Visual Rhetorical Analysis

• Images, like words, can be used to create meaning or construct an argument.
• As with verbal rhetorical analysis, you determine how images communicate a message and achieve a rhetorical purpose.

Visual Rhetorical Analysis

• We view – and react to – countless images every day.
  – Websites
  – Advertisements
  – Photographs
  – Brochures and flyers

Visual Rhetorical Analysis

• Visual vs. verbal analysis – In both cases you:
  – Consider the text’s rhetorical situation, made up of SOAPS – subject, audience, occasion, purpose, and speaker
  – Analyze how the text communicates for that audience, purpose, and occasion or context

Visual Rhetorical Analysis

• But in visual rhetorical analysis, you focus mainly on visual elements instead of verbal.

OK?

Visual Rhetorical Analysis

• Ask yourself:
  – Who is the intended audience?
  – What is the purpose of this visual image?
  – What is its context or occasion?
Visual Rhetorical Analysis

• Begin by simply describing the text. **Describe** its:
  – Colors and shading
  – People and places
  – Objects and shapes
  – Foreground and background
  – Arrangement of elements on the page

Visual Rhetorical Analysis

• Then **respond** to the text:
  – What is my initial gut reaction?
  – How does it make me **feel**?
  – What does it make me **think** about?
  – Does it make me want to **do** something?
  – Does it **remind** me of anything I've seen before?

Visual Rhetorical Analysis

• What rhetorical appeals is it using?
  – Ethos?
  – Pathos?
  – Logos?

Visual Rhetorical Analysis

• Finally, **analyze** the text:
  – How do its elements communicate a message to achieve a **purpose**?
  – Look at each element you described to determine how it might contribute to an overall **message**.

Visual Rhetorical Analysis

• Put this all together under **OPTIC**:
  – **Overview**: In a single sentence, what is the image about **literally**?
  – **Parts**: Look at each part, each element, noting any details that seem important.
  – **Title/text**: If available, does the title clarify the purpose? Is there any text present? Why?
  – **Interrelationship**: How are its parts related to one another, and to the image as a whole?
  – **Conclusion**: Write a brief conclusion about the image stating its overall purpose – what is about analytically?