



## AH 200 Point Tally

		Earned	Points Possible
<b>Writing Assignments 55%</b>	Essay 1		out of 50 points
	Essay 2		out of 50 points
	Group Essay		out of 25 points
	Museum Analysis		out of 50 points
	Architectural Analysis		out of 50 points
	Timeline		out of 50 points
			275 points
<b>Exams 30%</b>	Exam 1		out of 50 points
	Exam 2		out of 50 points
	Final Exam		out of 50 points
			150 points
<b>Class Participation 15%</b>	Contributions to conversation		out of 25 points
	Voluntary report on assigned reading		out of 25 points
	Visual Thinker Lecture series		out of 25 points
			75 points
<b>Sub Total</b>			
Extra Credit			max 25 points
<b>Total</b>			out of 500 points

Art historical scholarship is rooted in analytic and theoretical writing. In keeping with this foundation, we will begin a writing practice that makes mindful use of art historical methodologies and that builds a critical thinking muscle through the writing of essays that will convey important information and understandings as they apply to key works of art discussed in class, reading assignments, and other materials. You will be offered multiple assignments to choose from that will ask you to write visual analyses of specific works of art, or develop a critical response to readings on relevant works and art historical issues.

One of the required writing assignments will ask students to visit an exhibition featuring works made from the prehistoric period to the middle ages in person, and write a collaborative critical response to the exhibition and works on view.

Additionally, on at least one occasion, students will form small groups to write short essay responses to critical thinking prompts given during class. The date that these writing groups will not be announced ahead, and the assignment may not be made up.

### Essay Checklist

To earn full credit on writing assignments, essays should:

- Be 4 to 5 pages, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, and 1" margins on all sides;
- Identify works of art with artistic attribution, underlined or *italicized* titles, and dates (in that order), when possible;
- Attempt to address most questions from the essay prompt;
- Include two or more properly formatted Chicago Manual of Style footnote citations to credible, scholarly, college level materials. (Works of art should not be cited unless a point is being made concerning different versions or installations of the work.);
- Present a clear thesis and offer visual and/or scholarly evidence to support your claims;
- and Offer personal insights that demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the subject & reading materials.

Your instructor is always interested in proposals for subjects to write about. If the given writing prompts do not spark your interests, please feel free to propose alternative questions to consider at least one week before the assignment due date.

## Essay 1

Due Thursday, September 14

50 points

Explore the Chauvet cave website at <http://archeologie.culture.fr/chauvet/en/> .

How old do archaeologists believe the marks and depictions found in the Chauvet cave to be? Briefly describe the process of carbon dating by which experts have dated the various drawings, paintings, carvings, and prints made at this site. What is the significance of the age of Chauvet cave?

Consider a few of the widely held theories on why early humans created such markings and sculptural works inside caves. Utilize information on the recurrence of specific animal types represented at Chauvet, as well as other caves from the same period, to compare depictions of human forms in the Paleolithic era. Be sure to use appropriate vocabulary to describe stylistic and technical features of the works. What meaning has been gleaned from the subjects Paleolithic people considered, and the manner that they depicted these subjects?

- or -

Read <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/10/131008-women-handprints-oldest-neolithic-cave-art/>

What evidence do we have that helps us to shape an understanding of who the creators were of prehistoric works?

In the article, Virginia Hughes relates a common scenario, "Another researcher recently studied the palm-to-thumb ratio of the hand prints and concluded they mostly belonged to teenage boys, who, he told *NatGeo*, often drew their two favorite topics: big powerful animals and naked ladies." Why do we customarily assume in the West that artwork from any period was made by a male who was creatively inspired? What does the researcher's conclusion reveal about their own cultural biases and assumptions? How might these biases prevent us from understanding certain evidence? Identify a specific work from the Paleolithic or Neolithic era and discuss the visual causes and physical evidence in the work that indicates or suggests who the maker may have been?

## Essay 2

Due Thursday, October 5

50 points

Compare and contrast the *Head of an Akkadian Ruler*, c. 2250 - 2200 BCE with the statue of Gudea from the Temple of Geshtinanna, c. 2100 BCE. Consider the materials used to create these works, as well as their subject matter. What shapes are repeated and avoided in these figures? What do the figures' poses and facial expressions suggest?

Discuss the issue of idealization vs. naturalism, anatomical proportions, size, and stylization in relationship to the function and purpose of the object. Were the subjects depicted naturalistically, reflecting their real-life appearance, or in an idealized manner, to suggest a divine power? How did this depiction serve the function and purpose of the object? What meaning is conveyed?

- or -

Compare and contrast the *Victory Stele of Naram-Sin*, 2254 - 2218 with the stele depicting the laws of Hammurabi, from Susa, Iran, c. 1780. Consider the materials used, the compositional formats, and the size of the figures relative to each other, as well as to the size of the object itself.

Discuss the treatment of divine figures and the concept of sacred ground. How do these sculpted works communicate power and authority? To whom is this message addressed? What meaning is conveyed?

- or -

Describe the formal, representational and iconographic characteristics appearing on the Palette of King Narmer, c. 3000 - 2920 BCE that remain conventional in Egyptian two-dimensional art for the following three millennia.

Choose a Pre-Dynastic or Early Kingdom work that is either sculpted or painted, and compare it to a sculpted or painted work made in the Old or New Kingdom. Decipher common glyphs and interpret the meanings of each work. What similarities do these works have in common with the canon of forms demonstrated in the Palette of King Narmer? Consider the longevity of the world view expressed in the three works. What geographic, and political circumstances allowed for such consistent and relatively unchallenged visual lexicon?

### **Museum Analysis**

Due Thursday, October 26

50 points

Attend a professional exhibition that includes works made between the prehistoric period and the Middle Ages. The Getty Museum, LACMA, the Fowler Museum, the Huntington Museum, the Norton Simon Museum, and the Bowers Museum regularly feature exhibitions of prehistoric to medieval works. Plan ahead by checking museum websites to be sure that relevant works will be on view when you plan to visit. In addition, read Marjorie Munsterberg's explanation of visual description at, <http://writingaboutart.org/pages/visualdesc.html> for information on visual description and analysis.

Choose one work seen in person and develop a visual analysis. Begin by describing what you see, drawing the viewer's attention to key elements (objects, figures, symbols). Discuss the work's subjects. What are the main components, what is represented, who is portrayed, where does the story take place? While you may want to keep your visual description concise, remember that you cannot assume that what you are seeing and experiencing is universal. In other words, be careful not to make assumptions, and describe the work as if your reader has never seen it.

Next, identify important formal elements (shapes, textures, lines, colors, etc.) in the work. While this may feel descriptive, what you're focusing on in this section are the qualities and characteristics of compositional elements such as *atmospheric* perspective, *asymmetrical* balance, *irregular* rhythm, *organic* shapes, *faint* line work, and *bold* color harmonies. The handouts on design and the elements of art from the Getty Museum may be helpful.

Finally, connect your private experience with the work and its visual elements. What meaning do the objects, subjects, and symbols suggest? What meaning is conveyed by the work's form and visual elements? What story is told, or view of the world expressed by this work of art?

### **Architectural Analysis**

Due Thursday, November 30

50 points

Design a diagram, or create a model, of an architectural structure from the prehistoric to medieval period, making note of important architectural features and technology used to build the work. Be creative! A diagram doesn't have to be two-dimensional, or on 8 ½" X 11" paper, and a model does not have to be tangible. However, assignment responses that are not submitted on paper (such as a digital video) will require the submission of a link, photos, or other record of your creation that can be viewed outside of class.

You may choose to form small groups of two or three to collaborate on this assignment. Be sure that your submission includes the names of all contributors. Please be a considerate and responsible group member by sharing equally in the research and production of the analysis.

- or -

Although similar in form, the ziggurat and temple architecture of Mesopotamia contrasts a great deal with the mastabas of early dynastic Egypt and the Old Kingdom *Great Pyramids* of Gizeh. What religious purposes did each of these architectural forms (the ziggurat and temple vs. mastabas and pyramids) serve? Requiring exorbitant use of material and labor resources, why were these structures important to the members of their respective societies? What kinds of objects and depictions are found at these architectural sites, and what understandings of the purposes of the structures have we gleaned from their discovery? Given the particular purpose and function of ziggurats and pyramids (including their preceding form, the mastaba) what limitations exist in our understanding of the civilizations that created them? Equally, what ethical considerations must we navigate when these sites are excavated, and their associated objects put on display?

- or -

Although Roman architecture exhibits both Greek and Etruscan influences, Roman builders revolutionized architectural design through the development of concrete, which allowed for unprecedented shaping of space through arches. Discuss the disadvantages and exceptional qualities of concrete as used by Roman architects through a comparison of the Greek *Parthenon* 447 - 438 BCE, with the Roman *Pantheon* 118 - 125 CE. What were the central concerns and focal points for Iktinos and Kallikrates when designing the *Parthenon*. How did the concerns and focal points of the architects of the *Pantheon* differ? What concepts of space does each building demonstrate? How does the handling of space in these buildings reflect the sacred functions and world views of the civilizations that built them?

### **Timeline**

Due Thursday, December 7

50 points

Compose a timeline that includes at least ten key historical events (political, cultural and/or social) from the periods we have studied this semester - the prehistoric through medieval periods. Incorporate at least ten important works of art (properly identified) that exemplify the artistic concerns of the era. Include concise explanatory text to connect the key events with the exemplary works of art you have identified. Your timeline should incorporate both text and images. How well you organize this data is one element of your grade.

Rather than consider all of the history we have studied this semester, you may choose to focus on one relevant period. The interactive timeline, *The Top 50 Works of Modern Art* on [artstory.org](http://artstory.org) provides an excellent model.

Please provide a CMS Bibliography to cite at least two credible sources of information you consulted while developing your timeline. This can be printed/glued to the back of your timeline.

The timeline and related Bibliography will need to be submitted on paper at the beginning of class.

### **Visual Thinker Lecture Series Report**

Due one week after attendance

25 points

Please answer the questions on the Art Department's VTLS form. Copy or photograph the form before submitting at the event. Submit your copy or photo to the instructor in class, or via Blackboard.

You are asked by the department to attend all VTLS events. However, you are only required to report on one VTLS event for credit in this class.