

The Visual Essay: Understanding the Persuasive Power of Images

Purposes of the exercise:

- To begin to understand the power of images in persuasion
- To begin to understand how images can be variously interpreted
- To begin to understand how small contextual cues such as titles can guide viewers' interpretation of images
- To begin to understand formal aspects of visual analysis (how repetition reinforces a message and adds cohesion to a document; to understand how contrast guides eye flow; to understand how proximity implies connection in document design)

Homework: Please put together a “visual essay” of 5-10 PowerPoint slides. *The American Flag* shown in class is an example. Your visual essay should include a title slide, but the rest of the slides should use images alone to express a point of view on a particular topic. You will present your visual essay to the class. Please email me a copy BEFORE CLASS on the due date. I will post the visual essays in Canvas for your classmates to analyze.

In Class: Choose at least two of your classmates' sets of slides to analyze. Write down the main argument you believe the slides attempt to make. Then, write down support for your argument.

Make sure to note the formal visual aspects of the slides using the terminology learned so far this semester: contrast, repetition, alignment, proximity, audience, purpose, context, etc.

Further, make sure to mention how the title of the slide either seems neutral or attempts to guide your interpretation of the images.

We will discuss your analysis in class. Then you will type one of your analyses into an MLA formatted essay due next week.

Grading Considerations:

- 1) Followed directions
- 2) Slides seemed to have an overall point of view or message
- 3) Slides fostered a discussion in the classroom
- 4) Analysis used design terms effectively
- 5) Analysis is well-edited, fully developed, and specific

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