

Course Information: Introduction to Asian Art (AH 113) – Colorado College

Professor Tamara Bentley

This course will introduce students to the art traditions of India, China, and Japan.

Type: Group project
Oral presentation
Research paper

Level: 100

Block Plan Context:

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1							
2							
3							
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Important Features of the Assignment:

- Helps student build to a new layer of complexity based on previous assignments—i.e. **sequenced**.
- **Staged** progress through assignment.
- Encourages thinking of **writing as a process**
- Introduces student to **discipline-specific research**.
- Interfaces with librarians—helps students analyze quality of resources (**critical thinking**) and also introduces them to database searching.

Description of Assignment:

Earlier this week you wrote a closely-observed formal comparison between two sculptures, and we discussed Richard Brilliant’s “deep” iconographic analysis of Roman sculpture—tracing sculptural gestures and connecting them to military gestures. The director of the writing center also joined us yesterday to discuss the analogy between critical looking and critical reading. Our next project will involve working in groups in order to develop a contextual reading of a given Indian architectural monument, connecting the visual style of a monument to its religious or political context. As a group, you will want to come up with a proposed answer to these questions: **Why** is the architectural plan of this monument laid out the way it is; **why** is the sculptural program organized the way it is; and **why** does it use the sculptural style it does? For example, you might argue that the rise of the fig-leaf religious sect, which saw god as an abstract entity symbolized by fig leaves, was key to the proliferation of fig-leaf imagery on your monument; and to the monument’s overall layout in the form of a fig leaf. Or you may argue that a particularly despotic ruler patronized the construction of this temple, and commissioned the depiction of beneficent rulers in order to counteract his negative image.

You will work as a group on learning more about this monument, developing a thesis about why the monument looks the way it does, and teaching the class about the monument. Then you will each write your own double-spaced 5-page paper on some aspect of the monument in which you have specialized, adhering to the overall interpretation you have developed as a group. This paper will be due in class next Wednesday (week 2, day 3).

You will develop your group presentation and your individual paper by way of a series of steps.

Step 1. For the last hour-and-a-half of class today (week 1, thursday) we will go to Tutt library for a one-hour introduction to library and electronic resources, including interlibrary loan and the EBSCO database, with Krystyna Mrozek, interdisciplinary programs librarian. Following this orientation, you will need to find at least two articles and two books which address your monument, either in whole or in part. Obtain these sources (i.e. if you find a relevant article you must download or photocopy it) and bring them to class with you tomorrow (Friday). **As a group, you also need to hand in a single one-page bibliography listing each of these sources in the Kate Turabian bibliographic format.** Friday Krystyna will join us and she and Tamara will discuss the merits, or limitations, of the sources you have found; and Krystyna will demonstrate the use of additional databases for finding books and articles on your topic. Some of you may also want to make an appointment to meet with Krystyna Mrozek in the afternoon for more help finding sources. Reference librarians are also available at the Tutt library reference desk over the weekend.

Step 2. Alongside your research project, divide up the chapters of the short book *Darsan: Seeing the Divine in Indian Art* among your group. Meet preferably Saturday morning at the library to share with each other the overall points of the chapters you read.

Step 3. Regarding your research project, over the weekend (preferably Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning) **find at least 3 more sources** that address your monument (you need at least 7 sources total). Now that you have found these sources, it is time to read them. Decide how the group will read and summarize these sources. Do you all read everything? Do you divide up readings? In addition, how might you divide up coverage of the monument for your presentations? One division of labor might be the following: one person handles the sculptural program, one person handles the architectural design, and one person handles political or religious issues--or subtopics of that nature. You will need to continue meeting regularly and informing each other on your separate pieces, so that you can ultimately knit together your various aspects, forming a multi-faceted contextual interpretation of the temple or palace.

Step 4. **Monday morning hand in an annotated bibliography and a two-page rough draft on your section of the analysis.** Bonnie Stapleton will talk with you about how to organize effective oral presentations. Class is dismissed early. Meet with Tamara in order to pull slides for your presentation and go over your proposed plan for the presentation. **Prepare your presentation in consultation with each other.** Consider preparing handouts. Optimally students would also add another page or two to their paper Monday afternoon/evening.

Step 5. Tamara will provide **feedback on the two-page rough drafts**, although they are not graded. **Each group gives their 20-minute in-class presentation.** Students in the audience will be responsible for remembering main points regarding all monuments covered. Audience members will also fill out ungraded responses regarding the effectiveness of various components of each student's presentation. The group will receive a group grade for their presentation, which will be 30% of their grade for this project. Each student will also be asked to indicate, on a separate sheet, approximately what percentage of the project each project member was responsible for. Tamara will not assign individual grades based on the percentage of group work

carried, but she will make note of them, particularly in cases where it is indicated that a single member of the group put in a particularly low level of effort. Tamara will be available from 1:00 to 3:00 in the afternoon in her office (#203 Packard Hall) should any of the groups wish to meet with her. The writing center is also available to help prepare group presentations.

Step 6. At start of class Wednesday, **each student hands in their 5-page paper**. These papers will account for 70% of your research project grade. Each paper should start out with an explanation of the “why?” thesis developed by the group; and should then back up the thesis by way of particular aspects of the monument. All papers need to include xeroxes of the monument at the end, and a bibliography. Please use footnotes or endnotes whenever you draw upon the work of others which goes beyond simple statements of fact. Please use Turabian-style notes.

Step 7. Class will not meet in order to give you time to review images and information concerning Indian sculptures and architectural monuments to be covered in the midterm.

Step 8. 2-hour midterm on Indian sculptures and architectural monuments.

Timeline:

Wk	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Weekend
1	In-class formal comparisons Eve: write a 2-page formal comparison of two sculptures Read in <i>Look!</i> about constructing a formal comp.	Discuss iconography Tour chapel to consider iconographic analysis in an architectural setting Read R. Brilliant iconographic analysis of Roman sculpture	Feedback on formal comparisons. Director of writing center joins us to discuss analogy btwn critical looking & critical reading. Assessing methodology; considering the use of evidence.	<u>Groups of 2-3 assigned a temple or palace to research.</u> Introduction to searches for books and EBSCO database at library. Interlib. loan books ordered. Find 2 books and 2 articles on your temple	Hand in one-page bibliography of sources your group found. In-class discussion with librarian of sources found. Introduction to additional databases.	
2	Hand in annotated bibliography of at least 7 sources. Hand in 2-page rough draft of	Professor feedback on 2-page rough drafts 20-minute group presentations	Each student hands in 5-page paper on some aspect of their temple or palace. Professor	No class: review on your own for midterm. Professor available for consultation	midterm	

<p>your portion of the project (will not be graded).</p> <p>Debate instructor talks about delivering effective oral presentations.</p> <p>Meet with professor to pull slides you'll need, and prepare tomorrow's presentation.</p> <p>Optimally add another page or two to your paper.</p>	<p>Revise and complete papers.</p>	<p>lectures on and reviews material you are responsible for on the midterm.</p>	<p>should questions come up.</p>		
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