Online Introductory Concept/Writing and Image Exercise

Course Type/ Level:	Literature/Humanities/Social Sciences 100
Assignment Goals:	Students: ● Start thinking critically about a major concept, value, or ideal (justice, equality, freedom, peace, sustainability, etc), by identifying emphases and closures in common understandings of the concept ● Begin thinking towards and articulating their own definitions, which can be later connected to other theoretical approaches to the concept
Materials to Provide Students:	1) A starting image that symbolizes the concept, which should be posted on Google classroom stream 2) Exercise instructions (see below), which can also be posted on the Google stream or embedded into the student's individual google doc for this activity
Technological Resources Needed:	1) Google classroom (stream function), Google docs
Preparatory Steps:	1) Make sure each student has a Google doc for this activity which you are also invited to

Tasks/Activities: (Outline of the steps this activity or assignment requires)	Students do a set of free-writing exercises in response to the image (full sequence should take about 30min): 1. List 15 things you see in the image 2. List 10 things that you don't see in the image 3. Free write for 3 minutes: how does this image define the concept in question? What does it make you think xx concept is? 4. [Optional: if this is a well-known figure you can ask students to find 2 different online sources (wikipedia plus) explaining what the image is supposed to symbolize and then write for 3 minutes comparing that with their answer] 5. Free write for 5 minutes: what do you think is missing from this vision of the concept? If you could make three changes to the picture to bring it more in line with your vision of the concept, what would they be? 6. Draw your updated version of the image, take a picture of it, and post to the class stream with a short (150 word) explanation of the changes you made and why. Alternatively, take or find a picture online that you think better symbolizes the concept and post it, with the short explanation for why you chose the alternate image. 7. [Optional: Have the students comment on the updates/new image and explanation by one other student in the class] You will see their postings in the Google Classroom Stream and can also check the Google docs to make sure students have gone through all the steps
Additional Tips or Advice:	I used this as opening activity for my blended class PT 150 "Doing Justice After Atrocity" with an image of Justice holding the scales. It worked really well to get the students to examine common conceptions of justice (why is justice a woman? Why the blindfold? Why is weighing or comparing so important? etc) and to begin to identify blindspots as well as to bring out in an explicit way so of their starting assumptions about the concept. You can come back to the exercise across the semester, asking students to update the image or find a new one for different theorist's versions of the concept (New testament versus

	Marx's understanding of justice versus the Southern African kgotla model etc); for instance by assigning each student to create or find an image that reflects one of the main variants of the concept you are exploring.

Kerry Bystrom, Associate Dean

Bard College Berlin