AFRICA TO 1875

HIST 371:001/GENL 399:004

Writing Assignment

Overview

The writing assignment for this course will consist of two papers.

. Each of the two papers should be 3-4 pages (excluding any bibliography or cover page).

Paper Format: Both papers must be typed in a regular size 12 point, legible font (e.g. Times,

Arial, Courier), double-spaced with 1 inch margins, and should be numbered & stapled. I

will not accept assignments which do not conform to these requirements. Grading of the written

assignments will take into account not only content (particularly the thoughtfulness of arguments

and thoroughness of research), but also organization, grammar, spelling and syntax. Refer to the

attached ESSAY RUBRIC and Bibliography.

To help you prepare for this Assignment, a tour of the Museum’s collection

of African art. It is absolutely essential that you attend this session because the assignments are

built around it. Submission guidelines: These assignments should be submitted on time.

**The First Paper**

After our tour of the Museum collection, each student will select one of the pieces of African art

in the collection. Because this course covers African history before 1900, you should try to select

a piece which was made before that date. You will find that each piece in the Museum collection

is labeled as coming either from a geographical area or from an ethnic group. For the first paper,

you will be required to write about the artistic tradition to which the piece which you have

chosen belongs. For example, if you choose a carved figurine made by the Yoruba people, you

should write a paper about the art of the Yoruba, concentrating as much as you can on carvings.

You are not expected to have specialized knowledge of art. Instead, your aim should be to collect

enough information so that you could give someone who knows little or nothing about African

art a basic knowledge of the artistic tradition to which the piece which you have chosen belongs.

You should begin your essay by describing the piece which you have chosen. Explain as much as

you can when and where it was made, and say what materials have been used in making it. Think about the following questions: Do you think that the piece which you have chosen was a kind of

object which was made frequently? Or was it very unusual and special? Was it the only kind of

art practiced by the people who made it, or was it one of many numerous kinds of artistic

products? What do we know about the uses to which art was put in the society which made it?

Was it used in religious observances, perhaps, or in the initiation of young people? Did art in this

society express particular kinds of ideas or concepts? Do you see reflections of these conceptions

in the piece which you have chosen? Overall, your purpose in this first paper should be to situate

the piece which you have chosen within the artistic tradition of the society which made it. Use at

least one book and/or scholarly article and other sources.

**The Second Paper**

For the second paper, you will move away from a relatively narrow focus on the piece of art

which you have selected and the artistic tradition from which it comes. Now you want to write

about the historical and social circumstances in which the piece was created. Here, your primary

purpose will be to consider how art reflected the historical experience of its makers.

How can pieces of art reflect history? They can do so in a number of ways. Perhaps a piece of art

reflects ideas which were inspired by particular historical events, such as the slave trade. Perhaps

it reflects ideas which were important to African societies in the past, such as the importance of

venerating ancestors or the need to protect against the evil of witches. Perhaps a piece may tell us

about the economy in which its makers lived. It may tell us about commercial life, for example,

if some of the materials used in making it were procured from other regions through trade. Art

often tells us about gender roles and about relations between men and women in the past. If so,

does it reflect the different occupations of men and women, or perhaps the ideas which people

held about the differences between men and women? Pieces of art may tell us about many other

facets of society and human experiences in the past. They may, for example, reflect political

conditions and ideas about the nature of political legitimacy. There is plenty of scope here for

you to exercise your imagination – one of the most important tools of the historian. As you think

about the aspects of society and history which may be reflected in art, you may want to refer to

the lecture on core themes in African history. For this second paper, use books and articles from

scholarly journals. You should use information from at least four different publications. As you set about tracking down materials

which will tell you about the lives of the people who made the piece of art which you have

chosen, keep in mind what you have learned about a) the region from which the piece came and

b) about the ethnic or linguistic identity of its makers. If, for example, the piece which you have

chosen is identified as coming from the Yoruba area of Nigeria, you must then set about finding

out all that you can about the “Yoruba” in the period when the piece was made. In this example,

“Yoruba” and “Nigeria” would be the most important terms which you could use in doing

Keyword or Subject searches of Library holdings.

**Bibliographic Forms - how to cite which im pretty sure you already know**

The following examples of bibliographic forms are based on The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th edition.

This is a standard citation style that is used by historians.

BOOKS

ONE AUTHOR

FOOTNOTE

1 Emery Blackfoot, Chance Encounters (Boston: Serendipity Press, 1987), 19-23.

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TWO AUTHORS

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2 Leam P. Unwin and Joseph Galloway, Peace in Ireland (Boston: Stronghope Press, 1990), 243.

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3 Charlotte Marcus et al., Investigations into the Phenomenon of Limited-Field Criticism (Boston:

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Marcus, Charlotte, Jerome Waterman, Thomas Gomez, and Elizabeth DeLor. Investigations into the

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4 Dictionary of Research Grants (Phoenix, AZ: The Oryx Press, 1996), 126.

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5 Anthony B. Tortelli, ed., Sociology Approaching the Twenty-first Century (Los Angeles: Peter and Sons,

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6 John Stuart Mill, Autobiography and Literary Essays, ed. John M. Robson and Jack Stillinger (Toronto:

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7 Julio Cortázar, Cronopios and Famas, trans. Paul Blackburn (New York: Random House, Pantheon Books,

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(Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, 1977), 133-190.

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9 John J. Benjoseph, "On the Anticipation of New Metaphors," Cuyahoga Review 24, no. 6 (1998): 9.

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Benjoseph, John J. "On the Anticipation of New Metaphors." Cuyahoga Review 24, no. 6 (1988): 6-10.

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10 E.W. Caspari and R.E. Marshak, "The Rise and Fall of Lysenko," Science 16 July 1965, 276.

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Caspari, E.W. and R.E. Marshak." The Rise and Fall of Lysenko." Science, 16 July 1965, 276-277.

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11 "Robert Moses, Master Builder, Is Dead at 92," New York Times, 30 July 1981, Midwest edition, p. 2.

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12 Ernest Kaiser, "The Literature of Harlem," in Harlem: A Community in Transition, ed. J.H. Clarke (New

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13 James B. Jacobs, introduction to Drunk Driving: An American Dilemma (Chicago: University of Chicago

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14 Franklin E. Zimring, forward to Drunk Driving: An American Dilemma, by James B. Jacobs (Chicago:

University of Chicago Press, 1989) xiv-xv.

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Zimring, Franklin E. Forward to Drunk Driving: An American Dilemma, by James B. Jacobs. Chicago:

University of Chicago Press, 1989.

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For entries from an encyclopedia, dictionary, or other standard reference book, the abbreviation "s.v."

(sub verbo) is used to indicate that the entry is listed alphabetically under the indicated work. Well-known

reference books are usually not listed in bibliographies.

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15 Webster’s New International Dictionary, 3d ed., s.v. "epistrophe."

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PERSONAL SITE

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17 Joseph Pellegrino, "Homepage," 12 May 1999, <http://www.english.eku.edu/pellegrino/default.htm>

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18 Gail Mortimer, The William Faulkner Society Home Page, 16 September 1999,

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19 Peter J. Bryant, "The Age of Mammals," in Biodiversity and Conservation April 1999,

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20 Tonya Browning, "Embedded Visuals: Student Design in Web Spaces," Kairos: A Journal for Teachers of

Writing in Webbed Environments 3, no. 1 (1997),

<http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/2.1/features/browning/index.html> (21 October 1999).

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Browning, Tonya. "Embedded Visuals: Student Design in Web Spaces." Kairos: A Journal for Teachers of

Writing in Webbed Environments 3, no. 1 (1997).

<http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/2.1/features/browning/index.html> (21 October 1999).

SECOND OR SUBSEQUENT REFERENCES

When a work has already been cited in complete form, later references to it are made in a shortened

form. The abbreviation "ibid." is used to repeat references which follow one another without any intervening

reference, even when several pages may separate the references. If the page number on the second citation is

different, include that after the ibid. The second reference to a chapter or article includes only a shortened

version of the article.

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21 William Farmwinkle, Humor of the American Midwest, vol. 2 of Survey of American Humor (Boston:

Plenum Press, 1983), 223-24.

22 Mark Holloway, Utopian Communities in America, 1680-1880 (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1966),

53-63.

23 Farmwinkle, Humor of the American Midwest, 241.

24 Ibid., 35.

25 Holloway, Utopian Communities, 75.

26 Ernest Kaiser, "The Literature of Harlem," in Harlem: A Community in Transition, ed. J.H. Clarke (New

York: Citadel Press, 1964), 218-20.

27 Kaiser, "Literature of Harlem," 189.