

# Art Critique



## An Art Criticism Method

When used in reference to a work of art, art criticism is a process of asking questions through which we may discover many of an image's meanings. This method of art criticism analyzes the information that can be seen and understood within the image, as well as information about the image's context. You will choose one work of art from the attached list for study. Then you will compose and submit, on the prearranged due date, an analytical research paper in which the following aspects of art criticism are addressed. Your paper must cite ***no fewer than six sources*** (textbooks and encyclopedias not allowed), **must include an annotated Works Cited list** as well as text citations, and **must conform to standard MLA format**.

### I. Impression (10%)

*A first impression of the feeling or mood of the image.* Consider the following questions:

- What is the first word that comes to mind when you look at this image?
- Is the image joyful or gloomy?
- How does the image make you feel?

### II. Description (10%)

*A process of taking inventory, of noting what is immediately visible in an image.* Try to avoid making inferences or judgments.

Observe:

- subject matter
- sensory properties: line, shape, color, texture, value, space
- formal properties: repetition, contrasts, center of interest, movement, balance, unity
- medium/materials/technique

### III. Interpretation (70%)

*A process of finding the overall meaning of the image.* The image may be meaningful on several different levels. For example, the image may have a special message to which we can relate today, but it may have meant something different for people living at the time and place of its origin. The image may be a record of a historical event, but it may also have a broader significance. This process should include:

- contextual **research** on
  - ✓ characteristics of the movement to which the work belongs (**essential!**)
  - ✓ the artist's life
  - ✓ the community in which the artist lived
  - ✓ the social, economic, religious and political environment in which the image was created
  - ✓ the original function/purpose of the image
- formal analysis of the image

### IV. Judgment (10%)

*A process of giving an image rank in relation to other works of its type.* Compare this work with others from the same time or style.

