

How to succeed on analysis papers in Art 1350

For Susan Cohen's classes

These papers are intended to give you the opportunity to learn both photographic and diversity lessons from some of the best photographers in the world. They are also intended to “introduce” you to some photographers you may not have encountered before.

They are not intended to be particularly difficult nor involve an enormous amount of work. You should be able to complete them within a couple of hours.

The method is straightforward:

1. Do a little bit of research so that you get a sense of who this photographer is and why he or she chooses to photograph the things he or she does.
2. Choose three pictures that strike you and speak to the diversity lessons discussed in class.
3. Write a report analyzing the three pictures. The report needs to have:
 - a. Your name and the class name at the top of the first page
 - b. A title
 - c. Be written in paragraph form just like you would any other report.
 - d. Be at least one page, double-spaced, without the pictures.
 - e. The pictures should be attached. If you choose to put them into the report, then the length needs to grow to compensate.
 - f. List the sources or websites that you used at the end of the text.

Your report needs to include these things:

1. **One** paragraph explaining who the photographer is and why you think he or she photographs the things he or she photographs. **This should not be a biography**; just show that you have a sense of who this person is.
2. The analysis of each photo should discuss:
 - a. Why did you choose this photo?
 - b. What message does the photograph send? Consider:
 - i. What does the photograph say about the subject? And how does the photograph tie into the diversity messages presented in class?
 - ii. What is the mood of the photo?
 - iii. How does the photo make you feel?
But don't get hung up on this, it's just one part of the message of the photo.
 - iv. A few cautions: Don't speak strictly on emotion. And don't read messages into the photograph that are not there. You can usually find some

background about the photos on the Internet. A little research goes a long way.

- c. What makes this photo work photographically? Consider:
 - i. The lighting, and shadows.
 - ii. The contrast, balance and depth of field.
 - iii. The leading lines, sense of depth or other composition devices
 - iv. Does the photograph use a high-key or low-key technique?
(This is likely linked to the mood of the photo.)
 - v. How do these photographic techniques help build the message of the photo?
 - vi. Don't worry too much whether the photograph is black and white or color, unless it somehow changes the message of the photo. Many photos are shot in color and published in black and white.

With any report, it's a good idea to write a draft one day, then let it sit overnight. Pick it up again the next day, reread it to make sure you made all the points you wanted to make and make sure you still feel the same about what you had to say. Polish your writing and print it out to turn in.

Finally, please staple your pages together so that nothing gets lost.