

## Visual Analysis

**What:** Rhetorical analysis is a way of understanding and interpreting “texts” by examining the components of their construction. For this essay, you will choose an image to analyze, considering its rhetorical situation and how the different elements of the image work together to try to make its audience do, think, or feel something. Your goal is to construct a thesis based on your interpretation of the image, using specific aspects of the “text” to support your conclusions.

**Why:** We live in visually-dominant society. Most of the texts we consume are visual in nature, and much of what we read is accompanied by images. These images are rarely neutral, and often contain implicit arguments connected to specific cultural contexts. By analyzing an image, you will develop your visual literacy and critical thinking skills. You will also gain a deeper understanding of the ways different modes of composition can advance arguments. As you become more adept at conducting analyses, you will find that you can apply the skill to a range of texts, both in and out of school.

**How:** Begin by selecting an image. Product advertisements are a popular choice for this assignment, but you should also consider propaganda, public health campaigns, memes, movie posters, paintings, photographs, graffiti, flyers, pamphlets, t-shirts, etc. As long as the “text” is primarily visual, it should work for this assignment. You may also elect to work with a video if it is less than one minute in length. Next, consider:

- The **rhetorical situation** of the image, including the author, audience, purpose, context, tone, genre, design, constraints, and exigence
- The rhetorical **strategies**, or how the image is composed to produce a specific effect (use of color, layout, contrast, etc.)
- The rhetorical **appeals** (ethos/pathos/logos), or ways the image seeks to engage its audience

After you’ve considered these aspects, think about how the appeals and strategies used in the image are connected to its rhetorical situation. Also ask yourself how the rhetorical strategies you’ve identified enable particular appeals.

Once you’ve done this, you’ll be ready to compose a thesis that argues your interpretation (i.e. a particular way of viewing the image) based on the choices made in its construction. As you compose your essay, you’ll also want to think about what the rhetorical moves made in this image say about the larger contexts and concerns surrounding it.

### Requirements:

- A **3 page** visual analysis including
  - An approved image to work with
  - A thesis that argues for a specific interpretation of the image based on detailed supporting examples from the image
  - A coherent organizational structure that supports your thesis
  - A clear connection between your way of viewing this image and its context

- A strong sense of audience
- A citation for the image
- Proofreading and MLA formatting

**WHEN:**

Thursday, Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> : 1<sup>st</sup> Rough Draft Peer Review – Bring one hard copy to class and put one in iCollege drop box before class

Thursday, Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> : 2<sup>nd</sup> Rough Draft Peer Review – Bring one hard copy to class and put one in iCollege drop box before class

**Final Draft Due: Sunday Feb 12 at 11:59 pm via iCollege Dropbox**