Final Paper Assignment

Due Date: Thursday · December 15, 2020  (Papers will not be accepted after this date)

You are being offered two (2) options for your final paper: a contextual analysis (evaluating a work of art based on the historical time period and its style), or a formal analysis (evaluating a work of art based on its design principles). Choose one (1) of these options to evaluate a total of two (2) works of art, not discussed in class and not in your textbook, each from a different category below.

You are to virtually visit any museum in the world from which to select your two works of art. Listed here are the stylistic periods you will be choosing from as they have been introduced during the course of the semester. Think about the themes we have addressed in our blog posts regarding each of the stylistic periods we have studied. How does your chosen artwork fit within those discussions?

- Early Renaissance Art from Italy, Spain OR Northern Europe of the 15th century, 1400 to 1490
- High Renaissance Art from Italy, 1495-1520
- Late Renaissance Art from Italy, Spain OR Northern Europe of the 16th century
- Baroque Art from Italy, France, Spain, England OR the Netherlands of the 17th century
- The Rococo, Early 18th Century France and England
- Art in the Age of Enlightenment, Neo-Classicism, 1750-1789
- Art in the Age of Romanticism, 1789-1848
- Impressionist Art and/or Photography, 1848-1885
- Post-Impressionist Art, 1880-1905
- Modern Art, 1905-1914 (Cubism, Fauvism, German Expressionism or Futurism)
- Art Between the Wars: 1915-1945

Regardless of which option you choose, your paper must include the following:

- The images and a label for each with:
  - Figure #
  - Name of Artist
  - Title of Work
  - Date
  - Stylistic Period
  - Material
  - Size
  - Accession Number

- Incorporate relevant vocabulary introduced in class through the slide presentations, and in your Janson’s—this is an absolute requirement that weighs significantly on your grade.

- The body of your paper, not including cover page, images and the works cited page, will be a minimum of 6-8 pages, typewritten, double spaced, using 12 pt Garamond or Times. (see examples for formatting your final paper on the class website)
OPTION 1—CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

For this paper you are to discuss the artist, the subject matter, and the stylistic period in which the work was created. Communicating the circumstances that aided in the formation of these works of art is your aim.

Choose a total of TWO works of art, either painting or sculpture (not viewed in class or discussed in your text), ONE from a different category listed above.

The body of your paper is to include research and information regarding the following:

- **What do you know about the artist?** Introduce the artist of your work of art and include information about them and their career as it relates to their work. An excellent source for such information is *The Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists*, and *Women & Art: A History of Women Painters and Sculptors from the Renaissance to the 20th Century*.

- **What is the subject/narrative that is being presented in the work of art you have chosen?** Explain it thoroughly and define the iconography. Remember, you are writing for someone who knows nothing about the subject. *From Abacus to Zeus: A Handbook of Art History* is a very useful resource to help define subject matter. Is the subject representational, abstract, or non-representational?

- **What does the date tell you?** Consider what is taking place during this period historically. What belief systems do the people of this culture maintain? Politically, who is in charge at this time? How do these factors relate to your chosen works of art?

- **What artistic style does the work represent?** Explain why a work is considered, for example, Baroque or Impressionist. A case in point, during the Baroque period in Italy, the artist Caravaggio was an innovative painter and an important influence on many of the artists working in the 17th century. His use of tenebrosa/tenebrism influenced works of art created during this time period. The Baroque is defined by other characteristics as well, such as the Catholic church reforms, the desire to represent the mystical, and a predilection for drama. What is tenebris? Does your chosen Baroque work of art present this feature? What else defines the art of the Baroque period? In what ways does your chosen Baroque artwork depict these characteristics?
OPTION 2–FORMAL ANALYSIS

For this paper you are to evaluate each work of art based on its composition. The aim of your paper here is to describe how the artist is using the media associated with each artwork to present colors, shapes, forms, lines, etc., to create the final work and express its subject matter successfully.

Choose a total of TWO works of art, either painting or sculpture (not viewed in class or discussed in your text), ONE from a different category listed above. Along with the image of the original, you are to include a drawing for each work of art presented.

• Evaluate each work based on its compositional design. You are conducting a design analysis based on the Principles of Compositional Design—

  1) Unity and Variety          5) Directional Forces
  2) Pattern                   6) Contrast
  3) Balance                   7) Repetition and Rhythm
  4) Emphasis and Subordination 8) Scale and Proportion

The body of your paper is to include research and information regarding the following:

• What do you know about the artist? Introduce the artist of your work of art. An excellent source for such information is The Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists, and Women & Art: A History of Women Painters and Sculptors from the Renaissance to the 20th Century.

• What is the subject/narrative that is being presented in the work of art you have chosen? Explain it thoroughly and define the iconography. Give relevant information about the subject so that your reader understands what the artist is communicating. Remember, you are writing for someone who knows nothing about the subject. From Abacus to Zeus: A Handbook of Art History is a very useful resource to help define subject matter. Is the subject representational, abstract, or non-representational?

• What methods did the artist use to create this work? For example, if the work is a sculpture, did the artist carve it, mold it, or use an additive technique to create it? If the work is a painting, what kind of painting technique or colors are used? Is it representational, abstract, or non-representational? Reference the handout, An Introduction to Visual Art Forms, which is also on the class website to refresh your memory, and to guide you to the design elements you need to be focusing on.

• Choose three (3) of the design principles above to discuss in association with each artwork chosen. In what way is the artist depicting unity and variety, or emphasis and subordination, for example? Do the design elements—color or line support the design principles evident in the work? Where is your attention being drawn based on these design elements/principles?