Art 311: Medieval Art of the West  
Department of Art  
Northeastern Illinois University  
Instructor: Dr. William Sieger

**General Instructions for the Paper Assignment**

One paper of five to six typed pages is required for this course. It will be a review of an exhibition catalogue or a book on medieval art. This book may cover the work of a single artist, a group of artists, a movement in art, or an aspect of medieval culture or aesthetic theory. You may choose your own book to review, but you must do so in consultation with the instructor.

Reviewing a book involves three main activities: the description, assessment, and judgment of its contents. Consider these parts of a comprehensive process, with each leading to and reinforcing the next. First, describe briefly the entire contents of the publication. This includes information on the publication date, publication type, and intended readership; on the author(s) and topic; on the size and scope of the book; on the depth of research required for it; and on additions to the text such as illustrations, footnotes, bibliographies, chronologies, etc. Second, assess these contents. This involves systematically outlining and evaluating the information, analysis, and conclusions offered by the author(s) about the topic. Finally, judge the form and content of the book. Judgment is your determination of the ultimate worth of the entire publication and is based primarily on your point-by-point assessment of its contents. It is probably best to think of your assessments and judgments in terms of convincing or unconvincing arguments, rather than absolute right or wrong. Your goal should be to persuade your reader of the legitimacy of your observations, analysis, and conclusions.

Avoid exhibition catalogues or books that are too broad, complex, or lengthy for a five-page paper and thus allow for only vague generalities. Generally speaking, narrower topics are better, since they require more focus and more detailed analysis. Samples of exhibition and book reviews from journals of contemporary art are available online through the instructor’s web page at http://homepages.neiu.edu/~wbsieger. Click on Art 201; they are listed as supplemental readings.

The text of your paper should be at least five pages typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, and twelve-point fonts. If possible, include photocopied illustrations. The paper will be due during the fifth week of class. Please do not place your paper in a plastic binder; a single staple in the upper left-hand corner will suffice. **Please note:** Late papers will be penalized one-third of a letter grade per day, and no papers will be accepted after the final examination. You must submit a hard copy of the paper; submissions via e-mail will not be accepted.

**Selected Bibliography for Writing on Art**

**Style Manuals**  

**Basic Books on Writing about Art**


Use the **I-Share Catalog** to order material not in the Ronald Williams 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,” fill-out the required information, and click on the “submit” button. Please note that 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 the catalog of each of the system’s libraries with author, title, subject, or key-word searches. Or, if you like, you may do an advanced search. 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, where you may pick it up at the circulation desk—they **will not** notify you when it arrives.

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 the book or catalogue reviewed; clarity of the description of the contents of the book or catalogue; depth of assessments and criticism; persuasiveness of judgments and conclusions.


**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/survival/conduct.pdf. Consult the following manuals for instructions about proper citations or acknowledgements of the works of others in class assignments (both also listed above): Kate L. Turabian. *A Student’s Guide for Writing College Papers*. 3rd ed. Chicago, 1976 (Ronald Williams Library reference room: Ref. LB2369 T82 1976); and Walter S. Achert. *The M.L.A. Style Manual*. New York, 1985 (R.W.L. reference room: Ref. PN147 A28 1985).