

**ARTH 345 Spring 2021**  
**Northern European Art in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century**  
 Paper: Museum Exhibition

Due date: April 25, 2021 (11:59 pm)  
 Length: 4 pages (double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font)

**Learning objectives for this paper**

- Develop the skills of visual analysis and interpretation;
- Use textual sources to historically situate works of art;
- Demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge gained from class readings and discussions to visual material;
- Build arguments and articulate your thoughts and ideas in academic writing.

How well the paper fulfills these objectives will determine the grade it receives.

**Assignment**

Write a proposal for an exhibition about Seventeenth-Century Art in Flanders and/or the Dutch Republic, using 3 works of art made by artists from Flanders (Southern Netherlands) or the Dutch Republic between c. 1580 and c. 1700.

The exhibition must have a thematic focus, which should guide your selection. Possible themes and topics include:

- The implications of the Reformation and Counter Reformation on art;
- Paintings of mythology and classical history and the artist's knowledge;
- Rise of new, secular genres;
- Gender and/or class distinctions;
- Art, science, and technology.

If you wish to choose a theme not on this list, please let me know by week 7 so we can discuss your idea.

In the paper, you should:

1. Clearly explain the thematic basis of your exhibition. What do you want museum visitors to learn about seventeenth-century Flemish and Dutch art by viewing the show?
2. Explain the reasoning behind your selection. How do the works relate to your chosen theme? How do the works relate to one another in terms of subject matter and formal characteristics? Are they similar? Do they present a coherent message? Or do they offer different perspectives and approaches to your selected theme? To address these questions you will need to examine the formal characteristics of the works.
3. Situate the works you have chosen in historical context. Who were the artists and where did they work? Do you find similarities or differences between the Flemish and Dutch works?

To situate the art in historical context, use the following sources:

- Lecture videos and assigned readings. What purpose(s) did each work serve in its original context? How might seventeenth-century viewers have interpreted the imagery?

- Oxford Art Online. To access this resource, you have to sign in through the GMU library. Go to <http://infowiz.gmu.edu/dbs/subjects/databases.php?letter=o>, scroll down and choose Oxford Art Online. This website offers short articles on different periods, subjects, artists, etc., written by academic art historians.

Please let me know if you intend to use additional/other sources, especially those on the internet. NB: Wikipedia and lecture notes from other university websites are **not** acceptable sources for academic research.

The following reading is a useful guide to basic art historical writing:

- Anne D'Alleva, "Formal Analysis" and "Contextual Analysis," from *Look! Fundamentals of Art History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2006), 27-68.

You can access the PDF on Blackboard.

### **Citations and other writing issues**

It is important not only to develop interesting ideas, but also to communicate them effectively to your readers. Your paper should therefore be clearly structured and written, and proofread. Sloppy organization and frequent grammatical and typographical errors would negatively affect your grade.

The Mason Honor Code defines "plagiarism" as:

1. Presenting as one's own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment.
2. Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment.<sup>1</sup>

It is therefore crucial to acknowledge the arguments and specific information (which represents the result of scholarly research) you find in your sources. Please do so by providing proper citations in the form of footnotes.

- Use Chicago (Notes-Bibliography) style or MLA style for citations. See the following sites:  
[http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)  
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/>

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<sup>1</sup> George Mason University 2003-2004 University Catalogue (online):  
[http://www.gmu.edu/academics/catalog/0304/apolicies/#TOC\\_H12](http://www.gmu.edu/academics/catalog/0304/apolicies/#TOC_H12)

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**Paper: Museum Exhibition**

**CHECKLIST and Grading guide:**

**1. FOLLOWING THE ASSIGNMENT DIRECTIONS:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Selected three suitable objects as explained in the instructions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clearly stated and explained theme for the exhibition
- \_\_\_\_\_ Consulted appropriate sources listed in the instructions

**2. CONTENT**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Is each piece properly identified, by artist, title, date, medium?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the theme of the exhibition adequately explained?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the selection of each object adequately explained? Does the paper show careful analysis of each object?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did the student consult the appropriate sources in order to situate the works of art in their historical, social, and cultural contexts?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the basic art-historical vocabulary we have learned used, and used correctly?

**3. WRITING MECHANICS, compared to the norms of college-level English:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Correct grammar and punctuation?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Effective and acceptable English writing style?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Logical and clear organization?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate proofreading?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Correct and adequate documentation of all sources of information?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Citations in Chicago or MLA style?