Photo 1 Name _____
History of Photography

You earned _____ out of 25 possible points.

Worksheet 3

Using Iconography as a Method

You may find the website, http://www.writingaboutart.org/index.html helpful.

An iconographic analysis considers the meaning of the artwork during the time period in which it was made. When using an iconographic approach, the viewer must first identify visual elements (identifiable objects and subjects) in the work, then define what those elements might mean on a symbolic level. While attempting to identify and define the visual elements of a work, the viewer must consider the artist's intent, the patron's desired meaning, and the audience for whom the work was intended to be seen. Remember that multiple meanings, or definitions, may exist for the same visual element, and those meanings may contradict each other. Therefore, when using an iconographic approach, it is important for the viewer not to take any understanding for granted. One must ask whether a definition is universally accepted, if that meaning has always been understood, and what other meanings may also be offered?

Find a photograph in your textbook that has a number of visual elements (recognizable objects) and provide caption information. Identify and list four of these elements. Next, explain the meaning of each element, given the historical context of the work. In other words, interpret the symbols in the photo as they would have been understood when it was made.

Title, artist, date: _____

Visual Elements:

1. _____ 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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