

## **Selfie Assignment**

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DTEM1401

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Selfie Exercise How do your selfies produce or obscure a sense of your identity?  
This assignment involves three selfies and a one-page essay.

### **THE SELFIES**

How do your selfies produce or obscure a sense of your identity? For this assignment you will produce three selfies, following these instructions carefully:

Selfie #1: The first should be a selfie of yourself in any manner you choose, within any context so long as the context is appropriate to show in a classroom (yes, we will all be looking at these in class.) Your face should be central and recognizable in the image. No pics with other people. Just your own glorious selfie.

Exploring the limits of the selfie

Selfie #2: The second should be a “selfie” of one of your roles (student, work, child), but your face cannot be present in the image. Other parts of your body can be included – such as your hands, legs, feet, etc. – or none at all. Up to you. This should be an image that you think expresses something memorable about this part of your identity.

Selfie #3: The third image should be of an object that represents you. This can be an object you always carry, a place, or an animal - as long as it is individual to you. People who know you should ideally identify you when they see the image. Again, your own face should NOT be present in the image.

### **Submission**

Name each file with your surname and the selfie number (ex KlangSelfie2) Submit your selfies by uploading your pictures as .jpeg or .tiff files to this assignment link in BB. (if you have any difficulties please email me.)

### **THE ESSAY**

How do we create ourselves? These days, one selfie at a time. And each selfie bears information that can be used to read our identity characteristics: our race-ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and socio-economic status. Write a thesis-driven essay in answering the prompt: **How do your selfies produce or obscure a sense of your identity?** Examine your selfies for your performance of identity (Race-ethnicity, Socio-economic status, Sexuality, and Gender). Consider these identity characteristics independently and as they intersect. Study your selfies and analyze them for your construction of three intersecting and overlapping identity characteristics.

- Look at all elements of the way you present yourself (Clothing, pose, facial expression...)
- But also the elements of the framing of the picture (Background, lighting, proximity, angle of the camera...)
- And last any other elements in the picture (People, animals, objects...)

### **Questions**

- How do your selfies perform race/ethnicity, social/economic status, sexuality/gender as a group?
- What choices do you make to present yourself and what does this say about you: Clothing, pose, facial expression
- How do you frame the picture to construct meaning about your image? Background, lighting, proximity, angle of the camera
- Other elements in the picture? Objects? Other people? Location?
- Does the image/do the images portray one identity trait more than others? Why/how?
- How does your selfie/do your selfies play off other well-known images, or each other?
- Analyze the context of the selfies, and how it affects how they might be interpreted.

### **In class we will**

Look at some of the selfies submitted and use semiotics to "read" them as objects about their creators, even when we don't see a face in the frame.

Explore the limits of the concept of the selfie. Looking at the questions of when a selfie is (and is no longer) a representation of the self.

Look at all elements of self presentation (ex. Clothing, pose, facial expression), the elements of the framing of the picture (ex Background, lighting, proximity, angle of the camera), any other elements in the picture (ex. People, animals, objects...)

Think of everyone's selfies as a part of a "corpus of data" that might be used in the future by social scientists to typify all students in your department, at your University, in the U.S., in college this year around the world, etc.

This assignment was partly inspired by Mark C. Marino's "Know Thy Selfie" exercise <https://medium.com/buzzademia-now/know-thy-selfie-8c0c023372b>