



**Academic Research and Writing**  
**Final Research Paper**  
Dr. Sue Short

*Standard instructions: The first draft paper must be word processed (or typed) using a standard 10 to 12 point font, have one inch margins, and be stapled together. The length of the paper is your decision; ten to twelve pages will probably be typical.*

**Annotated bibliography due:** 4.05.2007  
**Outline due:** 4.12.2007  
**Draft due:** 4.19.2007  
**Workshop:** 4.19.2007  
**Final Paper Due:** 5.08.2007

The final work in the course will be a major research paper. This will be a comprehensive paper structured as a sound rhetorical argument. You will do independent research on a topic in art history. You may study the work of a particular artist in depth, may compare several artists, or research a movement or theme in the history of art. The paper shall critically review the artwork, with an emphasis on analysis of the work and the personal, social, and historical context in which it was created. The paper must consist of a rhetorical argument with an interesting, insightful thesis statement; discussion of evidence that supports (and contradicts) the thesis statement; synthesis of ideas and themes; and a final, supported conclusion that evaluates the relative merits of the ideas considered.

The research material must include primary sources (images of the work) and secondary sources (materials written by others about the person and the work). You will use scholarly quality secondary sources. A **minimum of six (6) secondary sources** must be cited in the paper and listed in the bibliography; no more than two (2) of them may be exclusively Internet sources (i.e. original Web pages). Electronic versions of print journals are considered “print” sources. If suitable, you may use one or more articles that you used for the earlier papers in the course.

The Research paper will have the following sections (not necessarily in this order):

1. An introduction to the topic, stating the questions and issues and your thesis.
2. A summary of the major themes involved in issues you identify.
3. An embedded critical evaluation of the sources you have identified and relied upon in generating your knowledge of the topic.
4. An analysis and synthesis of the important ideas and issues raised in your research.
5. A conclusion that returns to your thesis statement, sums up the information and main concepts, and fortifies the evaluation you have proposed in relation to the critical ideas.
6. A complete list of works cited in proper MLA format.

You will each lead a class discussion of the main ideas and themes of your research project. These issue discussions will help you to sharpen your analysis of the issues and identify areas that need more development. You will receive separate instructions about the issue discussion sessions and will sign up for a date.

As you are working on the research paper, keep the following in mind:

**Thesis:**

Question, revise, and refine your thesis statement as you analyze and synthesize all the information that you find. If your final thesis statement looks the same as your preliminary hypothesis when you began

your research, you probably have not done the necessary exploration of ideas! The thesis statement is the basis of your argument, and serves as the central structuring idea of the paper.

**Analysis:**

Analysis is the process of breaking complex ideas down into their constituent parts, so that they can be better understood. This is especially important when there are conflicting points of view and complicated interactions. Good analysis is a necessary preparation for good synthesis.

**Synthesis:**

**The synthesis of the ideas raised in various source materials is the heart of this paper,** and should demonstrate how the ideas and issues raised in each source confirm, qualify, or contradict each other. The synthesis will probably contain a large number of “on the other hand” kinds of statements, reflecting the complexity of reality. The synthesis will reflect your evaluation of the merits of the competing ideas you have encountered in your research, and your understanding of the issues.

**Organization:**

Organize your paper so that you are not simply summarizing each of the sources you have found but are constructing a sound rhetorical argument. The organization must be based on major issues and themes you identify.