**11AP**

**Questions for Visual Rhetoric**

• What is the historical, cultural, social or economic context of the visual? How might I determine it? How does absence of or misunderstanding of this context contribute to misreading?

• Do I feel compelled to speculate about the creator’s gender, ethnicity, creed, age, etc. as I interrogate the work? How might answers to these questions change or complicate my reading?

• What is the work’s creator trying to accomplish; can I summarize the work’s purpose or message?

• Why did the creator organize the work in the way that s/he did? What clues do I have to answer this question?

• What feature of the work first captured my attention and why? How might that response be made relevant to the reader?

• What do I like best/least about the work? Is my personal “reaction” relevant to the assignment? If not, can I reframe that response with scholarly assessment criteria?

• What is the overall tone and mood of the work?

• What is the point of view of the work; how might I infer it?

• Can I infer the creator’s state of mind when s/he drafted this work? What role, if any, should biographical knowledge of the creator play in my reading of the work?

• How does the work reveal the creator’s attitude toward the subject and its audience? Why did the creator choose this medium rather than another?

• Is the message of the work specific or universal? Can a case be made for both?

• Is there a secondary message in the work? If the creator included print text, how does that text add to or possibly complicate the visual text?

• If the work was constructed with color, what do the hues convey?

• How can this visual further a claim I want to make in my argument?

Adapted by Sherry Wynn Perdue for the *Write Space Resource Guide* (2007) from Shirley Counsil’s English Language and Composition Advanced Placement Consultant Handout, “Questions for Visual Works.” Lester Faigley’s *Picturing Texts* is the inspiration for both resources.

**OVERVIEW-PARTS-TITLE-INTERRELATIONSHIPS-CONCLUSION (OPTIC)**

From Walter Paulk’s book *How to Study in College*

This strategy provides you with key concepts to think about when approaching any kind of visual text.

* **O** is for *overview* – write down a few notes on what the visual appears to be about.
* **P** is for *parts* – zero in on the parts of the visual. Write down any elements or details that seem important.
* **T** is for *title* – highlight the words of the title of the visual (if one is available).
* **I** is for *interrelationships* – use the title as the theory and the parts of the visual clues to detect and specify the interrelationships in the graphic.
* **C** is for *conclusion* – draw a conclusion about the visual as a whole. What does the visual mean? Summarize the message of the visual in one or two sentences.

Practice:



\*James Rosenquist’s 1996 painting *Professional Courtesy* (in the form of 1960s pop art)

1. Use the **OPTIC** strategy to analyze this visual.

**O =**

**P =**

**T =**

**I =**

**C =**

2. Do you feel that this an effective strategy in analyzing visuals? Why or why not?