

Assignment 2

Please choose one of the following essay prompts.

Compare the three paintings of the Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci (1495 - 1498), Veronese (1573), and Jacopo Tintoretto (1592 - 1594). How are the paintings similar, and how do they differ? Discuss elements in each work that reflect the period and place in which they were made. For example, discuss the artist's representational strategies – what choices does each artist make to tell the well known story in an interesting and innovative manner that simultaneously conveys their own personal style while also rendering a scene that distinctly characterizes their particular time and place. What historical events or important philosophical ideas influenced the artist's choices? What aspect of the scene did the artist highlight or center on? How did the artist describe their intentions? Was the work well received once unveiled? Why or why not?

- or -

Use a feminist approach to compare and contrast a work by a female and a male artist from the High Renaissance, Baroque period, or Age of Enlightenment. Consider who the artist assumes the viewer of the work to be, and from whom's perspective the action or story unfolds. Who is the main subject, and what significance does their gender play in understanding the meaning of the work? What subjects exhibit power in the work, and how is that power understood (for example, logical, rebellious, odd, or conforming)? Do all subjects depicted in the work exhibit agency (power, freedom of choice, action)? Is there a gender division in the display of authority and/or action as depicted? Consider whether the work reinforces or critically evaluates gender stereotypes? Finally, discuss how the works were received, and whether they were equally valued in their time.

- or -

Attend a professional exhibition that includes works made between the Renaissance and early Modern periods (1400 to 1910). The Getty Museum, LACMA, the Huntington Museum, the Norton Simon Museum, and the Bowers Museum regularly feature exhibitions of Renaissance to Modern works. *Your visit to the venue must have occurred this semester!* Plan ahead by checking museum websites to be sure that relevant works will be on view when you plan to visit.

Choose one work seen in person and develop a visual analysis. Visual description involves communicating what you see and feel when viewing a work of art to a general reader who may or may not have experienced the work themselves. Assume that your reader has a background in art, but has not seen the work you are discussing. Begin your description with the basics - let your reader know the artist's name, the title of the work (being sure to distinguish the title in your text by italicizing your font), and the date the work was made. Describe 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.

Craft a persuasive visual description that supports a thesis. For example, you may want to argue that Sonia Delaunay is not adequately credited for her Cubist deconstruction of form and movement. After discussing the denotative meaning of the work (it's literal features), consider the work's connotative meaning by describing the ideas that are suggested and implied by its formal properties. 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. Refrain from offering iconographic, biographic, or semiotic analysis as much as possible in this essay.

Please include a photograph of yourself at the museum with your essay.