

ART WAC PLAN
Revised September 2014

I. What Constitutes Good Writing in Art History

In many ways, writing an art history essay is similar to writing other types of essays in the humanities. A good art-historical essay has a clear focus that is announced early in the paper and maintained throughout; is easy to follow, with helpful transitions, a logical order, and focused paragraphs; provides detailed support of its thesis in the form of descriptions, examples, citations of secondary sources, etc.; reveals accurate understanding of the paper's topic and of related facts and concepts from class discussions and reading; and contains few or no errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, usage, etc.

Beyond these basic elements of good writing, writing in art history involves translating the visual (what you see) into the verbal (what you write). In order to do this, students must be extremely attentive to the characteristics of the work, which means that description will make up a large portion of an essay. This description should reveal understanding of the formal elements of art (line, value, color, texture, form, and space) as they apply to the works discussed. The analysis must also show that the writer is knowledgeable about the cultural, social, and stylistic context of the art works being discussed and the writer addresses those contexts appropriately.

Finally, carefully labeled illustrations of all works referenced should be included, and appropriate kinds and numbers of sources should be accurately cited and documented.

II. Writing-intensive courses in the Art Department:

ARH 3530: 5-7 pp., counting 20% of course grade

ARH 3540: 5-7 pp., counting 20% of course grade

III. Rubric: Attached.

RUBRIC FOR ASSESSMENT OF ART HISTORY PAPERS

1. Introduction and Conclusion: The introduction engages the audience and prepares it for the thesis. The conclusion effectively summarizes the main ideas.

5 4 3 2 1 X 2 =

Comment:

2. Thesis/Focus: The thesis statement establishes a meaningful and specific purpose for the paper, and focus on that thesis is maintained throughout the essay.

5 4 3 2 1 X 3 =

Comment:

3. Organization/Coherence: Paragraphs are divided and ordered logically. Effective transitions clarify the relationships among paragraphs, sentences, and words.

4 4 3 2 1 X 3 =

Comment:

4. Description: Descriptions of art works are thorough and detailed, accurately addressing the formal elements of art (line, value, color, texture, form, and space).

5 4 3 2 1 X 3 =

Comment:

4. Context: The paper accurately and appropriately references the social, cultural, and stylistic context of the art work(s).

5 4 3 2 1 X 3 =

Comment:

5. Grammar/ Mechanics: The paper contains few or no errors in spelling, mechanics, usage, or grammar.

5 4 3 2 1 X 2 =

Comment:

6. Use of Secondary Sources: The appropriate kind and number of secondary sources are used. Quotations, paraphrase, and summaries are incorporated clearly, appropriately, and gracefully.

5 4 3 2 1 X 2 =

Comment:

7. Documentation: All quotations, paraphrases, and summaries are accurately and clearly attributed to their sources, and all sources are listed in correct format on a Works Cited page.

5 4 3 2 1 X 2 =

Comment: