work.

When using an psychoanalytic approach, it's important to understand that Freud theorized that our behavior reflects a persistent battle between the id, the ego, and the superego. We are born with instinctual drives, but as our personalities develop, we fail to resolve conflicts at particular stages, which may cause us to develop fixations and inhibitions. While we may not have access to the personal details of these three artist's lives to directly analyze their work using psychoanalytic theory, we can generalize and propose ideas based on the elements of their photographs.

Museum Analysis

Due Monday, November 6

50 points

Attend a professional exhibition that includes photographic works. The Getty Museum, LACMA, MoCA, UCR California Museum of Photography, the Annenberg Space for Photography, OCMA, and the Bowers Museum regularly feature exhibitions of photographic works. Plan ahead by checking museum websites to be sure that relevant works will be on view when you plan to visit. In addition, read Marjorie Munsterberg's explanation of visual description at, <http://writingaboutart.org/pages/visualdesc.html> for information on visual description and analysis.

Choose one photographic work seen in person and develop a visual analysis. Visual description involves communicating what you see and feel when viewing a work of art to a general reader who may or may not have experienced the work themselves. For the Museum Analysis, assume that your reader has a background in art, but has not seen the work you are discussing.

Begin your description with the basics - let your reader know the artist's name, the title of the work (being sure to distinguish the title in your text by italicizing or bolding your font), and the date the work was made. Describe what you see, drawing the viewer's attention to key elements (objects, figures, symbols). Discuss the work's subjects. What are the main components, what is represented, who is portrayed, where does the story take place? While you may want to keep your visual description concise, remember that you cannot assume that what you are seeing and experiencing is universal.

Next, consider how the photograph looks - is it abstract or realistic, in what style is the work created (you may need to look ahead in your textbook to figure this out), what are the qualities of the visual

elements like line (implied and actual), contrast (hi or lo), composition, form, and other formal aspects? Consider the materials, techniques, and physical properties of the work - how was it made, what type of photograph is it, what techniques were employed to capture the image? While this may feel descriptive, what you're focusing on in this section are the qualities and characteristics of compositional elements such as *atmospheric* perspective, *asymmetrical* balance, *irregular* rhythm, *organic* shapes, *faint* line work, and *bold* color harmonies. The handouts on design and the elements of art from the Getty Museum at the end of this packet may be helpful.

Finally, connect your private experience with the work and its visual elements. What meaning do the objects, subjects, and symbols suggest? What meaning is conveyed by the work's form and visual elements? What story is told, or view of the world expressed by this work of art?

Please include a photograph of yourself at the museum with your essay, and remember to list each contributor (if written collaboratively).

Presentation Plan

Due Monday, November 13

20 points

Please read *A Note on Photography and the Simulacra* as you prepare for your presentation.

Contemporary artist, Micol Hebron has organized "1 Image, 1 Minute" events in multiple cities since 2008, in which invited participants discuss a photograph of their choosing for 1 minute. The inspiration for the 1 Image 1 Minute column in X-TRA magazine was a similar project produced by Belgian director Agnès Varda (and later written about by Rosalind Krauss) for French television in 1983. Over 200 people have participated thus far. You can read three 1 Image 1 Minute presentations, here: <http://x-traonline.org/article/1-image-1-minute-13/>

For our final exam, we will take a spin on the 1 Image 1 Minute project. Your presentation on one photograph may be between 5 to 10 minutes.

Choose a photograph (preferably made after 1970) that is of significance to you and identify it. Discuss the approach you will use during your minute long presentation to analyze this photo and provide a bulleted list of important points you plan to make. Consider what drew you to this image and how it encapsulates what you have learned about the history of photography this semester?

Finally, provide the sources of information in CMS Bibliography format that you will use in your presentation.

Final Presentations will be delivered during our scheduled final exam period on Monday, December 11. The presentation itself may earn up to 30 points.

Essay 3

Due Monday, November 27

50 points

Read Susan Sontag's essay, *America, Seen Through Photographs, Darkly* and respond.

Explain what Sontag means when she writes that Walker Evans' photos "confer importance" and "democratize" their subjects by "leveling up." In Sontag's view, how did the MOMA exhibitions, *The Family of Man* and the retrospective of Diane Arbus' work differ? What differences in American culture during the 1950s and the 1970s did these exhibitions reveal? According to Sontag, how did Diane Arbus choose her subjects, and what were the inherent problems with this method? Compare a Robert Frank photograph to an Arbus photo. What is the general tone in each image and how is this tone constructed? What does the reveal about America to each of the photographers?

- or -

Read Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* and answer the following questions.

Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* perceptively anticipates and defines important artistic concerns of the 20th century just as photography became readily available to the masses via the hand-held camera and modern reproduction technologies. How does Benjamin define the "aura" of a work of art? To what does the aura, and "art," depend? What did technical/mechanical reproduction "emancipate" the work of art from? Once art ceases to relate to this, what are the negative consequences and benefits of this freedom? In other words, according to Benjamin, how did photography "transform the entire nature of art?" Discuss a photo made after 1980 that demonstrates the transformation and consequences that Benjamin predicted.

VTLS Report

Due one week after event

25 points

Please answer the questions on the Art Department's VTLS form. Copy or photograph the form before submitting at the event. Submit your copy or photo to the instructor in class, or via Blackboard.

You are asked by the department to attend all VTLS events. However, you are only required to report on one VTLS event for credit in this class.

Extra Credit

View the movie *Rear Window* and answer the following questions.

Consider how Alfred Hitchcock tells the story - think about the position of the camera, the main characters, and the symbolic role of the camera in Jeffries's lap. What do the other apartments and their occupants symbolize? What cinematic devices does the filmmaker use to suggest these meanings? What critique about the photographer and the practice/ process of taking photos does the movie offer? In other words, what does the movie say about the act of photographing?

- or -

View the movie, *Flags of Our Fathers* and answer the following questions.

How was the photo of the flag raising by Joe Rosenthal misleading? How did the American public interpret the action portrayed in the photo? As pondered by his son James throughout the movie, for what reasons did Jack Bradley never talk about Iwo Jima and the flag raising on Mt. Suribachi? Why did the soldiers who raised the flag in the photo struggle with going home? Why was the military interested in republishing the image widely? Explain the significance of this photo to the period.

- or -

View the movie *Bladerunner* and answer the following questions.

Where is the movie set? What is the general tone or mood? What is a replicant and what is the crime of the replicants that Decker hunts? What do the replicants want? Is Decker a replicant? Support your position. *Bladerunner* was released in 1982, but it shrewdly foretells many of the main concerns of the 21st century. The movie asks many questions, but resolves very few of them. Identify at least three 21st century issues considered by the film

		Grading Rubric			
		0 Deficient	1 Minimal/Basic	2 Proficient	3 Advanced
Content and Development	Art not identified and/or unacceptable choice of artwork. Student did not follow assignment guidelines.	Art not fully identified: Title; culture; date. Content is incomplete. Utility of analyzing formal characteristics for understanding artwork is unclear.	Art fully identified: Title; culture; date. Utility of analyzing formal characteristics for understanding artwork is expressed.	Art fully identified: Title; culture; date. Utility of analyzing formal characteristics for understanding artwork is clear.	
Analysis	Makes inaccurate statements. Does not address visual images/objects.	Analysis tends to be simplistic, superficial, or implausible. Formal description included but vague. Describes visual images/objects but without formal/ semiotic/ contextual analysis.	Analysis is plausible and begins to account for ambiguity or contradictory evidence. Clear formal description of art to support analysis and references course content. Describes visual images/objects and provides a plausible formal/ semiotic/contextual analysis of them.	Analysis is clear, nuanced, and sophisticated. Clear and well-integrated formal description of art connects to analysis and references course content. Formal/ semiotic / contextual analysis of visual images/ objects is integral to the thesis.	
Organization of argument	No discernible organization; minimal or faulty transitions. Student either did not submit the assignment or was unable to demonstrate enough knowledge to receive credit for the assignment.	Organization and structure detract from the message of the writer. Handout or other documentation (if required) incomplete. Paragraphs are disjointed and lack transition.	Structure is mostly clear and easy to follow. Handout or other documentation (if required) is completed. Paragraph transitions present.	Structure of the paper is clear and easy to follow. Handout or other documentation (if required) is thoughtfully completed. Paragraph transitions are logical.	
Vocabulary	Vocabulary is not appropriate to the subject.	Vocabulary choices are clear but remain prosaic and banal. Vocabulary is appropriate to the subject, but lacks precision.	Vocabulary choices enhance presentation's effectiveness. Uses art historical terms effectively and treats visual complexity appropriately.	Vocabulary is sophisticated and appropriate to the subject.	
Grammar, punctuation, and spelling	Paper contains numerous grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors. Language uses jargon or conversational tone.	Paper contains grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors. Language lacks clarity or includes the use of some jargon or conversational tone.	Rules of grammar, usage, and punctuation are followed; spelling is correct. Language is clear; sentences display varied structure.	Rules of grammar, usage, and punctuation are followed; spelling is correct. Language is clear and precise; sentences display consistently strong, varied structure.	

Understanding Formal Analysis

Elements of Art

The elements of art are the building blocks used by artists to create a work of art.



Line is a mark with greater length than width. Lines can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal; straight or curved; thick or thin.



Shape is a closed line. Shapes can be geometric, like squares and circles; or organic, like free-form or natural shapes. Shapes are flat and can express length and width.



Forms are three-dimensional shapes expressing length, width, and depth. Balls, cylinders, boxes, and pyramids are forms.



Space is the area between and around objects. The space around objects is often called negative space; negative space has shape. Space can also refer to the feeling of depth. Real space is three-dimensional; in visual art, when we create the feeling or illusion of depth, we call it space.



Color is light reflected off of objects. Color has three main characteristics: *hue* (the name of the color, such as red, green, blue, etc.), *value* (how light or dark it is), and *intensity* (how bright or dull it is).

- White is pure light; black is the absence of light.
- Primary colors are the only true colors (red, blue, and yellow). All other colors are mixes of primary colors.
- Secondary colors are two primary colors mixed together (green, orange, violet).
- Intermediate colors, sometimes called tertiary colors, are made by mixing a primary and secondary color together. Some examples of intermediate colors are yellow green, blue green, and blue violet.
- Complementary colors are located directly across from each other on the *color wheel* (an arrangement of colors along a circular diagram to show how they are related to one another). Complementary pairs contrast because they share no common colors. For example, red and green are complements, because green is made of blue and yellow. When complementary colors are mixed together, they neutralize each other to make brown.



Texture is the surface quality that can be seen and felt. Textures can be rough or smooth, soft or hard. Textures do not always feel the way they look; for example, a drawing of a porcupine may look prickly, but if you touch the drawing, the paper is still smooth.

Understanding Formal Analysis

Principles of Design

The principles of design describe the ways that artists use the elements of art in a work of art.



Balance is the distribution of the visual weight of objects, colors, texture, and space. If the design was a scale, these elements should be balanced to make a design feel stable. In symmetrical balance, the elements used on one side of the design are similar to those on the other side; in asymmetrical balance, the sides are different but still look balanced. In radial balance, the elements are arranged around a central point and may be similar.



Emphasis is the part of the design that catches the viewer's attention. Usually the artist will make one area stand out by contrasting it with other areas. The area could be different in size, color, texture, shape, etc.



Movement is the path the viewer's eye takes through the work of art, often to focal areas. Such movement can be directed along lines, edges, shape, and color within the work of art.



Pattern is the repeating of an object or symbol all over the work of art.



Repetition works with pattern to make the work of art seem active. The repetition of elements of design creates unity within the work of art.



Proportion is the feeling of unity created when all parts (sizes, amounts, or number) relate well with each other. When drawing the human figure, proportion can refer to the size of the head compared to the rest of the body.



Rhythm is created when one or more elements of design are used repeatedly to create a feeling of organized movement. Rhythm creates a mood like music or dancing. To keep rhythm exciting and active, variety is essential.



Variety is the use of several elements of design to hold the viewer's attention and to guide the viewer's eye through and around the work of art.



Unity is the feeling of harmony between all parts of the work of art, which creates a sense of completeness.