

**NATASHA RUIZ-GÓMEZ**  
**History of Art Department**  
**University of Pennsylvania**  
**Fall 2004 – ARTH 009.302**  
**Mondays & Wednesdays 3:00–4:30 PM**  
**Meyerson B2**

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## **WRITING SEMINAR ON SCULPTURE AND MODERNISM**

In Paris between the end of the 19th century and the Great War, sculpture suddenly became “modern.” This seminar will examine modernism through the lens of sculpture, identifying the forces that propelled artists at that particular time and place to break with a millennia-old sculptural tradition. Taking up sculpture during the Second Empire and mapping the changes in the medium over the following fifty years, we will focus on writings about both sculpture and modernism, as well as consider links between sculpture and other media in order to achieve a broader historical and artistic perspective on modernism. The objective of the course will be to introduce you to these issues while developing and refining your critical thinking and writing skills through in-class writing assignments and workshops, informal “thought” papers, an exploratory journal, and three 3-4 page formal essays.

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## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This Critical Writing Course is designed to help you:

- Learn to present your thoughts and impressions cogently, forcefully, and eloquently.
- Understand that writing is a process and a mode of gaining knowledge and understanding and that revision is fundamental to that process.
- Be more critical of your own writing through dialogue, drafts, and reading. This classroom is a safe place for you to explore different writing styles and to adopt different voices, with the goals of gaining confidence and learning to write persuasively. You will also learn to critique the writing of others—both your peers and the authors we read throughout the semester.
- Develop your own voice and hear it emerge in your writing.
- Improve the mechanics of your writing so that you write at the college level in any discipline. You will also learn the fundamentals of writing a research paper.
- Learn techniques for battling the blank page or screen. You will exercise your writing skills on both paper and a computer, because you may be surprised to find out that you are more comfortable, imaginative, and/or organized in one than the other.
- Enjoy looking at art, along with thinking and writing about it—because this would be the greatest incentive for you to continue doing all three.

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

### SEPTEMBER – CRITICAL READING AND THE MECHANICS OF WRITING

- September 8 – **Introduction**
- September 13 – **The Second Empire and Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux**
- Focus Assignment
  - Reading: Charles Baudelaire, “Why Sculpture is Tiresome” [Salon of 1846], *Art in Paris, 1845-1862: Salons and Other Exhibitions*, trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1970) 111-113.
  - Reading: Anne Middleton Wagner, *Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux: Sculptor of the Second Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) 209-256, 300-308.
- September 15 – **Sculpture on Penn’s Campus (meet in Meyerson B2)**
- Thought Paper
  - *A Writer’s Resource* Online Diagnostic
- September 20 – **Rodin**
- Thought Paper
  - Reading: Leo Steinberg, “Rodin,” *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972) 322-403.
- September 22 – **Rodin (continued)**
- Thought Paper
  - Reading: Anne M. Wagner, “Rodin’s Reputation,” *Eroticism and the Body Politic*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991) 191-242.
- September 27 – **Formal Essay #1 Workshop**
- First Draft of Formal Essay due – Comparison of Steinberg and Wagner
- September 29 – **Formal Essay #1 Workshop (continued)**
- Peer Review Outlines due

### OCTOBER – CRITICAL WRITING AND DEVELOPING A VOICE

- October 4 – **Rodin (continued)**
- **Formal Essay #1 due** – Comparison of Steinberg and Wagner
- October 6 – **Degas**
- Focus Assignment
  - Reading: Anthea Callen, “Physiognomy and Difference,” *The Spectacular Body: Science, Method and Meaning in the Work of Degas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) 1-35.
- October 11 – **Degas (continued) and Gauguin**
- Thought Paper
  - Reading: Paul Gauguin, *Noa Noa*, trans. O.F. Theis (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1994) 58-74.

- October 13 – Gauguin (continued)**
- Focus Assignment
  - Reading: Abigail Solomon-Godeau, “Going Native,” *Art in America* 77.7 (July 1989): 118-129, 161.
- October 18 – Brancusi**
- Analysis of reviews
  - Reading: Reviews of Brancusi Exhibition (not in bulk pack)
- October 20 – Formal Essay #2 Workshop**
- Draft of Formal Essay #2 due – Defend or refute the statement: “Only aesthetic considerations should be applied to the study of sculpture.”
- October 25 – No class/Fall Break**
- October 27 – Formal Essay #2 Workshop (continued)**
- Peer Review Outlines due

#### NOVEMBER – WRITING A RESEARCH PAPER

- November 1 – Brancusi (continued)**
- **Formal Essay #2 due** – Defend or refute the statement: “Only aesthetic considerations should be applied to the study of sculpture.”
- November 3 – Brancusi (continued)**
- Thought paper
  - Reading: Anna C. Chave, *Constantin Brancusi: Shifting the Bases of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 198-249, 313-319.
- November 8 – Picasso**
- Thought Paper
  - Reading: Werner Spies, *Picasso: The Sculptures*, ex. cat. (Stuttgart: Hatje Cantz, 2000) 66-73 and 84-90.
- November 10 – Picasso (continued)**
- Proposal for research paper due
  - Reading: John Richardson, *A Life of Picasso*, vol. 2 (New York: Random House, 1996) 252-257.
  - Reading: Françoise Gilot and Carlton Lake, *Life with Picasso* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964) 13-26, 115-122, 335-341.
- November 15 – Boccioni**
- Thought paper
  - Reading: F.T. Marinetti, “The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism” [1908], and Umberto Boccioni, “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture” [1912], *Theories of Modern Art*, ed. Herschel B. Chipp (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968) 284-289 and 298-304.

- November 17 – Tatlin**
- Annotated Bibliography for research paper due
  - Reading: Rosalind E. Krauss, “Analytic Space: Futurism and Constructivism,” *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977) 39-67.
- November 22 – Formal Essay #3 Workshop**
- First Draft of Formal Essay #3 due – Research Paper
- November 24 – No class/Thanksgiving break**
- November 29 – Formal Essay #3 Workshop (continued)**
- Peer Review continued
- DECEMBER – WRITING A RESEARCH PAPER (CONTINUED)**
- December 1 – Formal Essay #3 Workshop (continued)**
- Second Draft of Formal Essay #3 due – Research Paper
- December 6 – Duchamp**
- **Formal Essay #3 due** – Research Paper
- December 8 – Duchamp (continued)**
- Thought Paper
  - Reading: Molly Nesbit, “Ready-Made Originals: The Duchamp Model,” *October* 37 (Summer 1986): 53-64.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your final grade will be determined according to the following criteria:

**Class Participation (15%):** I expect you to come to class prepared to analyze readings, to discuss writing assignments, to participate in writing workshops, and to critique your own work and that of your peers. In other words, I expect you to be fully engaged in the course.

**Thought Papers/Writing Assignments (15%):** This course has been developed to help you become comfortable expressing your ideas in writing. Writing assignments will include formal essay proposals, focus assignments, and peer-review outlines, but will principally consist of informal “thought papers.” At the end of each class, you will be given a detailed assignment that addresses an issue related to writing (authorial voice, writing style, proposed audience, etc.). These assignments will serve as the basis for in-class workshops and will build a foundation for your three formal essays. The assignments will be evaluated with a check, check plus, or check minus. Please bring two copies of each assignment to class: one to hand in at the beginning of class and one to work on during class.

**Exploratory Journal (10%):** You will be expected to keep a journal in which you will write at least twice a week for a minimum of fifteen minutes at a time. In this journal, you can summarize the day’s class in your own words, explore a sculpture-related issue on which you are stuck, write a creative essay centered on a sculpture or a sculptor, etc. This is an opportunity for you to process/explore/analyze ideas that we discuss in class, develop questions for in-class discussion, convey your feelings about a work, and practice creative writing. In the journal, the quality of your thinking is more important than the style of your writing; this is not a place where you need to worry about grammar or spelling, but a place where you can work on ideas. Buy a notebook that will be dedicated to this purpose and bring it to every class; you will periodically write in it during class, and I will occasionally request to see it. Make sure you date each journal entry and start each day’s entry at the top of a clean page. At the end of the semester, the journal will be evaluated with a check, check plus, or check minus.

**Three Formal Essays (each 20%):** At the end of each month, you will hand in a three- to four-page formal paper that builds on the skills that we have been working on during that month. Writing assignments and in-class workshops will serve as the foundation for each of these formal essays; in addition, you will be required to turn in at least one draft of each essay for review and discussion.

### Please note:

**Office Hours:** I am very happy to meet with you for any reason. Office hours are by appointment only; please contact me at [natashar@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:natashar@sas.upenn.edu) to set up an appointment.

**Readings:** The readings are an essential component of this course, both as a basis for the writing assignments and for class discussions; for this reason, you should make sure to bring a copy of the readings to every class. There is no textbook for this course—readings are drawn from a number of sources. They are available online at the Blackboard site for this class, for purchase in a bulk pack at Campus Copy (3907 Walnut Street, 215.386.6410), and individually as “pamphlets” at the Reserve Desk at the Fisher Fine Arts Library. The only required text is Elaine Maimon and Janice Peritz’s *A Writer’s Resource: A Handbook for Writing and Research* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), which you will use as a resource both in this course and throughout your college career. In order to take advantage of a special arrangement between Penn and the publisher to use online writing resources and tools, the book must be bought from the Penn Bookstore, the Penn Book Center, or House of Our Own.

**Museum Visits:** You will be responsible for visiting the Philadelphia Museum of Art during the course of the semester in order to complete certain assignments.

**Late Papers:** Late papers will be marked down one grade per day. If you anticipate problems turning in your paper on time, you must contact me at least one week before the due date; I will grant extensions only in extreme circumstances.

**Attendance:** Faithful attendance is required to pass this class. Only one unexcused absence is allowed; your participation grade will decrease with each additional absence. I also expect you to come to class on time.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism constitutes an automatic failure for the course and will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct immediately.