Essay #2: Political Ad Analysis

Assignment: For this essay you will analyze a television advertisement by a political candidate or campaign. You can view ads at www.livingroomcandidate.org, on the campaign websites, or on YouTube. Pick an ad that interests you, and be sure to include in your analysis the title of the ad so that others can locate it. In this essay you should accomplish the following:

1. Summarize the ad
2. Analyze the ad’s claims and appeals
3. Offer a verdict on the effectiveness of the ad

Because this analysis will necessarily contain your opinions, you may also want to include your personal reaction to the ad and/or why it interested you

You will need to do a small amount of research to evaluate any factual claims in the ad

To evaluate the ad’s appeals, you may want to consider the following (choose those elements of evaluation that seem most relevant for your ad):

1. Classic rhetoric appeals (logos, ethos, pathos)
2. Ad’s rhetorical situation
3. Atmospherics & production value

Description/Rationale: Advertising permeates our culture, and perhaps nowhere is the power of advertising more apparent than in politics. Modern presidential campaigns are waged largely through advertising. Elections are won and lost due to the impression voters have of the candidates based upon their advertisements. An informed and rhetorically sophisticated viewer of these advertisements is in a better position to critically evaluate rather than simply accept the ad’s message at face value.

Audience: Classmates and myself.

Objective: This assignment tasks you to explain and interpret certain formal, stylistic, and thematic elements of one or two advertisements, and to compose a logical, persuasive, and formal analytically-focused essay that is built around a solid thesis and a clear line of argumentation. To be successful in this essay, you must utilize a variety of patterns of development, which should include, but are not limited to, description, definition, exemplification, compare/contrast, and cause/effect. This essay is an opportunity for you to practice the kind of analysis that will enable you to be not only smarter as a voter, but also more aware of the influence of advertisements in your daily life.

Length: 3-4 pages. Word count must be printed at bottom of last page of essay (word count does not include a works cited page or heading information).

Format: Essay should conform to all MLA requirements and use Standard English, including correct punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure. Your essay should be properly cited, if necessary, and include a properly documented Works Cited page.

Grading Criteria: See “Grading Criteria” in your course syllabus and the grading rubric (ANGEL) for general standards.

Total Points Possible: 50 points