

Assignment 3

Please choose one of the following essay prompts.

Jacques-Louis David and Francisco Goya present two very different images of warfare in *Oath of the Horatii* (1786) and *Third of May 1808* (1814). Compare and contrast each of these important works through the historical context in which each work was created. How do the works differ in approach, intention and style? How are they similar? How do the works relate to Neoclassic and Romanticist debates. Why are practitioners of these two styles described at odds with each other? How are the stylistic and personal aims of the artists evidenced in these works?

- or -

Why was Manet's *Luncheon on the Grass* (1863) considered so shocking to the French Academy? Use extensive visual analysis to discuss the ways in which Manet broke with convention in the work. How does the work relate to masterpieces of the past? Identify these predecessors and consider why Manet references these particular works. How does *Luncheon on the Grass* answer Baudelaire's call for new subjects? How is the work relative to the invention of photography and a newly emerging concept of the avant-garde? Alternately, you may ask the same questions of Manet's *Olympia*, 1863.

- or -

Find and photograph a building in your immediate environment (on campus, surrounding cities, or your home town). The building may be civic or domestic, famous or unknown, recently constructed or historic. Find images in your textbook or online of buildings constructed from the Renaissance to Modern periods that incorporate similar details, decorative programs, floor plans, construction methods, and/or architectural styles. Using your photo as the base, create a diagram that outlines the building's architectural elements and stylistic references. Include descriptive text that identifies each element, explains its context, and considers its function. Be creative! A diagram doesn't have to be two-dimensional - it can be a three-dimensional model, a Powerpoint presentation or a computer animation.

- 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. 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 or bolding 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 (see pg. 8 on your syllabus) 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.