**VISUAL LITERACY ESSAY ASSIGNMENT**

For a moment, I would like us to think about visual images. When you watch TV, when you listen to the radio, when you flip through magazines, and when you surf the Internet, you engage with a constant stream of visual images. Sometimes these are simply ads, and sometimes these are photos. What do these images do? Do these images make you feel something? Do these images make you want something? If we take ads, we all know that ads do something; but what exactly are the ads doing?

We have all seen a piece of art—from sculptures to paintings. Now, you may think that the Mona Lisa is just a portrait of a woman by Leonardo da Vinci but many people see this painting as a statement about the nouveau riche. Visual imagery creates many different effects, and so we want to take the skills of rhetorical analysis and interpretation that you learned last semester, investigating how these images create these effects for you as a viewer.

**What You Will Need To Do**

This unit asks you to write about one piece of art. At some point during this unit, you will visit the Haggerty Art Museum on campus. Using the techniques learned in class from lecture and readings, analyze a specific photograph, sculpture, or painting from the Haggerty Art Museum’s collection. You will not simply describe the piece. You will also explain your reaction to the piece and stake an interpretive claim. Our interest in this paper is not what your interpretation is but how you can articulate your interpretation.

**Begin by thinking about the following questions:**

1. What is it about a specific piece of art that you respond to?
2. Is the work telling a story?
3. What was your immediate response to the work? Did your response change after looking at the work longer?
4. What does this work tell you about some larger idea—money, gender, etc.?
5. How do the materials and processes used to create this piece impact how these ideas are conveyed?
6. What would you want the rest of the class to see that they might otherwise miss?

We want to tie reactions to specific ideas from the artwork, because analysis and interpretation depend upon specificity. For specific, concrete analysis of this piece of art, we will make use of chapter 10 of *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing*, as well as links on D2L.

**Format and Grade**

- Double-spaced, Times New Roman 12pt font, APA Style
- 4-5 pages plus References list and figures
- Unit 1 accounts for 25% of your final grade (25 points)
- Review the Grade Sheet on D2L for the specific criteria that will be used to evaluate your essay
- The rubric for this unit, also on D2L, will further help you understand what you need to do to achieve proficiency for these criteria.

As this is an academic paper. I expect you as an academic writer to follow the basic rules of good writing. This means, that there should be no spelling errors, few to no grammatical errors, and appropriate APA citations.