GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESEARCH PAPERS

Your paper should be on one aspect of twentieth-century art, culture, or aesthetic theory. 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. images of technology in French Cubist painting), a particular theme (e.g. apocalyptic imagery in the Munich paintings of Vassily Kandinsky), one aspect of an artist’s career (the photographs of Man Ray), or a theoretical issue (Dada and the concept of the avant-garde). Or, you may examine broader sociological, political, or economic issues (e.g. images of women in Surrealist art; Revolutionary ideology and Russian Constructivist art; the role of private dealers in the art economy of twentieth-century Europe).

Note that the assignment is not to prepare a report (e.g. on the career of Vassily Kandinsky). 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 apocalyptic imagery in the paintings of Vassily Kandinsky might initially ask: What were Kandinsky’s theories on the role of spirituality in art? How did these theories fit with his commitment to abstract painting? Why was Kandinsky particularly interested in apocalyptic imagery? How does the conjunction of apocalyptic iconography and abstract style effect the meaning of his pictures? 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 theme of the golden age in Fauve painting
- Giorgio de Chirico and the classical tradition in art
- Social satire in the drawings of George Grosz
- The iconography of Pablo Picasso’s Guernica
- Appropriated imagery in the paintings of Francis Bacon

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; submissions via e-mail will not be accepted.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR RESEARCH AND WRITING ON ART

Style Manuals


**Basic Works on Writing about Art**


**Basic Writing Skills Handbooks**


**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 (listed above).

**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; Kate L. Turabian. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th ed., Chicago, 2013; and Walter S. Achert. *The M.L.A. Style Manual*. New York, 1985 (all listed above under “Style Manuals”).