



Formative feedback

Student name	Rob Townsend	Student number	511892
Course/Unit	Documentary	Assignment number	4 Critical review
Type of tutorial	Written / Audio-Visual	Written	

Overall Comments

The essay is pitched at about the correct level. Its language is slightly informal for an academic piece, but the level and depth of research, the contextual referencing/quotes, the argument and structure are all handled well. There are a few (minor) suggestions for improvements that I picked up on in the feedback below.

As you go towards level three, the shift should be towards a *critical* view, more so than a descriptive one. This essay is okay for level 2, but the emphasis could be more critical (as per the title). See the reference in the reading section for pointers on how to structure writing critically (i.e. not just what is, but what you make of it). The structure of the introduction works well to lead the reader from the scope of the essay (what it is and what it's not) to how you are using the relevant terms (and how others use them). The next phase provides good links with examples of these tools.

It is really good that you lastly moved on to your own experiences, in reflective mode, to show what changed in your thinking. In terms of content I thought that the text was good. I think there is scope for more images to illustrate the points made – we go quite a distance before the images start.

Assessment potential

I understand your aim is to go for the Photography Degree and that you plan to submit your work for assessment at the end of this course. From the work you have shown in this assignment, providing you commit yourself to the course, I believe you have the potential to pass at assessment. In order to meet all the assessment criteria, there are certain areas you will need to focus on, which I will outline in my feedback.

Feedback on assignment

Reference citations need to have page numbers, unless they only consist of a single page (see the first one – Grierson). The bibliography is in two halves, one alphabetical, the other not (web based?). You might find referencing software beneficial for longer writing pieces in the future – I use endnote (there are other apps around). There's a free

web-based version available if you want to try it. They also allow linking of text sources with citations, citation searches online and automatically create a bibliography as you insert citations, so you only have to add page numbers and notes – you don't retype citations or the bibliography: it saves a lot of time 😊.

I'd also suggest a mind map structure to organise your output from 'brainstorming': they force you to condense ideas and concepts into short phrases, & then order them into a logical structure. You'll probably find that this is the point where you edit out some stuff, realise other stuff needs to be added and join bits together if they're similar. That's far easier than writing the piece and structuring/editing the content afterwards (from a 'stream of consciousness').

It needs another proof read (e.g. Lacan [wrote?] in 2nd para is followed directly by a quote), although to be fair it's pretty good already in the areas of grammar, punctuation etc..

I'd also reread based on what your text says in relation to what the evidence shows, just for a final reflection. For example the shadow/chalk line could be not just 'people were killed here', but children (their own sized shadow), which is more powerful. Or the steps of Auschwitz show the volume of people, i.e. the enormity, rather than the killing. Compare this shot to the devotional masses implied by the image 'Sea of steps' (F.H Evans 1903). Koudelka's (watch) shot is also about the normally heaving street being empty at that time of day (time shown by the watch)

There are separations made by three dots (?) Not sure what that denotes, but that could be a place for sub-headings to direct the reader as to what's in the next section. You wouldn't necessarily need headings in a short piece like this, but it can make for an easier, clearer read.

I would like to see a conclusion at the end, just to round it off. The last two paras feel like one, but the word (or sub-heading) conclusion flags the reader that this is where the meaty bit is – the results of the research. You have quite a few words left before you hit the 2000, so there is room for it. It's probably better to be done after time to reflect - say come back to it in a month's time.

Coursework

Coursework is sound: the contextual and reflective elements are gaining ground as you progress. The build up to this review and to assignment 5 is well considered and shows a deep level of thinking.

Research

The research for assignment 5 is coming along very well. I wouldn't dismiss the first idea of choosing immigrant workers to highlight their contribution. This theme could be a response to the rise in racism since the Brexit vote, so it could still be topical.

The rationale is well laid out and the scope for the images is clear. Access to the statistical data is a pre-requisite, which should be confirmed before proceeding. If possible include quotes from participants and get a consent form signed for words and images (you can get freebies online or just type out your own).

Learning Log

Excellent progress. Contextual research is wide-ranging and considered. Reflection should play a greater part than description (as mentioned above).

Suggested reading/viewing

I suggest taking a look at Charlie Crane's project, 'Welcome to Pyongyang'. See <http://www.theguardian.com/slideshow/page/0..2083188.00.html>

Crane photographed what he was allowed to (not very much choice actually), but his choice of a formal visual style moulds his work together as a single project; making a comment on the formality of what is presented to him and the North Koreans' way of life. Simon Roberts' project *Motherland* was restricted in a different way: he conducted it with just 2 prime lenses, following advice from his publisher to aim for a consistent look to the project to help to unify it. Roberts was also commissioned to document the election of 2010 http://www.simoncroberts.com/work/election-project/#PHOTO_0 which might help with assignment 5, documenting political/public.

For a critical writing template see:

<http://www.port.ac.uk/media/contacts-and-departments/student-support-services/ask/downloads/Reflective-writing---a-basic-introduction.pdf>

Pointers for the next assignment / assessment

If you rework any assignments, post them to your blog and let me know. Likewise, when you've started preparations on your images and text for assessment, get in touch. Then we can talk about any updates and the submission format, structure, etc. I'll write a report to summarise what we've covered in our conversation. This will constitute the 6th feedback.

Tutor name	Derek Trillo
Date	30/10/16
Next assignment due	30/12/16 (suggested)