

**Art 3395: Methods of Art History
Research Project**

fall 2007

Purpose

This research project is designed to develop your skills in conducting research and analyzing different methodologies used by art historians. It is intended to help you identify and think critically about the questions art historians ask and the kinds of evidence they use in answering those questions. The final paper will include a brief visual analysis of a single work and a sustained investigation of at least 3 different methodological approaches to the work.

It is broken into several stages so that over the course of the semester we can explore the processes of completing a research project. If you feel you have reached a dead-end at any point, don't hesitate to come see me.

Requirements

The basic requirements for each section are noted below; further details will be distributed later and we will discuss each section in class. Each portion of the project is due in class. Late submissions will be graded down. If you submit any portion of the project electronically and there is a problem with your computer or the file, no allowances will be made: if I don't receive it on time, the assignment is late and will be graded down.

- Part I: Topic Choice
- Part II: Scavenger Hunt
- Part III. Annotated Bibliography
- Part IV Class presentation
- Part V Final Paper

Part I: Topic Choice/Formal Analysis

Due Sept. 11

length: 300 words

Word processed, 10 or 12 pt. type, 1" margins

Identify the work that will be the subject of your project (see list on back of the assignment). Spend some time studying it, identify the subject and write a brief formal analysis of the visual characteristics of the work: the forms, colors, and textures as well as their physical and psychological effects on you. Note: this does not require research, but if you consult any sources, they should be cited in appropriate form, as indicated in the Art History Style Guide, which is on MyGateway. (It may also be useful to note an alternate work, in case you run into problems with your first choice.)

Part II: Richardson Library Scavenger Hunt

Due Oct. 4

Information about this will be distributed on Sept, 20.

Part III: Annotated Bibliography

Due November 8

6 items (see details below)
word processed, 10-12 pt. type, 1" margins
presentation: follow Chicago Manual of Style
Bibliographies will be discussed in class on Oct. 18

As you proceed, you should compile a *working* bibliography: a list of books and articles that *may* be of interest for your final project. You need not have read each one to include it on the bibliography: some are the items you will be *looking for*. Read those that sound most promising, but you will find that some don't meet your needs; they will be dropped from the final bibliography for your paper, and if necessary, further research will identify other books or articles that are more appropriate. (Be prepared for some "waste" in the process.) Please note: websites, survey texts, and encyclopedias are not appropriate sources for this assignment.

The bibliography you submit on Nov. 8 should include

1. At least **six items** you have looked at or are looking for.
These should include **at least one item for each of the following three categories**:
 - a. article from scholarly (peer-reviewed) journal
 - b. monograph on the artist
 - c. exhibition catalogue, survey or movement or period, or collection of essays
2. Each item should be listed in proper form (see Art History Style Sheet and Chicago Manual of Style sheets).
3. In addition, note the library where you have or will locate the item (e.g. UMSL, Mobius, Merlin, ILL) and the library call number.
4. Three of the items should be annotated with a brief synopsis or abstract of the contents

Part IV: Class Presentation

December 4 or 6

More information will be provided on November 15.

Each student will present his/her project to the other students. Since presumably you will not have finished at this point, these presentations will be "works in progress." You should, however, be able to:

1. present the work you are researching and some background on it (e.g. where it was located, who commissioned it)
2. give a general analysis of the articles/books you will be addressing in your final paper.

Part IV: Methodological Analysis

Due December 13, 5 PM

12-15 pages, (3000-3750 words)
plus endnotes and bibliography and illustrations
10-12 pt. type, double-spaced
Follow Art History Style Sheet

The final paper is your analysis of three different methodologies used by several art historians to interpret “your” work or artist. The interpretations you analyze should include at least one source that represents the most recent research on the topic (last 20 years). The others can be from any period. Your bibliography must include one article from a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal. Websites, encyclopedias or textbooks are not acceptable sources for this project..

Your paper should

- 1/ begin with a brief discussion and visual analysis of the work itself
- 2/ continue with a comparison of the methodologies art historians have used in analyzing the work and
- 3/ conclude with a section explaining which methodology seems to you most compelling or successful and why.

Possible Works for research project:

These are possible topics. As you select your work, keep in mind that since you are less interested in the object itself than in what other art historians have had to say about it, the more “canonical” a work is, the more useful it will be for your purposes. The more it has been analyzed the better!

You are free to focus on other works, if none of these interest you. Ancient, non-western works and architecture generally will not work for the purposes of this assignment, and there are some works which students in past years have found problematic. Please consult with me if you want to select a work not on this list.

Please do not select a work or artist you have worked on for another class. Since the faculty have expressed concern that students may “double-dip” (submit the same paper for two courses), I will provide the art history faculty with a list of the topics you select.

van Eyck, Ghent Altarpiece (1432)
Donatello, David (1440s)
Botticelli, Primavera (c. 1482)
Leonardo da Vinci, Last Supper (c. 1495-98)
Michelangelo, David?
Michelangelo, Sistine Ceiling
Dürer, Adam and Eve (1504)
Rembrandt, Bathsheba Reading King David's Letter (1654)
Rubens, The Marie de Medici Cycle (1621-25)
Caravaggio, Calling of St. Matthew (1599-1600)
Artemesia Gentileschi, Judith and Holofernes
Velázquez, Las Meninas (1656)
Watteau, Embarkation from Cythera (1717)
Delacroix, July 28, 1830 (1830)
Courbet, A Real Allegory: Seven Years of My Life (1855)
Whistler, Whistler's Mother (Arrangement in Grey and Black) (1871)
Eakins, The Swimming Hole (1875)
Edmonia Lewis, Forever Free (1867)
Degas, Little Dancer (1881)
Seurat, Sunday Afternoon on La Grande Jatte (1884-86)
Matisse, Joy of Life (1905)
Picasso, Demoiselles d'Avignon (1937)
Picasso, Guernica
Duchamp, The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (1915-23)
Rivera, Detroit Frescos (1932)

You might also want to work on a theme explored by an artist in a series of works:

Vermeer or De Kooning, women
Monet, Haystacks (1880s) or Rouen Cathedral (1890s)
O'Keeffe, flowers