GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESEARCH PAPERS

Your paper should be on one aspect of art, architecture, culture, or aesthetic theory from the seventeenth to the early eighteenth 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 investigate matters fundamental to the meaning or implications of art works themselves. Such a paper might involve a specific work from a local museum, the work of several artists (e.g. the origins of Italian landscape painting in the early seventeenth century), a particular theme (e.g. political persuasion in Ruben’s series on the life of Maria de’ Medici), one aspect of an artist’s career (the iconography of Bernini’s papal tombs), or a theoretical issue (the concept of the “Idea” in seventeenth century Italian art theory). Or, you may examine broader sociological, political, or economic issues (e.g. the education and training of female artists during the Italian Baroque, the role of the academy in the development of French Baroque painting, art and politics in the court at Antwerp in the mid-seventeenth century).

Note that the assignment is not to prepare a report (e.g. on the career of Rembrandt). 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 relationship between Caravaggio’s religious paintings and the cult of the saints during the Counter Reformation might initially ask: How did the Protestant and Roman Catholic views on the cult of the saints differ? On what did each group of theologians base their opinions? What was the Council of Trent’s position on religious art? How do the imagery, iconography, and style of Caravaggio’s religious paintings reflect these positions? Then, as you proceed with your research, your focus should tighten even further. 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 papacy and city planning in seventeenth-century Rome.
• The development of the formal garden during the French Baroque.
• The iconography of Ruben’s altarpieces in the churches of Antwerp.
• Women and court patronage during the French Rococo.

The text of all papers should be seven to eight pages typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, and twelve-point fonts. Your paper must include footnotes, photocopied illustrations, and a bibliography. 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.

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://libguides.neiu.edu/art.

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

**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. 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”).