MUSEUM VISIT PAPER: GUIDELINES

Due Date: Wednesday, Oct. 26—hard copy printout to be handed to me at the beginning of class (please do not send me papers via e-mail).

Length: Three-to-five double-spaced pages with twelve-point Times Roman font

Assignment: Your task is to choose an artwork or object created in one of the historical cultures that we are studying in this course this semester, and then write about it after you have seen it in person. You will need to go to a New York City museum and provide proof that you have seen the object in person by taking a picture of your face with the object/artwork in the background. You must choose an object from a culture that we have studied or will study later this semester. These include:

- Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, or Persia
- Classical Greece and the Hellenistic Kingdoms
- Roman Republic and Empire
- Europe of the early Middle Ages (500 – 1000 C.E.)
- Byzantine Empire
- Islamic culture
- Europe of the High Middle Ages (1000 – 1300 C.E.)
- Europe of the Late Middle Ages (1300 – 1500 C.E.)
- Renaissance Europe (1300 – 1640 C.E.)

Some museums that have very good collections in these areas are:

- Brooklyn Museum of Art
- Metropolitan Museum of Art
- The Cloisters
- The Frick Collection
- The Morgan Library & Museum

Objects/artworks from cultures not studied in the course cannot be used.

Your Visit: You will want to do some research on a museum’s website before your visit, and at least get a rough idea of the kind of object you would like to choose or at least know about what culture you would like it write. Even if you find a picture of your chosen object on the museum’s website, you still have to go to see it in person (trust me, a little digital image on a screen is very different from the REAL THING!). You will need to e-mail me a picture of yourself with the artwork as proof, and you may also want to keep your ticket stub as further proof.

Also note that some museums have special days or hours when admission is free, and all have student discounts, so make sure to bring your City Tech ID (at the Metropolitan, you can pay whatever you want, although they will try to bully you into paying the “suggested admission”). In any case, find out what the museum’s hours are and allow yourself enough time to get a good, close-up look at your chosen piece.

The paper will have the following parts:
1. Provide the name of the work, the artist (if known), date of the work’s completion (or an estimate), the place it was produced and/or discovered, and name of the culture that produced it.

2. Describe the historical context in which the piece was produced (for example, if it’s a sculpture that was produced in Athens during the Peloponnesian War, you should write a paragraph or two about those events and how it might shed light on the piece of art/object). Make sure that you have read that relevant section of the textbook before you sit down to write the paper.

3. Describe what the message that you think the artist was trying to convey in this piece.

4. What was it that attracted you to this piece?

5. What was the experience like seeing the piece of art in person?

6. What personal meaning did you find in the work you have chosen?

Please spend at least two paragraphs on each of these sections, excepting #1, which is you can write out in the following way:

*Madonna Adoring the Sleeping Child*, Giovanni Bellini, ca. 1460s, Renaissance Italy (Venice)

Don’t worry if the artist is unknown. I really just want you to choose an artwork that genuinely interests you.

**FOOTNOTING**

**DO NOT PLAGIARIZE!** I know there are a lot of materials on the web about certain famous artworks, so I will be ready to Google pieces of any papers that I find suspicious; any plagiarism will mean an automatic failure for the paper. Be certain that you pay attention to proper academic citation styles. I prefer the Chicago Manual of Style. You can find information on this style here: [http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocChiNotes.html](http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocChiNotes.html)

You are free to use sources from books and the web, but you must footnote them!

You may also use Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

**FORMATTING GUIDELINES**

- Papers are to be typewritten, in a twelve-point font, and have one-inch margins.
- Text on the first page must begin at the upper margin of the paper.
- Papers must bear a standard title page and be stapled in the upper left hand corner.
- No plastic paper covers, please.
- Pages must be numbered.
- Spelling counts. Use spell-check on your computer and get someone to proofread for you. Note that the spell-check function can sometimes be wrong!
- Writing style counts. Make sure that you write complete, clear, and coherent sentences. Don’t overreach in your writing: avoid convoluted sentences and pretentious language.