

Formal analysis assignment: Due October 2nd via Canvas (scan or photo of your sketch)

Sketch the object quickly and look closely at its formal qualities. Be sure to look with your EYES first, not your camera. Take notes and spend at least 15 minutes just observing. Once home, write a clear 2-3 page visual analysis that discusses how formal structure operates in your chosen work of art. Clearly identify your work of art with the basic information first (artist, title, date, materials, dimensions).

Be sure to create a clear mental picture of the work of art in the reader's mind, but do not merely describe the piece - rather break down how the various elements within it operate together. This kind of writing does not concern itself with too much context, subject matter, or iconography, but rather will discuss the visual and material properties of a work of art (such as color, line, volume, size, balance). If you are working with a three-dimensional work of art, be sure to move around it (if you can) to discuss how it is situated in space.

Related Wiki Project: Due October 30th with presentation in class

For this project, you will work together in groups to build a webpage that will act as a reference source for your chosen object. Each student will have a task and there will be both an individual grade and a group grade for the project. The roles are as follows: design, references, written prose, and oral presentation. Though there is expected to be group input on all of these aspects, the person assigned the role will be the "manager" of that component of the page. Choose a role for each person by next class, after which we will have a brief tutorial on how to make this resource.

You will build a page on the course blog that will have hyperlinks to references relevant to your object and building off of themes you discuss while writing the narrative of the piece (similar to Wikipedia, but with a scholarly angle). You should analyze the object from multiple angles (formal, iconographic, and contextual), and how you design the page is up to you. The team should use original images whenever possible, make ample use of scholarly sources available on the web, and be creative with media (videos, audio, or any other creative input is welcome).

The goal is to show research knowledge of the work's place in history, so all sources don't need to explicitly mention that object, but can illuminate certain vocab terms or generate a sense of context for the piece.

Objects as History
Final Research Paper Assignment
Fall 2013

Due Dates:

Annotated Bibliography and Research Question: October 25th (via Canvas)
Rough Draft: November 20th (hard copy, in class)
Five-Minute Audio-Visual Presentation: December 4th
Final Paper (4-5 pages): December 6th (via Canvas)

Assignment Description:

For this assignment you are to address a research question of your interest that compares objects from two cultures. You should choose objects from New York collections that are on view (another trip to the Met would help). You may wish to compare objects with similar functions or with similar iconography and compare how each culture interprets or uses them. Your essay should have a clear thesis statement and use evidence (both visual evidence and evidence from sources) to support this argument.

In your paper be sure to cover the following: descriptions of the works, historical background about the artists and period, and scholarly interpretations of the works' meaning or importance in history. You should balance your research with some of your own insight - a strong paper is not just a series of quotes and summaries, but rather an essay that synthesizes the information in an intelligent way. Furthermore, as this is a comparative analysis, you should organize your discussion around a thesis and not simply write half a paper on each object. Weave between the two to let them play off each other and produce an answer to your research question.

Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

Egyptian and Greek funerary objects
Two objects from fashion collections at the Met from different cultures
Byzantine and Renaissance paintings of the same subject
Astor Court and the Cloisters
Ritual objects from different cultures

General Rules and Guidelines:

1. All papers must be typed in Times New Roman font (12 points), be double-spaced, with a 1 inch margin on all sides, on white paper (size: 11" x 8.5"). The length of your research paper is 5-6 pages, plus one title page and one or two pages for illustration(s).
2. On your title page: Indicate the title of your paper, your name, the course number and title, name of school and department, name of instructor, date on which your paper is completed.
3. Please include an illustration of your image. Original photography is preferred. Cite your source if you use an image from a website.
4. Use Chicago Style footnote citations. Remember to cite not just direct quotes, but sources of information too (i.e. even when you paraphrase or reference an argument from another person's work). Refrain from using long quotes. If something is absolutely necessary and longer than two or three lines, make it single-spaced and indent that section.

Consult Sylvan Barnet's *A Short Guide to Writing about Art* for writing on art topics, and Diana Hacker's *The Bedford Handbook* for general writing guidelines.