Spring 2014

Composition 1101

Prof. Scanlan

Essay 2: Describing and Comparing Photographs

To describe is to create a verbal picture. A person, a place, a thing—even an idea or a state of mind—can be made vividly concrete through description. More specifically for our class, this essay asks us to take two photographs and then describe and compare them. We compare things all the time: music, college courses, ideas, and fashion. We often do so in order to establish ways of knowing. Describing and comparing go together and they are two of the most important ways of understanding the world around us.

Writing a description/comparison essay for our class requires three tasks that we have talked about in class:

1. Gathering: Gather as many details about the image/pro-filmic event as possible. Rely upon not only what the eyes see, but also on the emotions it seems to generate.

2. Terms: Dominant Impression, Reality Effect, Studium, Punctum, Frame, Pro-filmic Event: Use these terms (and others if needed) as a way to help you and your reader comprehend the photos.

3. Organization: How you move through the description is vital to writing a clear and effective essay. For example, will you move through each photo from top to bottom (Subject-by-Subject Organization)? Or, will you discuss the idea of color in both photos within one paragraph (Point-by-Point Organization)? Above all, you must organize it according to some strategy, and this will become your method.

More Specifically, in Essay 2, you are to write a 700-word essay (approx. three pages) in which you describe and compare the two photos that you took. You must take the photos, and I must approve your choices. Second, you must post the pictures to our OpenLab website—which means that you have to become a member of the site—see me if you have questions. Third, you must incorporate at least two quotations from either chapter four (“Urban Art and Design”) or from Susan Sontag’s “On Photography.” And, fourth, you must include a works cited page for this essay.

Grading Rubric:

1. Title, introduction, thesis, method (25 points)

2. Concrete Descriptions (25 points)

3. Organization and sentence/paragraph structure (25points)

4. Photography terms, conclusion, and works cited (25 points)

Due Dates:

Mar 11: Take photos plus readings in *Dwell*

Mar 18: Post Pictures to OpenLab

Mar 25: Peer Review—bring 2 pages to class

Apr 3: Final Draft of Essay 3