Critiquing Photographs

What are looking for?
How do you provide feedback constructively?

What is criticism?
- Describing the work,
- Interpreting the work,
- Evaluating the work, and
- Theorizing about the work

Why critique photos?
- To find out how successfully we are communicating our vision with others
- To improve our abilities
- To share our successes
- To improve our ability to discuss photography with others

Description
- What is here? What am I looking at?
  - Subject matter, medium and form
  - When was it made
  - Style
  - Compare and Contrast
  - Must be factual
Composition
- What is the photograph saying?
  - Shape
  - Image sharpness
  - Pattern
  - Texture
  - Frames
  - Lines

Questions to ask:
- What is the center of interest?
- Where does your eye come to rest in viewing the photo?
- If there is more than one focus point does that add to the photograph's interest or distract from it?
- Are there wasted parts of the frame that contain items not adding to the message of the photo?

Lighting
- Front, Back, Top, Bottom, Side
  - Natural vs. Artificial
  - Flash vs. no flash
  - Time of Day

Background
- Selective focus
- Depth of field
- Simple, solid or nonexistent
- How does the background add or distract from the message of the photo?

Subject Emphasis
- Placement
- Leading lines
- Rule of thirds
- Filling the frame

Photographer: Dorothea Lange
Title: Migrant Mother
Taken: February 1936
Style
- The way or manner in which a work of art is made.
- Should be a natural outgrowth of the photographer's personality and vision of the world
- Representational – realistic rendering
- Nonrepresentational

Purpose
- Documentary
- Graphic
- Pattern
- Symbolism
- Conceptual

Interpretation
- Make sense of the photo
  - Representing something
  - Expressing something
  - Being about something
  - Being a response to something
  - Belonging to a certain tradition

Judging Photographs
- Is it good?
- What do you like about the subject?
- Is there anything about the photograph that you would do differently if you were the photographer and had the chance to do the same shot?

A crowd of over 200,000 gathered on the Mall for the march on Washington for Jobs & Freedom, during which M.L. King delivered his “I have a dream” speech.

Life Magazine

**Judgment**

- Positive
- Negative
- Implied
- Comparative

A judgment is a what, it needs a why

- Use specific criteria to explain yourself