Spring Board Unit 1: Perception is Everything

Unit Vocabulary

1. Perception
2. Aphorism
3. Frame
4. Cropping
5. Lighting
6. Image
7. Composition
8. Space
9. Mise en scene
10. Literary Theory
11. Reader Response Critical Theory
12. Free verse (poetry)
13. Fixed form (poetry)
14. Imagery
15. Vignette
16. Shot
17. Establishing shot
18. Long shot
19. Medium shot
20. Close up
21. Extreme close up
22. Two shot
23. Eye level
24. High angle
25. Low angle
26. High key
27. Low key
28. Bottom or side lighting
29. Front or back lighting
30. Thesis
31. Photo essay
32. Cultural Criticism
33. Marginalize
34. Imperialism
35. Situational irony

Activity 1.2 “Perception is Everything”

1. Read “Learning Focus” p. 4
2. Choose 5 aphorisms on p. 6 that you like and explain what they mean.
3. Quick Write: In 15 minutes, write response to one of the aphorisms about the truth that it conveys.

Activity 1.4 “Different Ways to See the World”

1. Write down the definitions of the following terms (provided by teacher) as they are used in photography:
   a. Frame
   b. Subject
   c. Cropping
   d. Lighting
   e. Image
   f. Composition
   g. Space

2. The term “mise en scene” (“placing on stage”) refers to the composition, or setting, of an image. It can also be seen as a visual theme. It is created by using the set design, lighting, space, composition, costumes, makeup and hairstyles, acting, filmstock (choice of black-and-white or color, fine grain or grainy, etc.). Study the following photograph, and write a brief description of the mise en scene, or composition, of the image.

3. Literary Theory attempts to establish principles for interpreting and evaluating literary texts. In this unit, you will learn about Reader Response Criticism, which comes from the idea that people read and interpret literature differently because they bring different personal experiences to the text. What personal connections might you have made that influenced your perceptions of the photograph?

4. As a class, complete the OPTIC chart for analyzing the photograph on p. 10 of the Spring Board book.
“My Papa’s Waltz” p. 11

1. What is your initial reaction to or interpretation of the poem?

2. What specific words or phrases from the text support your interpretation?

3. Is there more than one way to interpret the poem? What might make one reader interpret the poem differently from the way another person interprets it?

4. W.H. Auden once said, “What a poem means is the outcome of a dialogue between the words on the page and the person who happens to be reading it; that is to say, its meaning varies from person to person.” What do you think he meant by this?

Activity 1.6 “Introducing Reader Response Theory”

1. Read Spring Board pages 12-14. What are the three elements of Reader Response Theory?

2. Write a summary statement that briefly, but completely summarizes Reader Response Theory.

“The Last Word” p. 16

1. Quote a line from the poem that you find interesting, and explain why it interests you.

2. Quote a line that you think is weak or boring, and explain why it is weak or boring.

3. What is one question that you would like to ask the poet about the poem?

4. In what way do you connect with the poem as a reader? (What do you think you and the poet may have in common?)

5. Write out your own, personal interpretive response to the poem. As a pre-write, you may use the TP-CASTT (Title, paraphrase, connotation, attitude, shift, title, theme) strategy. Make sure to include specific lines from the poem that support your interpretation.

Activity 1.8 “Seeing the World from My Perspective”

1. Read the poem “I Remember” on page 20. Give an example of how the speaker appeals to each of the five senses: sight, taste, hearing, smell, touch.

2. What is the subject of the poem?

3. What is the setting of the poem?
4. What do we learn about the speaker of the poem?

5. What seems to be the author’s purpose or message in the poem?

6. How does point of view, the lens through which the speaker is presenting the information, affect the reader’s interpretation of the events?

7. What is the writer’s tone? Give an example of diction that supports your answer.

8. Identify an image that complicates the tone and identify a possible contrast between the speaker’s perspective and the reader’s perspective.

9. Select a memory of a place, event, or time in your life of significance to you, and brainstorm a list of images that this memory generates for you. Try to evoke all five senses in your list.

10. Circle words or phrases from your list that you think may be effective if used in a memory poem of your own. Then freewrite about the memory.

11. Organize the freewrite into the structure of a free verse poem and edit until you are satisfied with it.

Activity 1.10 Symbolic Perception of Self

1. Read “Four Skinny Trees” p. 29. List three words, phrases, and/or images that indicate the speaker’s self-perception.

2. What do you think the trees in this poem symbolize? Explain your answer.

3. What is the tone of the poem? Give an example of diction that supports your answer.

4. What do you think the concrete symbolizes in the final stanza? Explain your answer.

5. Give an example of figurative language from the poem.

Activity 1.11 Exploring Perspectives in Visual Art

1. Review the terms for cinematic techniques listed on page 31. Look at the print advertisement provided by the teacher, and use the OPTIC strategy to analyze the advertisement. The OPTIC strategy is discussed in detail on Spring Board page 10.

2. Use the chart on page 33 to analyze the cinematic choices made by the artistic director and the effect of each choice on the viewer.

3. Does your advertisement include a slogan? If so, how effective is it? If not, write a slogan for the advertisement.
4. List three examples of advertising slogans that you remember without looking at any advertisements.

Activity 1.12 Exploring a Photo Essay


1. Recall the working summary of Reader Response criticism that you wrote in Activity 1.6. Reader Response Criticism explores how different individuals see the same text differently. Consider this concept as you review the photo essay presented by the teacher. Read the definition of “photo essay” at the top of page 34. What is the difference between a written essay and a photo essay?

2. What are the issues presented in the photo essay, and what is the author’s position on the issues?

3. What is the purpose of this photo essay?

4. Who is the target audience for this photo essay?

5. How do the images tell a story or progression of events to reveal a particular position?

6. What is your interpretation of the photo essay? Discuss how the composition and arrangement of photos lead to your interpretation.

“Margaret Thatcher Reflects on Working Toward Peace”

1. What is Thatcher’s tone toward Capitalism? Give an example of diction that supports your claim.

2. Toward the end of the essay, Thatcher alludes to Hitler and Stalin. What point does she make by comparing these dictators with the Western governments of today?

3. Thatcher repeats the claim that Capitalism is “a moral system based on a biblical ethic.” What is her purpose for doing this? What is the intended effect on the reader?

4. List one claim about Capitalism is Thatcher responding to in this essay.

5. Give an example of a rhetorical question from Thatcher’s essay. Evaluate the effectiveness of this rhetorical question.

6. Write a thesis statement that reveals Thatcher’s attitude toward Capitalism.

7. List three quotes from the essay and explain how each supports your thesis statement.
8. For each of the quotes you chose, describe an image that you might use in a photo essay to illustrate how each quote supports your thesis statement.

9. Describe an image you might use to illustrate your thesis statement, and an image you might use to illustrate the conclusion to your photo essay.

Embedded Assessment 1.1 Creating a Photo Essay: Essay may be digital, hard copy, or a ten-paragraph traditional essay may be substituted. All photos must be verified as original by turning in the camera or media card used.

Activity 1.14 What is Cultural Criticism?

1. Read “Perspective and Culture” p. 44 and “Cultural Criticism” p. 45. Write a brief definition of “culture” and give two examples of the elements of culture.

2. Read “Speaking with Hands” p. 46-47. Explain the purpose of the allusion to Moses and the Burning Bush.

3. Why do you think Mama made the children stand around while she argued with the store owner?

4. What do you think the speaker means by describing Mama as “tired of being tired?”

5. Does speaking broken English marginalize people? Explain your answer.

6. Do you sympathize with Mama and the speaker, or do you find her actions inappropriate? Explain your answer.

7. Use the elements listed as part of the definition of Cultural Criticism to write a paragraph about how this lens or perspective might help you interpret this text.

Activity 1.16 A Deeper Understanding of Imperialism using Cultural Criticism

1. Listen to the British National Anthem (p.55 or www.hereditarytitles.com). What does the song reveal about the attitude of the British toward Britain and the rest of the world when the song was chosen as the national anthem?

2. How might someone who came from one of the countries colonized by Britain view these lyrics?

3. By 1922, the British Empire ruled about one-quarter of the Earth’s population and land. To what does the song writer attribute the power of the British Empire?

4. In the last stanza, the song writer suggests that what events will lead to Great Britain becoming even “more majestic?”
5. Imperialism is “the policy of extending the rule or authority of an empire or nation over foreign countries, or of acquiring and holding colonies and dependencies. Today, imperialism is considered by many to be a negative thing. Nations are condemned for conquering or occupying other nations. Does imperialism always have a negative long-term impact on the occupied nation? Is imperialism ever justified? Can one nation occupy another without being imperialist? Explain your answers.

Activity 1.17 “Shooting an Elephant”

1. Life experiences often have a significant influence on a writer’s ideas and perception of events. You will examine George Orwell’s essay “Shooting an Elephant” from a Cultural Criticism lens in relation to the topic of imperialism. George Orwell (1903-1950) was born in colonial India but was educated in England. He served with the Imperial Police in Burma, and later became a journalist. He was admired for conveying the “truth” about political events around the world. “Shooting an Elephant” is a reflective essay. According to p. 57, what are the three parts of a reflective essay?

2. The first two paragraphs establish the mood and provide a context for the upcoming event. What can the reader infer about the narrator based on his commentary in just these two paragraphs?

3. Identify one positive image and one negative image in the first two paragraphs. How does Orwell use diction and imagery to create a contrast between the people of Burma and the narrator?

4. Paragraph 3 begins with an event, or incident. How does this “tiny incident” enlighten the narrator about the “real power of imperialism?”

5. Read paragraphs 5-6 and identify the narrator’s feelings and thoughts in response to the event. What cultural conflict does the narrator represent?

6. Read paragraph 7 and identify the narrator’s response and reflection in the midst of his circumstances.

7. In paragraph 12, what do the details of the elephant’s collapse reveal about the narrator’s attitude toward life?

8. What is the narrator’s initial response to the killing of the elephant?

9. What are the narrator’s thoughts after he has had time to reflect, to contemplate or think seriously, on the killing of the elephant?

10. How is the narrator an example of situational irony?

11. List one example of the narrator’s reflection on the events and discuss its significance to the work as a whole.
12. What is the narrator’s position regarding the shooting of the elephant?

13. What does the shooting of the elephant suggest about the nature of power in relationship to imperialism?

14. How would you state the theme of this essay? How does the last sentence of the essay relate to your assertion of the theme?

15. Recall an event in your life that taught you something valuable. Note the event, your response, and your reflection on the lesson(s) learned.

Activity 1.18 Being a Stranger

1. Watch the “Blood in the Water” scene from *Jaws*. How is chief Brody symbolic of the “stranger in the village?” In what ways is he set apart from the other characters in this scene?

2. Name another character from a movie, book, or story that fits the stereotype of the “stranger in the village.”

3. Name a person in real life who fits the “stranger in the village” stereotype.

4. In most cases, the “stranger in the village” is depicted as a positive character who is shunned as an outsider because of his or her beliefs or characteristics. Is shunning someone because of his or her beliefs ever justifiable? Explain your answer.

5. Have you ever felt like the “stranger in the village?” If so, how did you feel about being shunned, and what did you do about it? In what ways did the experience change you as a person?

Activity 1.19 Two Different Worlds

1. Read “Double Face” p. 67-68. Give one example of the stranger in the village thematic concept in this work.

2. What is the nature of the conflict between the narrator and her daughter?

3. Write a short scene that includes dialogue based on your own experience being a “stranger in the village.” Be sure to adhere to the punctuation rules for dialogue listed on page 68.

Activity 1.20 Understanding the Stranger’s Perception of a Village

1. Read “Stranger in the Village” paragraph 1. Identify the event and its significance.
2. Read paragraphs 2-3. What is the function of the details about the village and its people? How does Baldwin use these details to impact the reader?

3. Read paragraphs 4-5. What is Baldwin’s response (his feelings and thoughts) in paragraph 4?

4. Identify Baldwin’s reflection (insights and learning) in paragraph 5.

5. What is the significance of the last sentence in paragraph 4?

6. What is the significance of James Joyce’s quote at the end of paragraph 5? What does it contribute to Baldwin’s reflection?

7. Identify Baldwin’s tone or attitude as he writes about the village. Identify one example of diction that contributes to this tone.

8. Read paragraphs 6-9. Discuss the irony of the village’s “custom” as it resonates with Baldwin’s in his reflection.

9. Discuss the analogy Baldwin makes in paragraph 7.

10. Read paragraphs 10-13. How is the stranger in the village theme conveyed in these paragraphs?

11. What words are repeated in paragraph 10? Why do you think Baldwin does this?

12. How does the tone become more emotional in paragraph 10?

13. Read paragraphs 14-15. Discuss the new description of the village in which Baldwin is a stranger.


15. Read the rest of the essay. Is Baldwin’s conclusion positive or negative? Explain your answer.

16. Baldwin’s essay was written almost 60 years ago. Consider the world we live in today. Would Baldwin feel the same strangeness today? Would he have the same reactions? Explain.

Embedded Assessment 1.2 Writing a Reflective Essay. Minimum length for essay is 10 paragraphs.

Take Unit 1 Test. Test scores will be based on a bell curve, rather than on the established grading scale.