

Dr. Doran O'Donnell: Perspective Paper #1 on Beauty (3 to 5 pages, typed)

During the “Human Face” video, researchers claimed that there are some universal rules of beauty. Beauty certainly has privileges, but is also may have drawbacks.

For this paper, I would like you to think in-depth about all aspects of beauty, reflecting on what the video suggests versus what your own perceptions are regarding beauty. I would also like you to go beyond the physical (and human) elements of beauty and discuss beauty in nature.

I would like you to think about how beauty shapes our surroundings and our thoughts about what is or isn't ideal and how the context effects our perceptions of what is or is not beautiful. Go beyond just human beauty and think about architecture, art, music, astronomy, nature, etc. . Some questions you might ponder include:

How does one's age change one's perceptions or expectations of beauty?

How does the context modify our notions of beauty?

What in nature is “universally beautiful” and why?

Why do people differ in their perceptions of what is beautiful?

What personality types do you find attractive and have they changed since you were a child?

Why do most of us think babies are beautiful?

Why are some songs beautiful for us while others are just noise?

Conversely, are there elements of nature that are universally ugly?

What kinds of privileges do beautiful people have?

What drawbacks?

What “type” of person are you attracted to (the nerdy type, the funny type, the silent type, the bad boy, etc.) and why?

What makes up human beauty and what makes up for beauty if one is less attractive?

Can anyone really be beautiful to everyone?

How has (or does) the media shape your own perceptions of beauty and is its effect still as prevalent today with all the focus on media effects?

What in the world is undeniably beautiful for all who witness it?

What are the advantages of having beautiful workspaces or surroundings? Music? Cars?

What colors make a beautiful world?

Who has access to more beauty and why?

What are the costs of beauty?

Are the rules for beauty evolving in society and are there equal expectations based on sex?

I agree with the person in the video who claims that we are not all physically beautiful (genetics?), but also believe that we are all attractive in some ways. How does personality, empathy, and communication affect one's notions of beauty and is it possible for anyone to be “beautiful?”

As you can see, there are a lot ways you can go about writing your “perspective” on beauty. When working on this paper, try to understand your own notions of beauty or attraction, and uncover why you hold those notions and if those notions are similar for others. You might reflect on the universals that are in the video or that we discussed in class, and argue why we hold those as truths in society (or conversely why the video is flawed).

No more than 5 pages typed, double-spaced. You will be graded for the logic (or other reasoning) of your arguments, the correctness of your writing and grammar, and the depth of your analysis given the constraints of the assignment. This doesn't mean you have to turn in a five page paper, but at least turn in one with enough reflection that I can see you really thought through your perspective (hint, a 2 page paper might not get a passing grade unless really on task)

