GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESEARCH PAPERS

Your paper should be on one aspect of the history of art, architecture, culture, or aesthetic theory from the fourteenth to the twentieth century. You may choose your own topic, but you must do so in consultation with the instructor. A research proposal for the paper will be due during the seventh week of the semester, and an annotated bibliography for it will be due during the twelfth week.

Your research may involve matters fundamental to the meaning or implications of the art works themselves. Such a paper might involve the work of several artists (e.g. the origins of Italian landscape painting in the early seventeenth century); a particular theme (e.g. apocalyptic imagery in the Munich paintings of Vassily Kandinsky); one aspect of an artist’s career (Botticelli’s mythological paintings for the Medici family); or a theoretical issue (Courbet and the concept of the avant-garde). Or, you may use art works as part of an examination of broader sociological, political, or economic issues (e.g. the relationship between art and politics in the Doge’s Palace in Venice or colonialism and North African imagery in French Romantic painting).

Note that the assignment is not to prepare a report (e.g. on the career of Donatello). Your topic should involve a question or series of questions that your research will investigate and to which your paper will provide an answer. For instance, an inquiry into the political themes of Francesco Goya’s print albums might initially ask: What were the politics of the Spanish court in the early 1900s? What was Goya’s relationship to the court? What were the artist’s attitudes to the ideals of the Enlightenment that originated in France? What political crises occurred during the artist’s lifetime and how are they reflected in his art? Then, as you proceed with your research, your focus should tighten. Avoid subjects that are too broad and thus allow for only vague generalities; narrower topics are better, since they require more depth and more detailed analysis.

Examples of possible topics:
- The iconography of love in Raphael’s frescos for the Villa Farnesina in Rome
- Female patrons of art during the Italian Renaissance.
- Political persuasion in Ruben’s series The Life of Maria de’ Medici
- The iconography of Philipp Otto Runge’s Tageszeiten
- Gender roles is the paintings of Mary Cassatt
- The iconography of Pablo Picasso’s Guernica

The text of all papers should be eight pages typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, and twelve-point fonts. Your paper must include footnotes, photocopied illustrations, and a bibliography. Please note: late papers will be penalized, and no papers will be accepted after the final examination.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR RESEARCH AND WRITING ON ART

Style Manuals

**Basic Works on Writing about Art**


**Basic Guides to Art Historical Resources**


Also: See the pages on the Ronald Williams Library web site dedicated to research in art history at: http://www.neiu.edu/~neulib/guides/artresearch.html

Use the I-Share Catalog to order material not in the library. Log onto the University’s web site and go to the Library page. In order to request items through I-Share, you must first create a library account. Click on “Create an account,” then fill-out and submit the required information. You must use your full University I.D. number for this. Then, return to the Library homepage and click on “I-Share Catalog.” From the next screen, you will be able to search all I-Share library catalogs with author, title, subject, keyword, or advanced searches. Once you have found a book, to order it, click on “Request this item.” You will be asked to log-in to the I-Share system with your username and password. Once you log-in, you will go through a sequence of three screens: click on “Request this item” on the first, “Choose pick-up location” on the second, and “Request” on the third. The book will be delivered to the Williams library.

Your paper will be evaluated according to the following criteria. Form: presentation and elaboration of thesis; logical organization of contents; correct grammar, punctuation, and usage; correct usage of the descriptive and critical vocabulary of art history. Content: appropriateness of topic; depth of research; grasp of historical context; appropriate use of art historical methodology; persuasiveness of conclusions.

For tips on proper style and usage in art history papers, see the appendix, subtitled “The Rules and Principles Most Often Violated in Writing about Art,” in Henry M. Sayre. *Writing about Art*. pp. 115-128 (listed above under “Basic Works on Writing about Art”).

**Please note**: plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. This course adheres to the University’s policies on plagiarism as stated in the current University Student Conduct Code. According to the Code, plagiarism includes: 1) the paraphrasing of another’s ideas or conclusions without acknowledgement; 2) the use of entire sentences, paragraphs, chapters, etc. from another’s work without acknowledgement; 3) the submission as one’s own work of any work prepared by another person. For further information, see the Student Conduct Code at www.neiu.edu/~DeanSt/policy2.pdf. Consult the following manuals for instructions about proper citations or acknowledgements of the works of others in class assignments: Kate L. Turabian. *A Student’s Guide for Writing College Papers*. 3rd ed. Chicago, 1976; and Walter S. Achert. *The M.L.A. Style Manual*. New York, 1985 (both listed above under “Style Manuals”).