

HUMA 1315 Assignment – Response Paper Salvador Dali – thinking about Art and Surrealism

“There is only one difference between a madman and me. I am not mad.”
-- Salvador Dali

Hey, everyone, because Humanities is cray-cray, and covers everything, let's shift topics entirely for awhile. This module/section, let's discuss “Surrealism.”

First, go out to the Wikipedia site on it, and just read the opening paragraph to give you a nice, if vague, description of the history of the movement. Basically, Surrealism is a way of thinking about Art – painting usually, but other forms of Art too – that became popular just about 100 years ago, and has been very influential since. So, take a look at the link here, and as I said, read the opening paragraph (feel free to read the rest, too, but you don't need to).

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surrealism>

You'll see from reading this that a lot of Surrealists thought of themselves as people not just making “Art,” but of making statements about the world – they thought they were thinking and doing something, even if what they were doing was so absurd that it was hard to figure out exactly *what* they thought they were doing. This idea leads me to the point of this week, for you to start thinking about how perhaps things that make no sense can in fact teach you lessons about the world.

AFTER you have read the piece above, watch the link below.
It is AN HOUR LONG.
OMG, the horror.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkGfWZfRzWM>

This is a brief documentary film about the artist Salvador Dali. He is very interesting, and influential, but perhaps part of the reason I'm giving you this is that after everyone complaining about poetry – I thought it was time to shake it up a little and give you something *visual*.

JUST LIKE LAST WEEK I want you to look at that material, then create a RESPONSE PAPER. The requirements for receiving full credit, like last time, include these guidelines – it must be 2-3 pages in length, doublespaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font. Submit it as a Word document in the Module Assignment section where you found this very document. In your Response, you will talk about whatever you want that you think is relevant to the topic, BUT ALSO, you must answer these questions below, somewhere in the Response.

- 1) The early part of the video talks about Dali's biography and life. Do you think the biography of an artist (a creator, poet, writer, whatever) is important when thinking about the meaning of their work? -- this is an important question and we will be thinking about it all semester.
- 2) The video discusses Dali's understanding of Freud's “Paranoiac Critical Method.” It implies that you are “active” in interpreting the world around you, and that facts therefore aren't always just facts, because you have to interpret them before they mean anything. Even Science is necessarily creative? What do you think about that?

3) The video says that one of the points of Surrealism is that “things are more beguiling the less you understand them... the video discusses Feeling Versus Thinking, at that point. Watch that part of the video and tell me what you think (feel?) about that. Your answer should use some QUOTATIONS FROM THE VIDEO, as well as explanations or questions about what those quotations mean. These responses must demonstrate that you watched the video and perceived and/or deliberated about some of the major issues within it. You will receive full credit (i.e. an “A”) for all response papers turned in, as long as they fulfill the requirements stated above.

The point is for you to engage with the work and try to generate a meaning from it without my input. What do YOU think! Getting you to think about things is more important than you just having to memorize stuff that I say.