Humanities Unit Paper—Assignment and Guidelines

For this paper, you are going to use two texts in order to build an analytical argument based on close readings. Your paper will include an analysis of one poem or other short literary work as well as an analysis of one visual artwork. The poem or short literary work can be any text discussed in class or else something approved by me beforehand. The visual artwork can come from anything we look at in class or any other outside visual artwork (i.e. a painting, sculpture, photograph, etc.)

In order to build an argument for your paper, you must make some claim about the texts that is not obvious (this will be your thesis) and support these claims by presenting interpretive evidence from the literary text and the artwork. In constructing an argument, try to avoid simply saying the same thing about both texts. One way of approaching the assignment might be to consider joining together two seemingly different texts and have your argument demonstrate the way in which the texts are actually thematically linked. We will discuss further strategies of “close reading” and building interpretive arguments in class.

In order to approach the problem of accurately and succinctly describing visual texts, please bring a concise, typed description of your artwork to class on Wednesday Nov. 29 along with a reproduction of the artwork itself and an indication of what your literary text will be. In this description, simply attempt to capture what you perceive as the main formal elements of the work and the most important details, such that if someone were not looking at the work they could imagine what it looks like.

The essay itself should be 5-6 pages in length, typed (12 point Times Roman font), double-spaced, with one-inch margins and page numbers. Cite all sources using MLA style and include a title. A rough draft is due in class on Monday Dec. 4 (bring three copies to class) and the final draft is due on Wednesday Dec 6 as part of your Unit Three Portfolio.

Evaluative Criteria:

- Is the essay clearly and logically structured?
- Does the essay use concise language and leave out any excessive or irrelevant material, especially in its descriptions of the works?
- Does the essay clearly present an argument about the texts that is not obvious but is supported with interpretive evidence?
- Does the essay look closely at the details of the texts it analyzes?
- Does the essay show clear usage of grammar, spelling, diction, and mechanics?

Unit Three Portfolio grade breakdown: Artwork Description (5%); Peer Review Worksheets (5%); Rough Draft (10%); Final Draft (80%)