

ARTH-A102  
Renaissance Through Modern Art  
Spring 2020

Final Paper –  
Comparative analysis of two artworks

Due Friday, May 1, 2019 before mid-  
night, through Canvas, 20%

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## **A- Extension, format and submission:**

- 3-5 pages of text
  - double space.
  - Times New Roman 12.
  - Regular page margins
- Two images (images do not count to fulfil length requirement).
- Submit paper through Canvas by Friday, May 1, before mid-night, through Canvas, 20%.

## **B- CONTENT OF YOUR PAPER:**

- Write a **compare and contrast essay** on one of the themes listed below.
- Choose two works of art that fit in **ONE of these themes**.
- You **cannot discuss works** of art by **artists** that have been **covered in class** (lecture time and discussion sections).

THEMES (choose only ONE theme):

- ILLUSIONISTIC SPACE (LINEAR PERSPECTIVE VS. OTHER MEANS OF CREATING SPACE).
- BAROQUE ART (REFORMATION VS. COUNTER-REFORMATION).
- ARTISTS' PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER.
- NEOCLASSICISM VERSUS ROMANTICISM.
- AVANT-GARDE ART MOVEMENTS AND THEIR PRECEDENTS.
- MATERIALITY IN AMERICAN ART POST-WWII.

## C- GOALS OF THIS PAPER

1- The main goal of this assignment is to demonstrate that you are fully capable of **putting into words** (in complete sentences and organized paragraphs) **your visual experience** of two artworks, both individually and comparatively.

2 - A secondary goal is to demonstrate that you are capable of relating the visual/formal analysis (how the work looks), with the broader historical, social, political, economic, religious, cultural... context).

3- Finally, you may want to connect the works you chose to analyze with one or two works discussed in class.

# D- Step by step:

## **1/ FIND TWO IMAGES BY DIFFERENT ARTIST FOR THE ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT OF YOUR CHOICE:**

you need to chose works by artists that we have NOT discussed in class or in discussion sections.

## **2/INTRODUCE THE SUBJECT AND FORMULATE A HYPOTHESIS:**

two paragraphs; first, describe briefly the subject of your choice; second, point out at the question/argument you will discuss about and the rationale behind your choice of images.

## **3/ WRITE A COMPREHENSIVE VISUAL DESCRIPTION OF EACH OF THE IMAGES:**

for each image, you may provide a general overview of how the work looks like (basic visual analysis) followed by a very detailed description of work's compositional elements.

-This is a purely visual exercise. Imagine that you are describing an artwork over the phone or by email to someone that has never seen this work before.

- Use terminology/concepts covered in class that relate to the formal/visual qualities of the artworks you are describing.

#### **4/ COMPARE AND CONTRAST:**

CONNECT THE TWO WORKS BASED ON WHAT YOU HAVE OBSERVED IN THE VISUAL ANALYSIS (see **STEP 3**).

- Use terminology/concepts covered in class that relate to the meaning/interpretations of the artworks you are exploring.

#### **5/ CHECK 3 ACADEMIC RESEARCH SOURCES:**

briefly summarize the argument found in the academic sources consulted.

- See next page for tips on where to find academic sources and how to use them.

#### **6/ EXPAND THE SCOPE OF ANALYSIS:**

connect the above parts (the visual/formal analysis and the research sources consulted) with the historical, cultural, social, economic, religious... context.

#### **7/ CONCLUSION:**

this is not a summary of what you explained, but a paragraph where you comment on the artworks or the knowledge acquired during the research and writing process. (i.e. do you agree with the sources consulted? Or, is there interesting information out there to study these works? Or, did you had an aha! moment while researching and writing? Or, what else could be explored in this work if you hypothetically could expand the paper? Etc.

That is, be speculative, take risks and raise more questions.

## E-RESEARCH SOURCES:

These are the research sources you need to use for the writing of this assignment:

Due to the current circumstances, you will probably only have access to electronic sources, unless you have some books on the theme at home. Whether you use print or electronic sources, **only academic** titles are allowed for the writing of this paper:

- Academic electronic sources can be accessed through the IUB Library Internet site, in the art and architecture section at:  
<https://libraries.indiana.edu/art-art-history-resources>  
(you need to log in with your usual user name and passphrase)
  - YOU WILL FIND SOURCES TO FIND IMAGES, TOO, IN THE LIBRARY'S WEBSITE.
- \* (images must be included at the end of your paper with full captions).

For research assistance and tips, do not hesitate to contact:

**Sarah Carter (she goes by Carter)**

**Art, Architecture and Design librarian**

Herman B Wells Library E956A

saccarte@indiana.edu

(812) 855-5743

## Very important:

Whether you are quoting your sources them directly or summarizing (paraphrasing) them, you **MUST** cite your sources in a footnote.

See next page for how to properly cite your sources.

## **HOW TO CITE YOUR RESEARCH SOURCES**

(art historians uses the “Chicago citation style”)

**You can find a quick citation guide here:**

[http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html)

### **How to add a footnote:**

In a word document: go to insert: insert footnote. Here is where you may want to write the citation (next to the superscript number).

### **How to cite a print book (one author / two authors):**

Examples:

(one author):

Zadie Smith, *Swing Time* (New York: Penguin Press, 2016), 315–16.

(two authors):

Brian Grazer and Charles Fishman, *A Curious Mind: The Secret to a Bigger Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), 12.

### **How to cite a chapter or other part of an edited book:**

Example:

Henry David Thoreau, “Walking,” in *The Making of the American Essay*, ed. John D’Agata (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2016), 177–78.



## How to cite a Journal article (print and online):

Examples:

(print):

Susan Satterfield, “Livy and the *Pax Deum*,” *Classical Philology* 111, no. 2 (April 2016): 170.

(electronic):

Shao-Hsun Keng, Chun-Hung Lin, and Peter F. Orazem, “Expanding College Access in Taiwan, 1978–2014: Effects on Graduate Quality and Income Inequality,” *Journal of Human Capital* 11, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 9–10, <https://doi.org/10.1086/690235>.

## How to cite an E-book:

Example:

Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1851), 627, <http://mel.hofstra.edu/moby-dick-the-whale-proofs.html>.

## Images captions:

- Artist name (first and last), *Title in italics*, year.
- Medium, size.
- Collection, museum, art gallery or location if known and/or relevant

## **F- TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **TO GET YOU STARTED:**

- The first step is looking: look at each of the artworks you chose to write about. Look individually for a long time, zooming in on details, sketching it (if necessary), taking notes like you would do if you were asked to describe the work to someone who cannot see it.
- Read (and take notes on) the sources found at the library/online: what kind of basic information do your sources and class notes provide about the artists? About similar works of art? About the social, economic, political, religious, or other circumstances of the time/place in which it was made?
- Only then will you be able to start writing about the artworks. Only then you will be able to demonstrate in your paper your understanding of the artworks, only by previously conducting a visual analysis and by researching on textual evidence.

## G- WHAT IS A VISUAL ANALYSIS

### Visual analysis/description section (this is the main goal of the assignment):

*Visual analysis consists on developing an analytical (formal) description of a work of art based solely on what you can observe about it. So, expect to spend a good amount of time closely observing the two works you choose. **Visual analysis is not an exercise in interpretation.***

*Your aim is to describe the work in such a way that someone who does not have access to it would have a clear and accurate image of it.*

- Start with a general overview or first impressions pointing at the obvious:

What, if anything, does it depict (subject)? Are there figures present? If so, how are they interacting with one another? If not, how are forms arranged on the surface? What colors are used? How are colors arranged on the painting? Is it clear and crisp or on the contrary? how is light treated and how is space created? Is the composition balanced? Etc. The goal of all this is to put into words the experience of the visual. In all cases, do not feel that you must praise the artworks.

*\*Don't forget to mention the **fundamentals**: what seems obvious about the work should be included in your description.*

- Then, follow with specific details: Write in detail what you notice about the visual and physical properties of the work, including scale, implied texture, color, composition, etc. Be as precise as possible: E.g. if there is red color, what kind of red? Dull or bright? Saturated or light/thin?
- Then, complete the visual analysis with a compare and contrast discussion of the two works.

## **H- BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR PAPER VERIFY IT WITH THIS CHECK LIST:**

(which we will use as a grading rubric)

- Your paper features a clear overview of the chosen subject.  
(This is your first paragraph, or two).
- Your paper features a clear thesis introduction that announces your main argument and where you offer support for a thoughtful choice of two images (artist/images neither discussed in class nor in discussion sections).
- Your paper demonstrates clear, thoughtful organization through the use of separate, focused paragraphs.  
(One paragraph per idea/theme/visual characteristic).
- Your paper exhibits correct spelling and grammar.
- Your paper provides a general “big picture” description of the chosen artworks and discusses their visual/formal qualities, so it makes precise and appropriate use of visual evidence to support your argument/s.  
(that is, one introductory general overlook followed by an in-depth description).
- Your paper considers the relationship between how the artworks look like in comparison and in contrast (similarities and differences).
- Your paper describes the main points of the research sources consulted and the new knowledge you have acquired during this process.
- Your paper provides a section explaining how knowledge of the broader political, economic, social, religious, or political... developments surrounding these artworks can help us understand them.
- Your paper provides a conclusion that is not a summary, but rather a statement in the form of speculative questions or critical reflections.