Lamar University

Detailed Assessment Report
2012-13 NC ARTS 1303 - Art History
As of: 11/15/2013 11:35 AM CST

Goals

G 1: Provide a framework for the analysis of art and visual culture fram Prehistory to the 14th Century

The purpose of Survey of Art I is to familiarize the student with the earliest histories of art and their social, cultural, and economic contexts. Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

a. identify and analyze various works of art.

b. Interpret, analyze and assess works of art based upon formal concerns, iconography, historical context and art historical theory.

c. understand the visual arts as they exist in an historical context

d. employ the terms and methods of formal and cultural analysis.

e. understand how formal properties are used to create perceptual and psychological effects

f. assess the role of art within its cultural context

g. write about art in a clear and effective manner

h. effectively employ critical thinking skills

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

SLO 1: Apply critical thinking skills to analyze
Apply critical thinking skills to identify and analyze various elements of art history and visual culture within social, cultural and economic contexts.

Relevant Associations:

Standard Associations

- New Core Component Areas
  4 Creative Arts (CA)
- New Core Objectives
  1 Critical Thinking (CT)
General Education/Core Curriculum Associations

1. Critical Thinking: Students will apply critical thinking appropriately to identify, analyze and resolve complex issues.
2. Civic knowledge and engagement: includes both local and global intercultural knowledge and competence
3. Ethical reasoning and action: includes the ability to connect choices and actions to ethical reasoning.

Related Measures

M 1: Analyze artwork style and content
The student will use critical thinking, written communication, and personal responsibility to analyze artwork style and content within a specific historical context engaging the methods of formal and cultural analysis in a written format. (Sample question pasted below)

In a well-developed essay, with a thesis statement in the introduction, discuss how representations of the human form have changed from the Byzantine period to the Gothic period. As part of your answer be sure to compare and contrast, in depth, no less than three works of art that we discussed in class.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Target:
Students will average 75% or better on the questions pertaining to outcome 1

M 2: Formal Analysis
Through written and verbal communication the students will engage in formal and cultural analysis for the interpretation of style and content of diverse works of art. (sample assignment pasted below)

ARTS 1303 Writing Assignment #1

Formal Analysis Assignment

See below for instructions regarding each phase of the assignment

Directions:

Choose a work of art from the Antiquities Collection at the Menil Collection, in Houston, TX, pr the Antiquities Collection at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. (If you take your assignment sheet and Student ID with you to the MFAH you will get in free.) Be sure this painting corresponds to the time period under discussion in this course up to the time listed on the syllabus in which the paper is due. This assignment requires that you be able to view in person the painting about which you are writing a formal analysis.

Keep in mind that before writing parts two and three of the paper, you MUST be able to view it in person. A visual (or “formal”) analysis is a kind of description that examines not just how a work of art looks, but also how it works. In other words, it describes the effect of a work of art on the viewer, and how the work of art achieves that effect.
A formal analysis is a useful exercise since it forces you to look closely at the way an image is put together. **Do no outside reading** or research for this assignment as all of your information is contained within the painting about which you are writing. Then write an essay in which you meet the requirements for both form and content listed below.

This is not a research paper and no outside research is required. You may certainly use museum labels to augment your understanding, but your **focus should be on the visual qualities of the piece**. Do not quote from the labels. You are free to consider how the visual qualities may interact with the subject matter and help to generate meaning, but try not to dwell upon imagined details of the narrative. Your main point is the visual character of the work. Similarly, discussion of the historical style of the work is not necessary, and should not distract you from the workings of the piece you have chosen.

*For more information on formal analyses, consult “Introduction” and “Formal Analysis” (under “Visual Description”) sections at [www.writingaboutart.org](http://www.writingaboutart.org), a website created by Professor Margorie Munsterberg*

There are three basic steps you can use to begin the process of writing your formal analysis paper:

1. **GENERATE SOME NOTES:** Choose your work of art from the list and stand in front of it for a long time, from several different vantage points. Ask yourself the questions at the bottom of this sheet and write down your answers.

2. **DEVELOP A THESIS:** After you have looked at the work and made some notes, step back and consider the **effect** of each of the qualities you have noted in the piece. Based upon your consideration, come up with an overall **characterization** of the visual impression the work makes on the viewer, and the main ways it achieves that impression. **Boil it down to one sentence. This is your thesis.**

3. **PROVE YOUR THESIS:** **Put your thesis at the end of an introductory paragraph** that includes the title, artist and date of the work. In the body of the paper, describe how the piece achieves the impression it makes, using observations from your notes. Don’t include all of your notes, only those that support your thesis most clearly. Similarly, you don’t need to describe every detail at length, only those that are relevant to your argument. Use unified paragraphs with clear statements at the beginning of each. You might have one paragraph on the effect of the materials, one on the use of light, one on the arrangement of shapes, etc.

**Content:**

Begin your analysis with a brief and general description of subject matter and then move on to more detailed analyses of each of the formal elements (1 paragraph each), citing particular aspects/parts of the image to support your observations.
ANALYZE THE WORK CAREFULLY: Direct your analysis in such a way that it supports your THESIS (what you see as the visual tone/mood of the artwork).

i. Remember: A formal analysis is NOT a description of how a work of art looks, it is an analysis of how it works visually.

b. Support your analysis of how the artwork creates that overall visual impression by analyzing three to five specific visual elements.

c. Each visual element analyzed should get its own paragraph (s) devoted to the support of that specific visual element and its relationship to its overall effect or visual impression it makes on the viewer.

d. Direct your formal analysis in such a way that it supports your THESIS.

e. The first sentence of each of your analysis paragraphs should succinctly state – in ONE sentence – the visual element to be discussed and its relationship to the overall visual effect and meaning/function of the artwork – (a.k.a. your THESIS).

f. Each of the body paragraphs should begin with a topic sentence (also sometimes called a statement of argument), which states what the paragraph will be about. Each paragraph should discuss idea or one part of the thesis. The paragraph should end with a sentence that connects the ideas of the paragraph back to the thesis statement and transition into the ideas of the following paragraph.

When analyzing each of the elements listed below, be sure to talk specifically about the picture itself. For example, do not simply say that the artist varies his/her use of color throughout the image. Instead, make the claim and then describe specifically how/where the artist varies color in the image. The main body of your paper will address the following formal elements within the work:

**Composition**: How is the picture arranged? How does the artist create or reject a sense of 3-dimensional space? Does the artist emphasize the flatness of the canvas and/or dissolve it? The picture plane is the 2-dimensional surface of the painting. The foreground, middleground, and background organize the pictorial space behind the picture plane.

**Technique**: What is the artist’s medium? How is it applied? Discuss the surface-is it smooth, textured, rough, etc.? Are the brushstrokes visible, even, thick, thin, etc.? Is the technique consistent and/or varied through the image? Your discussion of technique will lead you to an analysis of line and how form is created through precision of line, blurring of line, etc.
**Color:** Describe the color scheme. Do the colors vary in intensity? Are colors or variations (levels of saturation) of them repeated? Are contrasting colors/like colors used in a specific way? Is color used to unify and/or break up the picture plane?

**Light and Shadow:** How are light and shadow represented? How does the artist model space and figures through variations in light and shadow? Are these variations abrupt and/or subtle?

While it is important to address each of the formal aspects of your image separately and thoroughly, there will be overlap—i.e. your understanding of an artist’s use of light may affect your analysis of spatial construction, etc.

**In your concluding paragraph,** discuss how the artist’s manipulation of formal elements affects our understanding of the subject of the image. In other words, show how the formal construction of the painting works in concert with the subject matter to create meaning.

The concluding paragraph should restate your thesis and summarizes your findings. In your conclusion you may, if you wish, also express your judgment about the work and whether you find it successful or engaging; if you do so, be sure to give specific, objective reasons for your opinion.

**Form:**

Please **follow these instructions** for the presentation of your paper:

*I will deduct points if you do not follow these parameters.*

- All papers must be word-processed.
- Your paper should be between a minimum 750 to a maximum of 1500 words (please indicate word count at the end of your paper.).
- Put your name and the title of your essay on a separate cover sheet.
- **DOUBLE SPACE** your essay and use a clear **12-POINT TIMES NEW ROMAN FONT**.
- Use **ONE-INCH** margins for the top, bottom, right, and left.
- Staple your paper together in the upper left corner.

**Writing assistance** is available through the LU Writing Center at http://dept.lamar.edu/writingcenter/index.php Please visit their website and plan ahead if you wish to take advantage of their services. I will happily look at drafts of papers if emailed to me no less than 48 hours before the day the are due.

**Common mistakes students make that I hope you will avoid:**

*I will deduct points if you make these mistakes.*

*Underline or italicize titles of paintings. Do not put painting titles in quotation marks.

*It’s=it is; It's is NOT a possessive OR a plural.*
Note: It is best to avoid contractions in formal writing assignments.

*Do not use an apostrophe (') to form a plural. Plurals are created by adding an s or an es to the end of a word.

*Not only…but also: the phrase “not only” must be followed with “but also”

Avoid the passive voice and colloquial language in formal writing. For information on the passive voice, see the following website: http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/passivevoice.html

Proofread your paper carefully before handing it in!

WARNING: The Museum is not open 24 hours a day NOR seven days a week. The works are also not available to view online. So plan accordingly.

Some Questions to Prompt Analysis:

Please merge your discussion in a mature and well thought out manner. Do not enumerate answers to each of the above or below listed questions – respond to them in an integrated manner. Vary your sentence structure and pull together different ideas and concepts. Many of these questions may have no bearing on your chosen artwork.

Is the work quite flat or is it “plastic?” Which parts project and which recede?

How does it relate to the space around it? Does it reach out? Does it have an ideal viewing point?

What are the major lines and shapes and where do they draw your eye?

Are some parts of the work framed or emphasized, or are the elements evenly distributed?

Is there a dramatic focus, or are the figures incorporated into a decorative scheme? (or both?)

Are the major lines and shapes horizontal or vertical, or do they seem to embody a balance?

What kinds of materials has the artist used, and what is the effect of them?

Are the contours open or closed? Ragged or smooth? Crisp or muddy? Curved or straight?

Which parts are most detailed?

Is there a sense of pattern or rhythm to the work?

Is it regular, orderly and precise, or is it loose? (or some combination?)

If the work is a decorated object, how do the images relate to the overall shape of the object?

Is there an impression of motion or speed, and what causes that?

Is there an impression of stillness or stability, and what causes that?
Is there a sense of the momentary, or of the eternal? What causes that?

Does the work seem heavy or light? What causes that?

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**
Students will average 75% or better on the assignment pertaining to outcome 1

**M 3: Group Research Presentation**
Student will collaborate with group research presented in a visual and verbal format. (Sample Presentation Assignment pasted below)

**Guidelines for In-Class Presentations**

The purpose of the In-Class Presentation is to foster verbal communication, teamwork skills, and supplement class discussion. Each Group is responsible for giving a brief overview/definition of the topic of their assigned day (Each group’s assigned Presentation day and topic is listed at the bottom of this document) including the general characteristics of the art of the period, the culture and history. It is also the responsibility of the group to address the readings assigned for that particular class period, including isolating the thesis of the argument and the main points of the essay(s). Your presentation should include the following:

- Presentations should last 15 minutes.
- Presentations must include visuals, in the form of a PowerPoint that can be loaded onto the computer in the lecture hall, that supplement your presentation.
  - It would be wise on the day of your presentation to come to class ten minutes early to make sure your visuals are properly loaded onto the lecture hall computer and that they work.
- Your goal in your presentation is to introduce the topic of the day – found at the top of each day’s class entries on the course schedule.
  - You also have a secondary goal of introducing the readings scheduled for that day, specifically the thesis argument of each reading and how the author proves (or does not prove) their thesis.

1. **Do your homework.** Nobody can give a good presentation without putting in some serious time preparing remarks. Many gifted speakers look as if they’re just talking off the cuff, saying whatever comes to mind. But, in truth, they’ve spent considerable time figuring out what they’re going to say. You should, too.
Tip. It's always a good idea to try out your presentation on your professor (or TA) before giving
it in class. Office hours work well for this.

2. **Play the parts.** Good presentations are structured in sections. Many presentations need only
two or three main points. Organizing your points into a few main parts and telling your audience
what these parts are—both before and as you go through your presentation—can be the difference
between a winning presentation and a loser.

3. **Do a dry run.** It's always good to do a run-through (or even a couple of run-throughs) the
night before the presentation. This can help with both your timing and your manner of
presentation. Be sure to make mental notes if you went on too long or got nervous or stuck.
Some people find it useful to have a friend pretend to be the audience: He or she can build up
your confidence and maybe even ask a question or two.

4. **Look presentable.** No need to wear a suit, but it's hard for people to take a presentation
seriously when you look like someone who just rolled out of bed.

5. **Talk; don't read.** Nobody enjoys seeing a speaker burying his or her face in a script, reading
stiffly from a piece of paper. Try to talk from notes, or, if you use a written-out text, try to look
down at it only occasionally. It's less important that you capture the text word for word than that
you present the main ideas in a natural and relaxed way. (Your practice sessions should help you
here, since they enable you to better remember what you want to say.)

6. **Take it slow.** The single biggest mistake inexperienced speakers make is going too fast.
Remember that your audience is hearing the material for the first time and isn't nearly as familiar
with the topic as you are.
7. **Use aids.** For certain sorts of presentations, visual aids—such as PowerPoints help your audience locate and grasp the main points. Just be sure to explain these materials fully in your presentation: No one is happy to see an outline that can't be made heads or tails of. – On the same note, do not show a PowerPoint presentation that is text heavy and then read the text. Your audience will tune you out completely.

Some presenters find the "speaker notes" feature useful in PowerPoint (you see a pane with your notes that the audience doesn't see). It sure beats flashcards.

8. **Be yourself.** As important as the content you present is your authenticity in presenting it, so don't try to be someone you're not. You'll never succeed.

9. **Play it straight.** There's no harm in including a little humor in your presentations, especially if you can carry it off well. But in most college presentations, clowns will get C's.

10. **Circle the crowd.** A very important part of public speaking is to make eye contact with people seated in all parts of the room—even those nodding off in the back. That shows people that you're interested in communicating with them—not just getting through this experience as quickly as possible. And it wouldn't hurt to go out from in back of the podium or desk and walk around the room a little. Sharing space with the audience can also communicate your interest in sharing your results with them, something you surely want to do.

11. **Appear relaxed.** You don't have to actually be relaxed—few speakers are—but at least try to appear as relaxed as possible. Bring along some water or a drink, take short breaks from time to time, and think pleasant thoughts. No one enjoys speakers who are trembling and sweating bullets.

**Professors' Perspective.** Some professors throw up before having to lecture. It doesn't happen...
often–thankfully–but take consolation in knowing that even very experienced speakers find it
tense to give a lecture.

**12 Finish strong.** Always be sure to have a satisfying conclusion to your presentation in which
you make clear to the listeners what they now know. It creates a warm
feeling in the minds of
your listeners and shows them that they've really learned something from
your talk—which they
probably have.

**13. Welcome interruptions.** Some speakers are terrified that someone will interrupt them with a
question or comment. Actually, this is one of the best things that can happen, because it shows
that someone in the audience has engaged with what you're saying, and, if you have the time to
offer a brief response, it can actually lead to genuine progress on the point you were making.

And two-way conversation (assuming you're minimally good at it) is always a
tension-reducer.

**14. Know when to stop lecturing.** Certain presentations—especially in advanced or upperdivision classes or seminars—can require you to present
some material, then lead a discussion. Be sure to attentively listen to any
comments or questions your classmates might raise before starting on your
answer. And in a discussion period, never lecture (only discuss), and be sure to answer exactly the question asked (don't offer up more canned–but irrelevant–material). In many classes, how you discuss is as important as how you present.

**Schedule and Topics of Presentations**

2/19 – Ancient Egypt – **Group #1**

2/28 – Ancient Greece – **Group #2**

3/21 – Ancient Rome – **Group #3**

4/2 – Late Antiquity - **Group #4**

4/9 – Byzantium – **Group #5**
4/11 – Medieval Art and Islam – **Group #6**

4/16 - The Celts and Vikings – **Group #7**

4/25 – Early Medieval Art on the Continent – **Group #8**

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**
Students will average 75% or better on the Group Presentation pertaining to outcome 1

**M 4: Social and Personal Responsibility and Diverse Histories**
Through in depth reading the student will be socially and personally responsible with the engagement of the diverse histories and interpretations of art and visual culture. (Sample assignment pasted below.)

**Reading Questions #10**

Answers should be **thoughtful, typed, double spaced, written in complete sentences and paragraphs and employ proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation.** Do not use quotes or wording directly from the text; words and phrases should be your own. *(Work that does not follow the instructions will not be graded and the student given a zero (0) for that assignment.)*

A. Marilyn Stokstad, "Rivals from the East: Byzantine and Islamic Art" in *Medieval Art*

1. What is the difference between the Muslim conception of Jesus and the Christian?

2. When did the Mongols conquer Baghdad?

3. When did the Crusaders loot Constantinople and how long did they remain there?

4. When did the Council of Constantinople end the iconoclastic controversy and what happened as a result?

5. In what terms did the Byzantine artistic masters conceive of the human figure, during the Middle Byzantine period?

6. What is significant about the *Paris Psalter*?

7. What is the meaning or symbolism of Hodegetria, when discussed in relation to images of the Virgin and Christ?
8. How did architects of the Middle Byzantine period adjust to new liturgical requirements in the design of churches?

9. What route did Byzantine art take to get into western Europe?

10. What does salam mean?

11. What is a caliph?

12. Where did the earliest mosques derive their forms from and how is this similar to early Christian architecture?

B. “Henry Luttikhuizen and Dorothy Verkerk, “Medieval Art and Islam,” in Snyder’s Medieval

1. What is the primary function of the Dome of the Rock?

2. What is the significance of the mosaics on the Dome of the Rock?

3. What is the most lavish illuminated manuscript created in the Crusader states and where was it created?

4. What was the original function of the Knights of Hospitaller?

5. How many renovations has the mosque at Córdoba undergone?

6. What is a maqsura?

7. What was the caliphate of Córdoba known for in the tenth century?

8. What is Adoptionism?

9. What are mudejars?

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Target:
Students will average 75% or better on the Reading Response Questions pertaining to outcome 1

SLO 2: Apply written and verbal communication skills
Students will apply Communication Skills in written and verbal formats to interpret and analyze artwork style and content within a specific historical context engaging the methods of formal and cultural analysis.

Relevant Associations:

Standard Associations

New Core Component Areas
4 Creative Arts (CA)

New Core Objectives
1 Critical Thinking (CT)
2 Communication (COM)
6 Personal Responsibility (PR)

General Education/Core Curriculum Associations
1  Critical Thinking: Students will apply critical thinking appropriately to identify, analyze and resolve complex issues.
3  Communication: Students will develop written and oral presentations that are clear, precise, organized, efficient and appropriately adapted to audience and purpose.
6  Ethical reasoning and action: includes the ability to connect choices and actions to ethical reasoning.

Related Measures

M 1: Analyze artwork style and content
The student will use critical thinking, written communication, and personal responsibility to analyze artwork style and content within a specific historical context engaging the methods of formal and cultural analysis in a written format. (Sample question pasted below)

In a well-developed essay, with a thesis statement in the introduction, discuss how representations of the human form have changed from the Byzantine period to the Gothic period. As part of your answer be sure to compare and contrast, in depth, no less than three works of art that we discussed in class.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Target:
Students will average 75% or better on the questions pertaining to outcome 2

M 2: Formal Analysis

Through written and verbal communication the students will engage in formal and cultural analysis for the interpretation of style and content of diverse works of art. (sample assignment pasted below)

ARTS 1303 Writing Assignment #1

Formal Analysis Assignment

See below for instructions regarding each phase of the assignment

Directions:

Choose a work of art from the Antiquities Collection at the Menil Collection, in Houston, TX, or the Antiquities Collection at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. (If you take your assignment sheet and Student ID with you to the MFAH you get in free.) Be sure this painting corresponds to the time period under discussion in this course up to the time listed on the syllabus in which the paper is due. This assignment requires that you be able to view in person the painting about which you are writing a formal analysis.

Keep in mind that before writing parts two and three of the paper, you MUST be able to view it in person. A visual (or “formal”) analysis is a kind of description that examines not just how a work of art looks, but also how it works. In other words, it describes the effect of a work of art on the viewer, and how the work of art achieves that effect.
A formal analysis is a useful exercise since it forces you to look closely at the way an image is put together. **Do no outside reading** or research for this assignment as all of your information is contained within the painting about which you are writing. Then write an essay in which you meet the requirements for both form and content listed below.

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1. GENERATE SOME NOTES: Choose your work of art from the list and stand in front of it for a long time, from several different vantage points. Ask yourself the questions at the bottom of this sheet and write down your answers.

2. DEVELOP A THESIS: After you have looked at the work and made some notes, step back and consider the **effect** of each of the qualities you have noted in the piece. Based upon your consideration, come up with an overall **characterization** of the visual impression the work makes on the viewer, and the main ways it achieves that impression. **Boil it down to one sentence. This is your thesis.**

3. PROVE YOUR THESIS: **Put your thesis at the end of an introductory paragraph** that includes the title, artist and date of the work. In the body of the paper, describe how the piece achieves the impression it makes, using observations from your notes. Don’t include all of your notes, only those that support your thesis most clearly. Similarly, you don’t need to describe every detail at length, only those that are relevant to your argument. Use unified paragraphs with clear statements at the beginning of each. You might have one paragraph on the effect of the materials, one on the use of light, one on the arrangement of shapes, etc.

**Content:**

Begin your analysis with a brief and general description of subject matter and then move on to more detailed analyses of each of the formal elements (1 paragraph each), citing particular aspects/parts of the image to support your observations.
ANALYZE THE WORK CAREFULLY: Direct your analysis in such a way that it supports your THESIS (what you see as the visual tone/mood of the artwork).

i. Remember: A formal analysis is NOT a description of how a work of art looks, it is an analysis of how it works visually.

b. Support your analysis of how the artwork creates that overall visual impression by analyzing three to five specific visual elements. —

c. Each visual element analyzed should get its own paragraph(s) devoted to the support of that specific visual element and its relationship to its overall effect or visual impression it makes on the viewer.

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When analyzing each of the elements listed below, be sure to talk specifically about the picture itself. For example, do not simply say that the artist varies his/her use of color throughout the image. Instead, make the claim and then describe specifically how/where the artist varies color in the image. The main body of your paper will address the following formal elements within the work:

**Composition**: How is the picture arranged? How does the artist create or reject a sense of 3-dimensional space? Does the artist emphasize the flatness of the canvas and/or dissolve it? The picture plane is the 2-dimensional surface of the painting. The foreground, middleground, and background organize the pictorial space behind the picture plane.

**Technique**: What is the artist’s medium? How is it applied? Discuss the surface-is it smooth, textured, rough, etc.? Are the brushstrokes visible, even, thick, thin, etc.? Is the technique consistent and/or varied through the image? Your discussion of technique will lead you to an analysis of line and how form is created through precision of line, blurring of line, etc.
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**In your concluding paragraph,** discuss how the artist’s manipulation of formal elements affects our understanding of the subject of the image. In other words, show how the formal construction of the painting works in concert with the subject matter to create meaning.

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**Some Questions to Prompt Analysis:**

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Is the work quite flat or is it “plastic?” Which parts project and which recede?

How does it relate to the space around it? Does it reach out? Does it have an ideal viewing point?

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Are some parts of the work framed or emphasized, or are the elements evenly distributed?

Is there a dramatic focus, or are the figures incorporated into a decorative scheme? (or both?)

Are the major lines and shapes horizontal or vertical, or do they seem to embody a balance?

What kinds of materials has the artist used, and what is the effect of them?

Are the contours open or closed? Ragged or smooth? Crisp or muddy? Curved or straight?

Which parts are most detailed?

Is there a sense of pattern or rhythm to the work?

Is it regular, orderly and precise, or is it loose? (or some combination?)

If the work is a decorated object, how do the images relate to the overall shape of the object?

Is there an impression of motion or speed, and what causes that?

Is there an impression of stillness or stability, and what causes that?
Is there a sense of the momentary, or of the eternal? What causes that?

Does the work seem heavy or light? What causes that?

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**
Students will average 75% or better on the assignment pertaining to outcome 2

**M 3: Group Research Presentation**
Student will collaborate with group research presented in a visual and verbal format. (Sample Presentation Assignment pasted below)

**Guidelines for In-Class Presentations**

The purpose of the In-Class Presentation is to foster verbal communication, teamwork skills, and supplement class discussion. Each Group is responsible for giving a brief overview/definition of the topic of their assigned day (Each group’s assigned Presentation day and topic is listed at the bottom of this document.) including the general characteristics of the art of the period, the culture and history. It is also the responsibility of the group to address the readings assigned for that particular class period, including isolating the thesis of the argument and the main points of the essay(s). Your presentation should include the following:

- Presentations should last 15 minutes.
- Presentations must include visuals, in the form of a PowerPoint that can be loaded onto the computer in the lecture hall, that supplement your presentation.
  - It would be wise on the day of your presentation to come to class ten minutes early to make sure your visuals are properly loaded onto the lecture hall computer and that they work.
- Your goal in your presentation is to introduce the topic of the day – found at the top of each day’s class entries on the course schedule.
  - You also have a secondary goal of introducing the readings scheduled for that day, specifically the thesis argument of each reading and how the author proves (or does not prove) their thesis.

1. **Do your homework.** Nobody can give a good presentation without putting in some serious time preparing remarks. Many gifted speakers look as if they’re just talking off the cuff, saying whatever comes to mind. But, in truth, they’ve spent considerable time figuring out what they’re going to say. You should, too.
**Tip.** It's always a good idea to try out your presentation on your professor (or TA) before giving it in class. Office hours work well for this.

2. **Play the parts.** Good presentations are structured in sections. Many presentations need only two or three main points. Organizing your points into a few main parts and telling your audience what these parts are—both before and as you go through your presentation—can be the difference between a winning presentation and a loser.

3. **Do a dry run.** It's always good to do a run-through (or even a couple of run-throughs) the night before the presentation. This can help with both your timing and your manner of presentation. Be sure to make mental notes if you went on too long or got nervous or stuck.

Some people find it useful to have a friend pretend to be the audience: He or she can build up your confidence and maybe even ask a question or two.

4. **Look presentable.** No need to wear a suit, but it's hard for people to take a presentation seriously when you look like someone who just rolled out of bed.

5. **Talk; don't read.** Nobody enjoys seeing a speaker burying his or her face stiffly from a piece of paper. Try to talk from notes, or, if you use a written-out text, try to look down at it only occasionally. It's less important that you capture the text word for word than that you present the main ideas in a natural and relaxed way. (Your practice sessions should help you here, since they enable you to better remember what you want to say.)

6. **Take it slow.** The single biggest mistake inexperienced speakers make is going too fast.

Remember that your audience is hearing the material for the first time and isn't nearly as familiar with the topic as you are.
7. Use aids. For certain sorts of presentations, visual aids—such as PowerPoints help your audience locate and grasp the main points. Just be sure to explain these materials fully in your presentation: No one is happy to see an outline that can't be made heads or tails of. – On the same note, do not show a PowerPoint presentation that is text heavy and then read the text. Your audience will tune you out completely.

Some presenters find the "speaker notes" feature useful in PowerPoint (you see a pane with your notes that the audience doesn't see). It sure beats flashcards.

8. Be yourself. As important as the content you present is your authenticity in presenting it, so don't try to be someone you're not. You'll never succeed.

9. Play it straight. There's no harm in including a little humor in your presentations, especially if you can carry it off well. But in most college presentations, clowns will get C's.

10. Circle the crowd. A very important part of public speaking is to make eye contact with people seated in all parts of the room—even those nodding off in the back. That shows people that you're interested in communicating with them—not just getting through this experience as quickly as possible. And it wouldn't hurt to go out from in back of the podium or desk and walk around the room a little. Sharing space with the audience can also communicate your interest in sharing your results with them, something you surely want to do.

11. Appear relaxed. You don't have to actually be relaxed—few speakers are—but at least try to appear as relaxed as possible. Bring along some water or a drink, take short breaks from time to time, and think pleasant thoughts. No one enjoys speakers who are trembling and sweating.

Professors' Perspective. Some professors throw up before having to lecture. It doesn't happen
often–thankfully–but take consolation in knowing that even very experienced
speakers find it
tense to give a lecture.

12 Finish strong. Always be sure to have a satisfying conclusion to your
presentation in which
you make clear to the listeners what they now know. It creates a warm
feeling in the minds of
your listeners and shows them that they've really learned something from
your talk—which they
probably have.

13. Welcome interruptions. Some speakers are terrified that someone will
interrupt them with a
question or comment. Actually, this is one of the best things that can
happen, because it shows
that someone in the audience has engaged with what you're saying, and, if
you have the time to
offer a brief response, it can actually lead to genuine progress on the point
you were making.

And two-way conversation (assuming you're minimally good at it) is always a
tension-reducer.

14. Know when to stop lecturing. Certain presentations–especially in
advanced or upperdivision classes or seminars–can require you to present
some material, then lead a discussion. Be sure to attentively listen to any
comments or questions your classmates might raise before starting on your
answer. And in a discussion period, never lecture (only discuss), and be
sure to answer exactly the question asked (don't offer up more canned–but
irrelevant–material). In many classes, how you discuss is as important as
how you present.

Schedule and Topics of Presentations

2/19 – Ancient Egypt – Group #1

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4/25 – Early Medieval Art on the Continent – Group #8

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**
Students will average 75% or better on the Group Presentation pertaining to outcome 2.

**M 4: Social and Personal Responsibility and Diverse Histories**
Through in depth reading the student will be socially and personally responsible with the engagement of the diverse histories and interpretations of art and visual culture. (Sample assignment pasted below.)

**Reading Questions #10**

Answers should be **thoughtful, typed, double spaced, written in complete sentences and paragraphs** and **employ proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation**. Do not use quotes or wording directly from the text; words and phrases should be your own. *(Work that does not follow the instructions will not be graded and the student given a zero (0) for that assignment.)*

A. Marilyn Stokstad, "Rivals from the East: Byzantine and Islamic Art" in *Medieval Art*

1. What is the difference between the Muslim conception of Jesus and the Christian?
2. When did the Mongols conquer Baghdad?
3. When did the Crusaders loot Constantinople and how long did they remain there?
4. When did the Council of Constantinople end the iconoclastic controversy and what happened as a result?
5. In what terms did the Byzantine artistic masters conceive of the human figure, during the Middle Byzantine period?
6. What is significant about the *Paris Psalter*?
7. What is the meaning or symbolism of Hodegetria, when discussed in relation to images of the Virgin and Christ?
8. How did architects of the Middle Byzantine period adjust to new liturgical requirements in the design of churches?

9. What route did Byzantine art take to get into western Europe?

10. What does salam mean?

11. What is a caliph?

12. Where did the earliest mosques derive their forms from and how is this similar to early Christian architecture?

B. “Henry Luttikhuizen and Dorothy Verkerk, “Medieval Art and Islam,” in Snyder’s Medieval

1. What is the primary function of the Dome of the Rock?

2. What is the significance of the mosaics on the Dome of the Rock?

3. What is the most lavish illuminated manuscript created in the Crusader states and where was it created?

4. What was the original function of the Knights of Hospitaller?

5. How many renovations has the mosque at Córdoba undergone?

6. What is a maqsura?

7. What was the caliphate of Córdoba known for in the tenth century?

8. What is Adoptionism?

9. What are mudejars?

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Target:
Students will average 75% or better on the Reading Response Questions pertaining to outcome 2.

SLO 3: Apply Teamwork with collaborative group research
Students will apply Teamwork and communication skills with collaborative group research and presentations, focusing on art, history, and culture across time from Prehistory to the 14th century.

Relevant Associations:

Standard Associations

New Core Component Areas
4 Creative Arts (CA)
9.3 CAO Language, Philosophy & Culture

New Core Objectives
2 Communication (COM)
4 Teamwork (TW)
5 Social Responsibility (SR)
6 Personal Responsibility (PR)

General Education/Core Curriculum Associations
1 Critical Thinking: Students will apply critical thinking appropriately to identify, analyze and resolve complex issues.
3 Communication: Students will develop written and oral presentations that are clear, precise, organized, efficient and appropriately adapted to audience and purpose.
4 Teamwork: includes the ability to collaborate effectively, consider different points of view, and work with others to support a shared purpose or goals.
5 Civic knowledge and engagement: includes both local and global intercultural knowledge and competence
6 Ethical reasoning and action: includes the ability to connect choices and actions to ethical reasoning.

Related Measures

M 3: Group Research Presentation
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Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**
Students will average 75% or better on the Group Presentation pertaining to outcome 3.

**SLO 4: Apply Social Responsibility effectively to understand diverse histories**
Students will apply Social Responsibility in written and verbal formats effectively to understand diverse histories, purposes, and content of art and visual culture.

**Relevant Associations:**

**Standard Associations**

**New Core Component Areas**
4 Creative Arts (CA)
9.3 CAO Language, Philosophy & Culture

**New Core Objectives**
1 Critical Thinking (CT)
2 Communication (COM)
5 Social Responsibility (SR)
6 Personal Responsibility (PR)

**General Education/Core Curriculum Associations**

1 Critical Thinking: Students will apply critical thinking appropriately to identify, analyze and resolve complex issues.
3 Communication: Students will develop written and oral presentations that are clear, precise, organized, efficient and appropriately adapted to audience and purpose.
5 Civic knowledge and engagement: includes both local and global intercultural knowledge and competence
6 Ethical reasoning and action: includes the ability to connect choices and actions to ethical reasoning.

**Related Measures**

**M 2: Formal Analysis**

Through written and verbal communication the students will engage in formal and cultural analysis for the interpretation of style and content of diverse works of art. (sample assignment pasted below)
ARTS 1303 Writing Assignment #1

Formal Analysis Assignment

See below for instructions regarding each phase of the assignment

Directions:

Choose a work of art from the Antiquities Collection at the Menil Collection, in Houston, TX, or the Antiquities Collection at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. (If you take your assignment sheet and Student ID with you to the MFAH you get in free.) Be sure this painting corresponds to the time period under discussion in this course up to the time listed on the syllabus in which the paper is due. This assignment requires that you be able to view in person the painting about which you are writing a formal analysis.

Keep in mind that before writing parts two and three of the paper, you MUST be able to view it in person. A visual (or “formal”) analysis is a kind of description that examines not just how a work of art looks, but also how it works. In other words, it describes the effect of a work of art on the viewer, and how the work of art achieves that effect.

A formal analysis is a useful exercise since it forces you to look closely at the way an image is put together. Do no outside reading or research for this assignment as all of your information is contained within the painting about which you are writing. Then write an essay in which you meet the requirements for both form and content listed below.

This is not a research paper and no outside research is required. You may certainly use museum labels to augment your understanding, but your focus should be on the visual qualities of the piece. Do not quote from the labels. You are free to consider how the visual qualities may interact with the subject matter and help to generate meaning, but try not to dwell upon imagined details of the narrative. Your main point is the visual character of the work. Similarly, discussion of the historical style of the work is not necessary, and should not distract you from the workings of the piece you have chosen.

*For more information on formal analyses, consult “Introduction” and “Formal Analysis” (under “Visual Description”) sections at www.writingaboutart.org, a website created by Professor Margorie Munsterberg

There are three basic steps you can use to begin the process of writing your formal analysis paper:

1. GENERATE SOME NOTES: Choose your work of art from the list and stand in front of it for a long time, from several different vantage points. Ask yourself the questions at the bottom of this sheet and write down your answers.

2. DEVELOP A THESIS: After you have looked at the work and made some notes, step back and consider the effect of each of the qualities you have noted in the piece. Based upon your consideration, come up with an overall characterization of the visual impression the work makes on the viewer, and the main ways it achieves that impression. Boil it down to one sentence. This is your thesis.
3. PROVE YOUR THESIS: **Put your thesis at the end of an introductory paragraph** that includes the title, artist and date of the work. In the body of the paper, describe how the piece achieves the impression it makes, using observations from your notes. Don’t include all of your notes, only those that support your thesis most clearly. Similarly, you don’t need to describe every detail at length, only those that are relevant to your argument. Use unified paragraphs with clear statements at the beginning of each. You might have one paragraph on the effect of the materials, one on the use of light, one on the arrangement of shapes, etc.

**Content:**

Begin your analysis with a brief and general description of subject matter and then move on to more detailed analyses of each of the formal elements (1 paragraph each), citing particular aspects/parts of the image to support your observations.

ANALYZE THE WORK CAREFULLY: Direct your analysis in such a way that it supports your THESIS (what you see as the visual tone/mood of the artwork).

i. Remember: A formal analysis is NOT a description of how a work of art looks, it is an analysis of how it works visually.

b. Support your analysis of how the artwork creates that overall visual impression by analyzing three to five specific visual elements.

c. Each visual element analyzed should get its own paragraph(s) devoted to the support of that specific visual element and its relationship to its overall effect or visual impression it makes on the viewer.

d. Direct your formal analysis in such a way that it supports your THESIS.

e. The first sentence of each of your analysis paragraphs should succinctly state – in ONE sentence – the visual element to be discussed and its relationship to the overall visual effect and meaning/function of the artwork – (a.k.a. your THESIS).

f. **Each of the body paragraphs should begin with a topic sentence (also sometimes called a statement of argument),** which states what the paragraph will be about. Each paragraph should discuss idea or one part of the thesis. The paragraph should end with a sentence that connects the ideas of the paragraph back to the thesis statement and transition into the ideas of the following paragraph.

When analyzing each of the elements listed below, be sure to talk specifically about the picture itself. For example, do not simply say that the
artist varies his/her use of color throughout the image. Instead, make the claim and then describe specifically how/where the artist varies color in the image. The main body of your paper will address the following formal elements within the work:

**Composition**: How is the picture arranged? How does the artist create or reject a sense of 3-dimensional space? Does the artist emphasize the flatness of the canvas and/or dissolve it? The **picture plane** is the 2-dimensional surface of the painting. The **foreground, middleground, and background** organize the pictorial space behind the picture plane.

**Technique**: What is the artist’s medium? How is it applied? Discuss the surface—is it smooth, textured, rough, etc.? Are the brushstrokes visible, even, thick, thin, etc.? Is the technique consistent and/or varied through the image? Your discussion of technique will lead you to an analysis of line and how form is created through precision of line, blurring of line, etc.

**Color**: Describe the color scheme. Do the colors vary in intensity? Are colors or variations (levels of saturation) of them repeated? Are contrasting colors/like colors used in a specific way? Is color used to unify and/or break up the picture plane?

**Light and Shadow**: How are light and shadow represented? How does the artist model space and figures through variations in light and shadow? Are these variations abrupt and/or subtle?

While it is important to address each of the formal aspects of your image separately and thoroughly, there will be overlap—i.e. your understanding of an artist’s use of light may affect your analysis of spatial construction, etc.

**In your concluding paragraph**, discuss how the artist’s manipulation of formal elements affects our understanding of the subject of the image. In other words, show how the formal construction of the painting works in concert with the subject matter to create meaning.

The concluding paragraph should restate your thesis and summarizes your findings. In your conclusion you may, if you wish, also express your judgment about the work and whether you find it successful or engaging; if you do so, be sure to give specific, objective reasons for your opinion.

**Form:**

Please **follow these instructions** for the presentation of your paper:

*I will deduct points if you do not follow these parameters.*

- All papers must be word-processed.
- Your paper should be between a minimum 750 to a maximum of 1500 words (please indicate word count at the end of your paper.).
- Put your name and the title of your essay on a separate cover sheet.
• DOUBLE SPACE your essay and use a clear 12-POINT TIMES NEW ROMAN FONT.
• Use ONE-INCH margins for the top, bottom, right, and left.
• Staple your paper together in the upper left corner.

Writing assistance is available through the LU Writing Center at http://dept.lamar.edu/writingcenter/index.php Please visit their website and plan ahead if you wish to take advantage of their services. I will happily look at drafts of papers if emailed to me no less than 48 hours before the day they are due.

Common mistakes students make that I hope you will avoid:

I will deduct points if you make these mistakes.

*Underline or italicize titles of paintings. Do not put painting titles in quotation marks.

*It’s=it is; It’s is NOT a possessive OR a plural.

Note: It is best to avoid contractions in formal writing assignments.

*Do not use an apostrophe (’) to form a plural. Plurals are created by adding an s or an es to the end of a word.

*Not only…but also: the phrase “not only” must be followed with “but also”

Avoid the passive voice and colloquial language in formal writing. For information on the passive voice, see the following website: http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/passivevoice.html

Proofread your paper carefully before handing it in!

WARNING: The Museum is not open 24 hours a day NOR seven days a week. The works are also not available to view online. So plan accordingly.

Some Questions to Prompt Analysis:

Please merge your discussion in a mature and well thought out manner. Do not enumerate answers to each of the above or below listed questions – respond to them in an integrated manner. Vary your sentence structure and pull together different ideas and concepts. Many of these questions may have no bearing on your chosen artwork.

Is the work quite flat or is it “plastic?” Which parts project and which recede?

How does it relate to the space around it? Does it reach out? Does it have an ideal viewing point?

What are the major lines and shapes and where do they draw your eye?

Are some parts of the work framed or emphasized, or are the elements evenly distributed?
Is there a dramatic focus, or are the figures incorporated into a decorative scheme? (or both?)

Are the major lines and shapes horizontal or vertical, or do they seem to embody a balance?

What kinds of materials has the artist used, and what is the effect of them?

Are the contours open or closed? Ragged or smooth? Crisp or muddy? Curved or straight?

Which parts are most detailed?

Is there a sense of pattern or rhythm to the work?

Is it regular, orderly and precise, or is it loose? (or some combination?)

If the work is a decorated object, how do the images relate to the overall shape of the object?

Is there an impression of motion or speed, and what causes that?

Is there an impression of stillness or stability, and what causes that?

Is there a sense of the momentary, or of the eternal? What causes that?

Does the work seem heavy or light? What causes that?

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Target:
Students will average 75% or better on the assignment pertaining to outcome 4.

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Some presenters find the "speaker notes" feature useful in PowerPoint (you see a pane with your notes that the audience doesn't see). It sure beats flashcards.

8. **Be yourself.** As important as the content you present is your authenticity in presenting it, so don't try to be someone you're not. You'll never succeed.

9. **Play it straight.** There's no harm in including a little humor in your presentations, especially if you can carry it off well. But in most college presentations, clowns will get C's.

10. **Circle the crowd.** A very important part of public speaking is to make eye contact with people seated in all parts of the room—even those nodding off in the back. That shows people that
you're interested in communicating with them—not just getting through this experience as quickly as possible. And it wouldn't hurt to go out from in back of the podium or desk and walk around the room a little. Sharing space with the audience can also communicate your interest in sharing your results with them, something you surely want to do.

11. **Appear relaxed.** You don't have to actually be relaxed—few speakers are—but at least try to appear as relaxed as possible. Bring along some water or a drink, take short breaks from time to time, and think pleasant thoughts. No one enjoys speakers who are trembling and sweating bullets.

**Professors' Perspective.** Some professors throw up before having to lecture. It doesn't happen often—thankfully—but take consolation in knowing that even very experienced speakers find it tense to give a lecture.

12. **Finish strong.** Always be sure to have a satisfying conclusion to your presentation in which you make clear to the listeners what they now know. It creates a warm feeling in the minds of your listeners and shows them that they've really learned something from your talk—which they probably have.

13. **Welcome interruptions.** Some speakers are terrified that someone will interrupt them with a question or comment. Actually, this is one of the best things that can happen, because it shows that someone in the audience has engaged with what you're saying, and, if you have the time to offer a brief response, it can actually lead to genuine progress on the point you were making.

And two-way conversation (assuming you're minimally good at it) is always a tension-reducer.

14. **Know when to stop lecturing.** Certain presentations—especially in advanced or upperdivision classes or seminars—can require you to present some material, then lead a discussion. Be sure to attentively listen to any comments or questions your classmates might raise before starting on your answer. And in a discussion period, never lecture (only discuss), and be...
sure to answer exactly the question asked (don’t offer up more canned—but irrelevant—material). In many classes, how you discuss is as important as how you present.

**Schedule and Topics of Presentations**

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4/11 – Medieval Art and Islam – **Group #6**

4/16 - The Celts and Vikings – **Group #7**

4/25 – Early Medieval Art on the Continent – **Group #8**

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**

Students will average 75% or better on the Group Presentation pertaining to outcome 4.

**M 4: Social and Personal Responsibility and Diverse Histories**

Through in depth reading the student will be socially and personally responsible with the engagement of the diverse histories and interpretations of art and visual culture. (Sample assignment pasted below.)

**Reading Questions #10**

Answers should be **thoughtful, typed, double spaced, written in complete sentences and paragraphs** and **employ proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation**. Do not use quotes or wording directly from the text; words and phrases should be your own. *(Work that does not follow the instructions will not be graded and the student given a zero (0) for that assignment.)*
A. Marilyn Stokstad, "Rivals from the East: Byzantine and Islamic Art" in *Medieval Art*

1. What is the difference between the Muslim conception of Jesus and the Christian?
2. When did the Mongols conquer Baghdad?
3. When did the Crusaders loot Constantinople and how long did they remain there?
4. When did the Council of Constantinople end the iconoclastic controversy and what happened as a result?
5. In what terms did the Byzantine artistic masters conceive of the human figure, during the Middle Byzantine period?
6. What is significant about the *Paris Psalter*?
7. What is the meaning or symbolism of Hodegetria, when discussed in relation to images of the Virgin and Christ?
8. How did architects of the Middle Byzantine period adjust to new liturgical requirements in the design of churches?
9. What route did Byzantine art take to get into western Europe?
10. What does salam mean?
11. What is a caliph?
12. Where did the earliest mosques derive their forms from and how is this similar to early Christian architecture?

B. “Henry Luttikhuizen and Dorothy Verkerk, “Medieval Art and Islam,” in *Snyder’s Medieval*

1. What is the primary function of the Dome of the Rock?
2. What is the significance of the mosaics on the Dome of the Rock?
3. What is the most lavish illuminated manuscript created in the Crusader states and where was it created?
4. What was the original function of the Knights of Hospitaller?
5. How many renovations has the mosque at Córdoba undergone?
6. What is a maqṣura?
7. What was the caliphate of Córdoba known for in the tenth century?
8. What is Adoptionism?
9. What are mudejars?

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

Target:
Students will average 75% or better on the Reading Response Questions pertaining to outcome 4.

**SLO 5: Apply Personal Responsibility effectively to understand diverse histories**
Students will apply Personal Responsibility in written and verbal formats for the effective analysis and interpretation of the diverse histories, cultures, and content of visual art and culture.

**Relevant Associations:**

**Standard Associations**

- **New Core Component Areas**
  - 4 Creative Arts (CA)
  - 9.3 CAO Language, Philosophy & Culture

- **New Core Objectives**
  - 1 Critical Thinking (CT)
  - 2 Communication (COM)
  - 6 Personal Responsibility (PR)

**General Education/Core Curriculum Associations**

1. Critical Thinking: Students will apply critical thinking appropriately to identify, analyze and resolve complex issues.
2. Civic knowledge and engagement: includes both local and global intercultural knowledge and competence
3. Ethical reasoning and action: includes the ability to connect choices and actions to ethical reasoning.

**Related Measures**

**M 1: Analyze artwork style and content**
The student will use critical thinking, written communication, and personal responsibility to analyze artwork style and content within a specific historical context engaging the methods of formal and cultural analysis in a written format. (Sample question pasted below)

In a well-developed essay, with a thesis statement in the introduction, discuss how representations of the human form have changed from the Byzantine period to the Gothic period. As part of your answer be sure to compare and contrast, in depth, no less than three works of art that we discussed in class.

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**
Students will average 75% or better on the questions pertaining to outcome 5

**M 2: Formal Analysis**

Through written and verbal communication the students will engage in formal and cultural analysis for the interpretation of style and content of diverse works of art. (Sample assignment pasted below)

ARTS 1303 Writing Assignment #1

**Formal Analysis Assignment**
See below for instructions regarding each phase of the assignment

**Directions:**

Choose a work of art from the Antiquities Collection at the Menil Collection, in Houston, TX, or the Antiquities Collection at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. (If you take your assignment sheet and Student ID with you to the MFAH you will get in free.) Be sure this painting corresponds to the time period under discussion in this course up to the time listed on the syllabus in which the paper is due. This assignment requires that you be able to view in person the painting about which you are writing a formal analysis.

Keep in mind that before writing parts two and three of the paper, you MUST **be able to view it in person**. A visual (or “formal”) analysis is a kind of description that examines not just how a work of art looks, but also how it works. In other words, it describes the effect of a work of art on the viewer, and how the work of art achieves that effect.

A formal analysis is a useful exercise since it forces you to look closely at the way an image is put together. **Do no outside reading** or research for this assignment as all of your information is contained within the painting about which you are writing. Then write an essay in which you meet the requirements for both form and content listed below.

This is not a research paper and no outside research is required. You may certainly use museum labels to augment your understanding, but your **focus should be on the visual qualities of the piece**. Do not quote from the labels. You are free to consider how the visual qualities may interact with the subject matter and help to generate meaning, but try not to dwell upon imagined details of the narrative. Your main point is the visual character of the work. Similarly, discussion of the historical style of the work is not necessary, and should not distract you from the workings of the piece you have chosen.

*For more information on formal analyses, consult “Introduction” and “Formal Analysis” (under “Visual Description”) sections at [www.writingaboutart.org](http://www.writingaboutart.org), a website created by Professor Margorie Munsterberg

There are three basic steps you can use to begin the process of writing your formal analysis paper:

1. **GENERATE SOME NOTES:** Choose your work of art from the list and stand in front of it for a long time, from several different vantage points. Ask yourself the questions at the bottom of this sheet and write down your answers.

2. **DEVELOP A THESIS:** After you have looked at the work and made some notes, step back and consider the effect of each of the qualities you have noted in the piece. Based upon your consideration, come up with an overall characterization of the visual impression the work makes on the viewer, and the main ways it achieves that impression. **Boil it down to one sentence. This is your thesis.**

3. **PROVE YOUR THESIS:** **Put your thesis at the end of an introductory paragraph** that includes the title, artist and date of the work. In the body of the paper, describe how the piece achieves the
impression it makes, using observations from your notes. Don't include all of your notes, only those that support your thesis most clearly. Similarly, you don’t need to describe every detail at length, only those that are relevant to your argument. Use unified paragraphs with clear statements at the beginning of each. You might have one paragraph on the effect of the materials, one on the use of light, one on the arrangement of shapes, etc.

**Content:**

Begin your analysis with a brief and general description of subject matter and then move on to more detailed analyses of each of the formal elements (1 paragraph each), citing particular aspects/parts of the image to support your observations.

ANALYZE THE WORK CAREFULLY: Direct your analysis in such a way that it supports your THESIS (what you see as the visual tone/mood of the artwork).

- **i.** Remember: A formal analysis is NOT a description of how a work of art looks, it is an analysis of how it works visually.

- **b.** Support your analysis of how the artwork creates that overall visual impression by analyzing three to five specific visual elements. –

- **c.** Each visual element analyzed should get its own paragraph(s) devoted to the support of that specific visual element and its relationship to its overall effect or visual impression it makes on the viewer.

- **d.** Direct your formal analysis in such a way that it supports your THESIS.

- **e.** The first sentence of each of your analysis paragraphs should succinctly state – in ONE sentence – the visual element to be discussed and its relationship to the overall visual effect and meaning/function of the artwork – (a.k.a. your THESIS).

- **f.** Each of the body paragraphs should begin with a topic sentence (also sometimes called a statement of argument), which states what the paragraph will be about. Each paragraph should discuss idea or one part of the thesis. The paragraph should end with a sentence that connects the ideas of the paragraph back to the thesis statement and transition into the ideas of the following paragraph.

When analyzing each of the elements listed below, be sure to talk specifically about the picture itself. For example, do not simply say that the artist varies his/her use of color throughout the image. Instead, make the claim and then describe specifically how/where the artist varies color in the
image. The main body of your paper will address the following formal elements within the work:

**Composition:** How is the picture arranged? How does the artist create or reject a sense of 3-dimensional space? Does the artist emphasize the flatness of the canvas and/or dissolve it? The **picture plane** is the 2-dimensional surface of the painting. The **foreground, middleground, and background** organize the pictorial space behind the picture plane.

**Technique:** What is the artist's medium? How is it applied? Discuss the surface—is it smooth, textured, rough, etc.? Are the brushstrokes visible, even, thick, thin, etc.? Is the technique consistent and/or varied through the image? Your discussion of technique will lead you to an analysis of line and how form is created through precision of line, blurring of line, etc.

**Color:** Describe the color scheme. Do the colors vary in intensity? Are colors or variations (levels of saturation) of them repeated? Are contrasting colors/like colors used in a specific way? Is color used to unify and/or break up the picture plane?

**Light and Shadow:** How are light and shadow represented? How does the artist model space and figures through variations in light and shadow? Are these variations abrupt and/or subtle?

While it is important to address each of the formal aspects of your image separately and thoroughly, there will be overlap—i.e. your understanding of an artist’s use of light may affect your analysis of spatial construction, etc.

**In your concluding paragraph,** discuss how the artist’s manipulation of formal elements affects our understanding of the subject of the image. In other words, show how the formal construction of the painting works in concert with the subject matter to create meaning.

The concluding paragraph should restate your thesis and summarizes your findings. In your conclusion you may, **if you wish,** also express your judgment about the work and whether you find it successful or engaging; if you do so, be sure to give specific, objective reasons for your opinion.

**Form:**

Please **follow these instructions** for the presentation of your paper:

*I will deduct points if you do not follow these parameters.*

- All papers must be word-processed.
- Your paper should be between a minimum 750 to a maximum of 1500 words (please indicate word count at the end of your paper.).
- Put your name and the title of your essay on a separate cover sheet.
- **DOUBLE SPACE** your essay and use a clear **12-POINT TIMES NEW ROMAN FONT**.
- Use **ONE-INCH** margins for the top, bottom, right, and left.
• Staple your paper together in the upper left corner.

Writing assistance is available through the LU Writing Center at [http://dept.lamar.edu/writingcenter/index.php](http://dept.lamar.edu/writingcenter/index.php) Please visit their website and plan ahead if you wish to take advantage of their services. I will happily look at drafts of papers if emailed to me no less than 48 hours before the day they are due.

Common mistakes students make that I hope you will avoid:

I will deduct points if you make these mistakes.

*Underline or italicize titles of paintings. Do not put painting titles in quotation marks.

*It’s=it is; It’s is NOT a possessive OR a plural.

Note: It is best to avoid contractions in formal writing assignments.

*Do not use an apostrophe (‘) to form a plural. Plurals are created by adding an **s** or an **es** to the end of a word.

*Not only…but also: the phrase “not only” must be followed with “but also”

Avoid the passive voice and colloquial language in formal writing. For information on the passive voice, see the following website: [http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/passivevoice.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/passivevoice.html)

Proofread your paper carefully before handing it in!

**WARNING:** The Museum is not open 24 hours a day NOR seven days a week. The works are also not available to view online. So plan accordingly.

Some Questions to Prompt Analysis:

Please merge your discussion in a mature and well thought out manner. Do not enumerate answers to each of the above or below listed questions – respond to them in an integrated manner. Vary your sentence structure and pull together different ideas and concepts. Many of these questions may have no bearing on your chosen artwork.

Is the work quite flat or is it “plastic?” Which parts project and which recede?

How does it relate to the space around it? Does it reach out? Does it have an ideal viewing point?

What are the major lines and shapes and where do they draw your eye?

Are some parts of the work framed or emphasized, or are the elements evenly distributed?

Is there a dramatic focus, or are the figures incorporated into a decorative scheme? (or both?)
Are the major lines and shapes horizontal or vertical, or do they seem to embody a balance?

What kinds of materials has the artist used, and what is the effect of them?

Are the contours open or closed? Ragged or smooth? Crisp or muddy? Curved or straight?

Which parts are most detailed?

Is there a sense of pattern or rhythm to the work?

Is it regular, orderly and precise, or is it loose? (or some combination?)

If the work is a decorated object, how do the images relate to the overall shape of the object?

Is there an impression of motion or speed, and what causes that?

Is there an impression of stillness or stability, and what causes that?

Is there a sense of the momentary, or of the eternal? What causes that?

Does the work seem heavy or light? What causes that?

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**

Students will average 75% or better on the assignment pertaining to outcome 5.

**M 3: Group Research Presentation**

Student will collaborate with group research presented in a visual and verbal format. (Sample Presentation Assignment pasted below)

**Guidelines for In-Class Presentations**

The purpose of the In-Class Presentation is to foster verbal communication, teamwork skills, and supplement class discussion. Each Group is responsible for giving a brief overview/ definition of the topic of their assigned day (Each group’s assigned Presentation day and topic is listed at the bottom of this document.) including the general characteristics of the art of the period, the culture and history. It is also the responsibility of the group to address the readings assigned for that particular class period, including isolating the thesis of the argument and the main points of the essay(s). Your presentation should include the following:

- Presentations should last 15 minutes.

- Presentations must include visuals, in the form of a PowerPoint that can be loaded onto the computer in the lecture hall, that supplement your presentation.

  - It would be wise on the day of your presentation to come to class ten minutes early to make sure your visuals are
properly loaded onto the lecture hall computer and that they work.

- Your goal in your presentation is to introduce the topic of the day – found at the top of each day’s class entries on the course schedule.
  - You also have a secondary goal of introducing the readings scheduled for that day, specifically the thesis argument of each reading and how the author proves (or does not prove) their thesis.

1. **Do your homework.** Nobody can give a good presentation without putting in some serious time preparing remarks. Many gifted speakers look as if they're just talking off the cuff, saying whatever comes to mind. But, in truth, they've spent considerable time figuring out what they're going to say. You should, too.

   **Tip.** It's always a good idea to try out your presentation on your professor (or TA) before giving it in class. Office hours work well for this.

2. **Play the parts.** Good presentations are structured in sections. Many presentations need only two or three main points. Organizing your points into a few main parts and telling your audience what these parts are—both before and as you go through your presentation—can be the difference between a winning presentation and a loser.

3. **Do a dry run.** It's always good to do a run-through (or even a couple of run-throughs) the night before the presentation. This can help with both your timing and your manner of presentation. Be sure to make mental notes if you went on too long or got nervous or stuck.

   Some people find it useful to have a friend pretend to be the audience: He or she can build up your confidence and maybe even ask a question or two.

4. **Look presentable.** No need to wear a suit, but it's hard for people to take a presentation seriously when you look like someone who just rolled out of bed.

5. **Talk; don't read.** Nobody enjoys seeing a speaker burying his or her face in a script, reading
stiffly from a piece of paper. Try to talk from notes, or, if you use a written-out text, try to look down at it only occasionally. It's less important that you capture the text word for word than that you present the main ideas in a natural and relaxed way. (Your practice sessions should help you here, since they enable you to better remember what you want to say.)

6. **Take it slow.** The single biggest mistake inexperienced speakers make is going too fast.

Remember that your audience is hearing the material for the first time and isn't nearly as familiar with the topic as you are.

7. **Use aids.** For certain sorts of presentations, visual aids—such as PowerPoints help your audience locate and grasp the main points. Just be sure to explain these materials fully in your presentation: No one is happy to see an outline that can't be made heads or tails of. On the same note, do not show a PowerPoint presentation that is text heavy and then read the text. Your audience will tune you out completely.

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4/25 – Early Medieval Art on the Continent – **Group #8**

Source of Evidence: Academic direct measure of learning - other

**Target:**
Students will average 75% or better on the Group Presentation pertaining to outcome 5.

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8. What is Adoptionism?

9. What are mudejars?

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