ISU: Comparative Art History Essay (10%)  
Name:____________

STEP ONE: RESEARCH on the school network:  
K://Mr.Arnett/AVI4M/ISU/Social Commentary/intro.html and look on-line what social commentary means in art: See your art history handouts for ideas or try http://www.20thcenturylondon.org.uk  
-> themes.

STEP TWO: CHOOSE two 20th century artworks that have the same social/cultural theme (each work must illustrate a different art movement).

STEP THREE: Write a comparative analysis essay about the two 20th century artworks employing the elements and principles of art.

The essay should include brief information on the artists and movements the works are associated with.

THESIS: UNDERLINE IT! - Your thesis should be well-worded, insightful, and demonstrates a clear and valid opinion. It should focus the essay forcefully.

Questions to consider:  
How do the artists visualize their specific social commentary using the elements and principles of design?

Which of the two works of art chosen to compare is more effective and/or clear in conveying a specific social commentary and why?

Use the following handout – How to Write An Effective Essay if you are not sure how to start.

STEP FOUR: Include photocopy reproductions of the two works of art you chose to comparatively analysis using the elements and principles of design.

RESTRICTIONS  
The paper should be no longer then 4-6 typed pages (approx.750–1300 words). Remember to include at least 3 different specific sources/references, (i.e. books, internet) and use the elements and principles of design in comparing the two works.

*Don’t forget to include your research references!

Social/Cultural Theme: War (Second World War)

Henry Moore’s – Women in a Shelter, 1941.  
Art Movement: Modern Art: Abstract Sculpture (Organic Abstraction)

Graham Sutherland’s - City; Burnt out interior; Silence, 1941.  
Art Movement: Neo Romanticism
Art of the 20th Century Essay

Background Information into the Works of Art

Women in a Shelter: The following art work done in drawing pencil, chalk, watercolor wash, ink and wax crayon was created by an artist by the name of Henry Moore in 1941. Moore found the inspiration of the artwork during the second world war when his studio was bombed. The artwork depicts the struggle of London’s people in the underground sanctuaries they found during the bombing of London. The canvas itself being 48.0 x 42.8 cm now resides in the London Museum being one of only 20 pieces that depict the harshness of the Second World War in London.

City, Burnt out Interior; Silence – painting: The following painting was completed by an artist by the name of Graham Sutherland’s, after his experience during the Second World War during the Blitz of London. Later on Sutherland’s comment about the after math or the bombing was ’I will never forget those extraordinary first encounters: the silence, the absolute dead silence, except every now and then a thin tinkle of falling glass - a noise which reminded me of the music of Debussy’, a quote that certainly is the inspiration to his painting. Also completed in 1941, this painting is another one of 20 being held in the London Museum. One of the main differences between the previous work of art and this one is the size of the painting, being 88.1 x 62.5 cm and is done completely in an unrecorded type of paint.

Critiquing of World War 2

Art throughout history has inspired, forced emotion and educated countless thousands in the world. Art is not simply a means to make money or a job that one goes to every day out of obligation. Art is the source of history that never allows its viewers to forget points in time. With that in mind two works of art have been selected to be critiqued, both identifying a major point in history. The Second World War was a pivotal point in history, a major event being Blitz Krieg, the bombing of London. The two works of art that have been selected are: Women in a Shelter by Henry Moore and Burnt out Interior by Graham Sutherland. Both works of art depict the after math of the bombing of London, thus fit into similar categories. Similar categories are important in a comparison as both artists had similar goals but different outcomes. The work of art that was most successful was Henry Moore’s Women in Shelter due to its use of artistic skill and the emotion that flows from the canvas.
Henry Moore’s Women in Shelter uses an array of artist methods and skills in his painting. Not only does he use four different materials in his painting but he also shows artist expertise in this very abstract representation of the people of London as they look for refuge from the devastation surrounding them. Moore’s painting incorporates an array of line techniques in the detail of the forms of the different women and the detail in the facial expressions. The lines used are very loose and have simplicity to them. This bodes well for the painting as it does distract the viewer with detail and intrigues them with the actual painting as a whole. Burnt out Interior, by Graham Sutherland, does incorporate the use of line in the creation process; but not to the extent that Moore uses in his painting. The lines used in Sutherland’s painting are more precise but do not create the same effect that Moore’s use of lines does, which is drawing the viewer in. Ultimately it does depend on what the vision of the artist is, but technique wise, Moore’s use of line shows a greater knowledge of principles and elements of design in abstract painting. The superior use of line in Moore’s painting makes his painting more successful than Sutherland’s painting.

Elements and principles give art structure, without those people wouldn’t know how to create art. Elements and principles involve the use of line, value, form, shape, proportions, space, unity, texture, pattern, emphasis, color etc. Line was the first elements and principles discussed but when critiquing two works of art it requires a look at different elements and principles in order to fully explain the reasoning of the more successful piece. Moving on to the next principle and element, value is a huge part of art and the process of giving art work realism. Value can create mystery in a work of art or highlight aspects of a subject to create a sense of lifelike quality.

Moore’s painting incorporates value in all aspects of the painting. The value is used throughout the painting, in the anatomy and facial expressions of the figures as well as creating a mysterious background. He uses the value also to blend the entire canvas together, not so much showing the figures as different parts of the painting but as one. This ties together the meaning of the painting, all the people huddled together as one in their time of crisis. Sutherland’s painting also incorporates value in the subject of the painting. The value in his painting helps create the “burnt out” theme of his painting and he uses the technique very accurately. Whereas Moore uses his value mostly in the figures themselves, Sutherland uses his throughout the setting of his painting. The two artists use value throughout their paintings and have shown equally that the knowledge and know-how of this principle. My only comment would be that Moore successfully used different color ranges in creating his value, whereas Sutherland restricted himself with using black and white for his value.

Color is an element and principle very important in an artist’s work, as it can create moods or feelings and thus control how the observer views the art. Colors such as red and orange can give the viewer the feeling of angry, whereas blues and cool colors giving the observer a relaxing feeling or possibly sorrow. Moore’s painting incorporates a range of different tones and colors. Since his use of different materials, (chalk, wax crayon, ink, pencil and watercolor wash), Moore was able to create a work of art that was colorful while still being
able to have it all uniform. The colors aren’t very vibrant but lie in well with each other and
they make certain aspects of the painting apparent to the audience. The dull colors in the
painting help to create the mood or feeling that he wants to create. By using dull colors he
helps to create that atmosphere of sorrow, thus aiding the audience in their understanding of
that point in history. Sutherland’s painting of the Burnt out Interior does not incorporate as
wide of a color range. He also only uses one type of material in the creation of his painting, an
unrecorded type of paint, and seems to only incorporate three different colors. This is not to
say that Sutherland’s painting does not show knowledge and know-how of the element of color
in his work, just that he may not have considered the use of different materials or different
colors in his painting. The reasoning for Moore’s painting being more successful is the emotion
he is able to create from the color in his painting. William Faulkner once said that, “The aim of
every artist is to arrest motion, which is life, by artificial means and hold it fixed so that a
hundred years later, when a stranger looks at it, it moves again since it is life.” Moore’s painting
does that very same thing, his painting captures that moment in history and he couldn’t do this
without color. The color surrounds the figures yet the faces of them are pale, showing the fear
and depression they must have been going through in their time of desolation.

I have just gone in to detail about three very important elements and principles of
design but they are not the only ones. Moore’s painting also includes accurate proportions in
the figures, which really aids him in creating life like imagery in his painting. His painting is also
very unified and has a great sense of space as it does not look as it was squeezed into the
canvas. It seems that Sutherland struggled a bit in the creation process of his painting and fails
to evoke emotion in the viewer. As a war painting, you want to bring a certain type of remorse
or sadness in the viewer and his painting is, in general, to create the type of emotion. Especially
since these two paintings share a similar theme, World War Two, it is only Moore’s painting
that demonstrates a clear knowledge of the trials the people of London had to endure, this may
be due to his experience in the time of war. It is also because Moore uses lifelike figures in his
work that evokes that type of emotion and as an artist that is one of the most important things
he wants to do when creating his work. An art critique named John T. Spike wrote that, “Artists
can be compared to bees, American philosopher Buckminster Fuller has pointed out. A bee
gathers nectar to make honey; yet what it’s really doing, one might say, is pollinating flowers.
So artists often find that their actions have unexpected consequences.” Consequences of art
work do not necessarily mean a negative connotation, but can mean that they inadvertently
create emotion in the audience and Moore does this more successfully through his use of the
many elements and principles in his artwork.

In conclusion, Moore’s Women in a Shelter in comparison with Sutherland’s Burnt Out
Interior is more successful in the sense of the use of different elements and principles as well as
the emotion that seems to flow off the canvas. Sutherland’s work of art is not as clear and
concise as Moore’s and I found myself having to read the description of the painting to gain a
better understanding of what kind of message he was going for. Moore’s painting is more
apparent in its meaning and I knew right off the bat what type of painting this was and what
type of emotion he was trying to convey. All art work is special in its own way and I am not
dictating what is to be considered art and is not to be. I am simply looking at two different
works of art, from a nonbiased perspective, and basing their successfulness on the use of
elements and principles. Moore’s painting was the “winner” in this matchup and was found to
be a more successful piece of art. The important thing to remember is that both art works do
something very important for humanity and that is educating us on a very critical time in
history.

Works Cited

Moore, Henry. “Women in a Shelter - Drawing; Pencil; Chalk; Watercolour Wash; Ink; Wax
http://www.20thcenturylondon.org.uk/server.php?show=conObject.5000
“Quotes about Art, Sayings for Artists.” The Quote Garden - Quotes, Sayings, Quotations,
Spike, John T. “Art Critiques, Reviews and Media Articles.” Environmental Art, Recycled Art and
Art of the 20th Century Comparative Essay

In the 20th century there were many changes in a women’s status at home and in the workplace. I chose two works that show the evolution of the women’s journey in the 1900’s, more specifically from World War I to World War II. The first work that I chose was the “Gee!! I Wish I Was A Man” propaganda poster from the first World War. The second piece I chose was made during the second World War and is entitled “We Can Do It!” Both of these posters were used as motivational artworks in the United States during the world wars.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION INTO THE ARTWORKS

The first artwork that I chose was part of the “Christy Girl” propaganda poster line made by the artist Howard Chandler Christy. The poster that I chose was entitled, “Gee!! I wish I were a man.” The work was created towards the end of the first World War in 1917. The “Christy Girl” is said to be a successor of the every-woman “Gibson Girl” from the early 20th century. The woman in the “Gee!! I Wish I Was A Man.” pin-up, (modelled by Ms. E. Leroy Finch), wore a naval uniform and was dressed in the patriotic colours of the United States. The artwork medium was lithograph and is now kept at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, U.S.A.

The second artwork that I chose was entitled “We Can Do It!” and was made by the artist J. Howard Miller. The posters were made on 22 x 17 inch paper. Miller produced this work for the Westinghouse electric & Manufacturing Company. The poster was made in the middle of the war, around 1942. The artwork is currently held at the Smithsonian Museum of American History, in Washington. The icon “Rosie the Riveter”, depicted on the posters, represented the women who worked in factories and shipyards during the second World War. In this work the woman is depicted as a strong, motivational figure who believes in herself and her country.

PURPOSE OF THE ARTWORKS

The purpose of the “Gee!! I Wish I Were A Man”, and the “We Can Do It!”, posters was to create motivation for people at war, but for the most part people at home. The posters used emotion to encourage the viewer to do their part in the war. The difference between these posters is the emotions which they created in their viewers.

The first “Christy Girl” poster manufactured feelings of shame, guilt, and weakness. The poster suggested that women were unable to serve and that any man who wasn’t fighting was less of a man and more of a “weak woman”. “Generally viewed as being weaker, both physically and emotionally, women as portrayed in World War I posters as willing to enroll in the Navy
prompt men who have not joined to feel dislocated from the others who are fulfilling their American duty in the war efforts," (stlau.edu).

The second artwork, “We Can Do It”, was created to instill a feeling of hope and encouragement in the men and women working on the homefront. The productivity of the people working on ammunition and army vehicles directly influenced the war. Women were encouraged to take on jobs in the defense industry and this poster created a feeling of determination in the women left at home.

TIME AND ATMOSPHERE

Both of these works were created during a world war. The propaganda posters were used to create a sense of motivation and hope in the soldiers fighting, but also for the people whom were left at home.

The first piece was created in 1917, (towards the end of the first world war). The poster was used as a final recruitment tactic for the U.S. Army in a time where they were in need of more recruits.

The second poster was created during the second world war, in 1942. The poster was used as a recruitment tool, but instead of recruiting soldiers the purpose was to recruit women as workers for the factories creating supplies, ammunition, and transportation vehicles for the army.

Women played a large role in the war by taking over jobs of men whom were away at war.

During the war the economy was held together by the women at the homefront.

CHANGE IN ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN’S RIGHTS

Women’s rights have changed in a number of ways over the years and have been influenced by a number of different works, people and events.

At the time that the first work was created women were viewed as weak, uneducated, and helpless beings. This is why in the “Christy Girl” poster the female figure is depicted as someone of which to be ashamed. The perception of women ability changed during and after the second world war. In the poster the female figure is shown being strong and determined. Women during the second world war took on more responsibilities by filling in job placements all while taking care of family. Women played a large role in the “home front” – “the civilian population and activities of a nation whose armed forces are engaged in war abroad,” (google.com). The perception of women was changed drastically during these times which later aided in the women’s rights movement. The “We Can Do It” poster became a symbol of strength in the women’s rights movement. When the war was over, the majority of the male population expected the women who were doing the “men’s” jobs to go back to staying at home. The women whom were represented by “Rosie the Riveter” had a different idea. The opportunities and responsibilities that they had become accustomed to through the duration of the war ignited a new fire among women in the United States.

ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES

In both of these works there are many elements and principles that make the message of the posters effective. The “Christy Girl” poster used colour as a way to promote patriotism. The colours used were blue, red and white, which instilled a sense of pride among Americans.

Another element that the first poster used was emphasis. The poster used line to create an emphasis on the word man. Man was underlined to encourage the males left at home to become honourable. Proportion was used to generate an alluring feeling from the female figure. The
figure captured in the poster was meant to attract the attention of people. The poster also used colour to make contrast and emphasis upon important words. Words such as “gee”, “man” and “United States Navy” were made in a different colour and/or thickness to draw the attention of viewers.

The “We Can Do It!” poster used colour as well. The poster was captured in blue, yellow and red. The bright colours used grabbed the attention of the viewer. The emotion and expression depicted on the figures face directly reflected the emotions the viewers were meant to feel. The woman’s face showed hope, determination and strength, all of which were meant to be felt by the workers at home in the United States. The contrast of the work’s colours put emphasis on the woman in the work and the strength she exuded. There was also contrast between the letters and the speech bubble, which lured the viewer’s attention. Pattern was used on the woman’s headband which added a feminine touch to the strength painting. The femininity of the figure mixed with the strength of the pose created a visual that was not typically pictured when it came to women, but was later accepted with the women’s rights movement.

EFFECTIVENESS

The two works were both extremely effective in motivating American workers and soldiers into contributing to the war. The characteristic that I believe made one poster more effective than the other would be the emotions created from viewing the artworks. The set of emotions and emotions manufactured by the first poster would be guilt, weakness, and a bruised ego. The second poster brought on feelings of hope, determination and pride. The artists took polar opposite approaches towards motivating Americans. I believe the artwork that was the most effective and influential would be the “We Can Do It!” poster. The poster was the most effective because it brought the world into a new age where women were able to serve their country, work regular jobs and later get to vote.

CONCLUSION

The two pieces had similar purposes, (recruitment and motivation), but delivered their messages in two very different ways. Both works were created during one of the World Wars and used female figures as a motivational tool. The first showing women as a weakness, and the second showing women as strength. The posters used similar colour schemes, but vary drastically with viewer emotion and feeling. The effectiveness of the works were determined by the result of the posters. The first “Gee! I Wish I Were A Man” poster could have influenced more men to join the army. The second poster had a much larger result. With the use of the poster, women were given jobs, allowed to serve in the army and, eventually given equal rights to men. Both posters created motivation for men and women, but varied in their delivery. The perception of women changed from weak in the “Gee! I Wish I Were A Man” poster to a strong and powerful force in the “We Can Do It!” poster.
Works Cited


Dolor, L.I. *Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh.*


Doe, R. John. *Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh.*


Works Cited

- “Christy Girl”
  https://www.pritzkermilitary.org/explore/museum/past-exhibits/american-icons-great-war/christy-girl
  http://www.stlawu.edu/gallery/education/fips103-3-10-4.php
  https://www.moma.org/collection/works/8845

- “We Can Do It!”
  http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_538122
In Brief: How to Write an Effective Essay

1. **CHOOSE:** First you must decide which two works of art you want to write about, consider selecting works that interest you visually.

2. **PURPOSE:** Keep the purpose of the essay in mind, what is the focus of your comparison? What are you trying to prove?

3. **PRINT OFF AND LOOK:** Get a reproduction of the works and begin by looking at the artworks you are writing about, jot down notes on all relevant matters. You can generate ideas by asking yourself these questions:

   - **DESCRIPTION:** What is my first response to the works? What is the subject matter? Do I find the work attractive, boring, ugly, offensive?

   - What are the titles? Do they help illuminate the works?
   - When and where was the work made? Try to avoid generalizations.

   - Where would the work originally have been seen? A church, a private home?

   - What purpose did the work serve? To stimulate devotion? To teach? To delight?

   - **ANALYSIS:** How are the elements and principles of design employed?

     **ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN:**
     - Space, Line, Shape, Form, Texture, Colour, Value
     - Balance, Emphasis, Movement, Rhythm & Pattern, Variety, Unity, Proportion

     What elements and principles do both works use in similar ways?
     What elements and principles do both works use in contrasting ways?
     How do both works successfully use **colour** to **unify** these works? Etc.

   - **INTERPRETATION:** How are the elements and principles employed - and more importantly to what **effect**?

     What kind of **mood/feeling** is suggested in the works as a result of how the elements and principles are used?

   - **JUDGEMENT/EVALUATION:** should be based on your formal analysis and comparison of the two works.

4. **MAKE AN OUTLINE OF YOUR IDEAS:** Jot down an outline, start with the works of art themselves and identify your thesis that you will prove. Outline how you will discuss the works of art - artistically (using the elements and principles) and then a general interpretation and judgement/evaluation.
5. RE-READ AND REVISE: Continue to re-read and revise your essay. Questions to consider:

- Do I mean what I say? Do I say what I mean?
- Could my essay be better unified? Unity - is achieved partly by eliminating irrelevancies, consider eliminating non-relevant information. Example: the whole life history of the artist.
- Could my essay be organized better? Organization - is largely a matter of arranging material into a sequence that will assist the reader to grasp a point.

6. PEER EDIT: Get another student to read your essay and have them answer the following questions:

1. What is the essay’s topic? Is it appropriate and relevant?
2. Looking at the essay as a whole, what thesis (main idea) is stated or implied?
   If implied, try to state it in your own words.
3. Is the thesis plausible? How might it be strengthened?
4. Looking at each paragraph separately:
   A) What is the basic point?
   B) How does each paragraph relate to the essay’s main idea or to the previous paragraph?
   C) Should some paragraphs be deleted? Be divided into smaller paragraphs or combined?
   D) Is each sentence clearly related to the sentence that precedes and to the sentence that follows?
   E) Is each paragraph adequately developed? Are there sufficient details to support the generalizations?
   F) Are the introductory and concluding paragraphs effective?

5. Are the necessary illustrations included and correctly identified?
6. What are the paper’s chief strengths?
7. Make at least two specific suggestions that you think will assist the author to improve the paper.

7. RE-READ AND REVISE: Consider the suggestions from the peer reviewer and revise your essay where necessary.

THESIS: UNDERLINE IT! - Your thesis should be well-worded, insightful, and demonstrates a clear and valid opinion. It should focus the essay forcefully.
B1. The Critical Analysis Process: demonstrate an understanding of the critical analysis process by examining, interpreting, evaluating, and reflecting on various art works;

B1.1 demonstrate the ability to support their initial responses to a variety of art works with informed understanding of the works’ artistic form and function (e.g., describe their initial response to an art work, and explain in detail how specific aspects of the work’s content, formal qualities, and media inform that response)

B1.3 explain in detail, with reference to a variety of historical and contemporary art works (e.g., the social scenes painted by Pieter Bruegel the Elder; Joseph Paxton’s Crystal Palace; works by Canadian war artists, such as Alex Colville’s Bodies in a Grave or Molly Lamb Bobak’s Private Roy, Canadian Women’s Army Corps), how knowledge of a work’s cultural and historical context, achieved through extensive research, has clarified and enriched their understanding and interpretation of a work’s intent and meaning

B1.4 describe in detail and reflect on with increasing insight the qualities of their art works and the works of others, and evaluate the effectiveness of these works using a wide variety of criteria (e.g., provide an informed explanation of why a work of art is, or is not, successful with respect to its ability to communicate a message or emotion, its technical and aesthetic conventions, its form and stylistic qualities, its originality)

B2. Art, Society, and Values: demonstrate an understanding of how art works reflect the societies in which they were created, and how they can affect both social and personal values;

B2.1 analyse, on the basis of research, the function and social impact of different kinds of art works in both past and present societies (e.g., how art works function to decorate private and public space, to investigate and draw attention to themes and issues, to criticize political policy and social norms, to satirize public figures, to memorialize people and commemorate events, to preserve aspects of a people’s culture; how works of art can symbolize political, religious, social, or economic power; the power of art to help change personal and public positions on social and political ideas)
B2.2 assess the impact of socio-economic, political, cultural, and/or spiritual factors on the production of art works (e.g., how artists are affected by oppression, persecution, censorship, or war, or by cultural, political, and/or religious beliefs; how access to locations, materials, technologies, and funding can affect the production of art works)

C1. Terminology: demonstrate an understanding of, and use correct terminology when referring to, elements, principles, and other components related to visual arts;
   C1.1 extend their understanding of the elements and principles of design, and use terminology related to these elements and principles correctly and appropriately when creating or analysing a variety of art works (e.g., when analysing how artists’ manipulation of space, movement, form, and proportion affects meaning in an installation or an environmental work);
   C1.2 explain in detail terminology related to a wide variety of techniques, materials, and tools (e.g., techniques and materials associated with installation art; additive and subtractive techniques, digital manipulation, impasto, optical colour mixing, pointillism), and use this terminology correctly and appropriately when creating, analysing, and/or presenting art works;
   C1.3 explain in detail the stages of the creative process and the critical analysis process, and explain, using appropriate terminology, how these processes contribute to the successful creation and analysis of art works;

C2. Conventions and Techniques: demonstrate an understanding of conventions and techniques used in the creation of visual art works;
   C2.1 extend their understanding of a wide variety of techniques that artists use to achieve a range of specific effects (e.g., techniques used to create a range of textures in an art work, to develop the connection and relationship between forms in a composition, to draw attention to specific parts of a work);
   C2.2 extend their understanding of the variety of conventions used in visual art (e.g., allegory, appropriation, juxtaposition, synectics; conventions associated with formalism, objective and non-objective abstraction, propaganda, realism, social commentary), and explain in detail how they are used in a variety of art works.