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.

**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.
- 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.
Course Schedule

Critical Reading and the Mechanics of Writing

January 10 – Introduction

January 12 – The Second Empire and Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux
  - Focus Assignment

January 17 – No Class—Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 19 – Sculpture on Penn’s Campus (meet by Benjamin Franklin statue in front of College Hall)
  - Thought Paper
  - *A Writer’s Resource Online Diagnostic*

January 24 – Rodin
  - Thought Paper

January 26 – Rodin (continued)
  - Thought Paper

January 31 – Formal Essay #1 Workshop
  - First Draft of Formal Essay due – Comparison of Steinberg and Wagner

February 2 – Formal Essay #1 Workshop (continued)
  - Peer Review Outlines due
  - Journals collected

February 7 – Rodin (continued)
  - Formal Essay #1 due – Comparison of Steinberg and Wagner

Critical Writing and Developing a Voice

February 9 – Degas
  - Thought Paper
February 14 – Degas (continued) and Gauguin
- In-Class Conferences
- Thought Paper

February 16 – Gauguin (continued)
- Thought Paper

February 21 – No Class

February 23 – Brancusi
- Analysis of reviews
- Reading: Reviews of Brancusi Exhibition

February 28 – 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.”

March 2 – Formal Essay #2 Workshop (continued)
- Peer Review Outlines due
- Journals collected

March 7 & 9 – No Class—Spring Break

March 14 – Brancusi (continued)
- Formal Essay #2 due – Defend or refute the statement: “Only aesthetic considerations should be applied to the study of sculpture.”

WRITING A RESEARCH PAPER

March 16 – Brancusi (continued)
- Thought paper

March 21 – Picasso
- Thought Paper

March 23 – Picasso (continued)
- Proposal for research paper due
March 28 –  
**Boccioni**
- In-Class Conferences
- Thought paper

March 30 –  
**Tatlin**
- Annotated Bibliography for research paper due

April 4 –  
**Formal Essay #3 Workshop**
- First Draft of Formal Essay #3 due – Research Paper

April 6 –  
**Formal Essay #3 Workshop** (continued)
- Peer Review continued

April 11 –  
**Formal Essay #3 Workshop** (continued)
- Second Draft of Formal Essay #3 due – Research Paper
- Journals collected

April 13 –  
**Duchamp**
- **Formal Essay #3 due** – Research Paper

April 18 –  
**Duchamp** (continued)
- Thought Paper

April 20 –  
**Duchamp** (continued)
- Thought Paper
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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

Class Participation (10%): 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 (10%): 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 P (pass) or R (revision recommended). 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 (5%): You will be expected to keep a separate notebook as a journal in which you will write at least one paragraph every day. 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, practice creative writing, etc. 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. Make sure you date each journal entry and start each day’s entry at the top of a clean page. I will collect your journals on February 2nd, March 2nd, and April 11th and will evaluate them with a check or check minus.

Three Formal Essays (each 25%): At the end of each writing unit, 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. My office hours are Wednesdays from 2 to 3 PM in Jaffe B16 (on the corner of 34th and Walnut Streets). If that time is not convenient, I can also meet with you by appointment; please contact me at natashar@sas.upenn.edu.

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.