

Term paper guidelines

As part of the course you are expected to write a 10 page essay. As discussed, your topic and approach are yours to choose, as long as they pertain to the main themes of the course subject – philosophical aesthetics, form and formal analysis, materiality, tactility and touch, and/or context.

I want to urge you to keep in mind a number of questions whilst writing your assignment.

- What is your main research question, problem and/or hypothesis? Think about this carefully. Can the question be answered within the space of the essay (or would it need a book length study)? Can the question be answered by the methods you employ? A question about color, for instance, will probably not be answered sufficiently by a method that helps analyse textures...
- What is your corpus? Will you analyse a single image or compare screens practices? What does the choice of corpus mean for the method you choose and/or the argument you make?
- Why is it important that you address this particular question, problem, and/or hypothesis? That is to say, what is the relevance of the topic, academically as well as, possibly, more popularly? Are there ongoing debates you respond to? Is there a related object of study that receives lots of attention? Equally important in this sense is to ask yourself what your contribution is; what is it that your research contributes?
- How do you go about answering your question, and/or developing your argument? In other words: what are the methods you use, but also: what is the structure that helps you make your case most convincingly? Remember: you are writing for an audience, an audience that needs to be able to follow your argument, to trace it, retrace it if necessary; as well as an audience that needs to be enthralled, excited, that needs to want to read your essay.
- Make sure your argument results from either your own analyses or secondary references; do not simply speculate.

For some of you, the importance of these questions may be obvious. You might introduce them in your introduction. Or you may reflect on them in your conclusion. But I very much want to ask you to keep these questions in mind during the whole process of essay writing, the introduction and conclusion as much as the body of the argument, so as to help you structure your argument, reminding yourself of the relevance (or irrelevance) of each of your observations. It may help putting up some post-it notes above your desk or on your desktop.

In line with these, your essay will be graded with the following criteria in mind:

- spelling/grammar;
- originality of topic;
- quality research question;

- engagement with/positioning within ongoing debate;
- methodology;
- structure of paper;
- clarity and focus of research;
- conceptualisation trend;
- integration theory and close analysis (of the trend);
- integration observation and argumentation;
- reflection argumentation in light of research question, debate, methodology;
- functionality of the conclusion;
- correct referencing system and bibliography (you're free to use the system you are most familiar with, given that you use it appropriately and consistently);
- minimum of 7 secondary **scholarly** sources.

Finally: do yourself a favour and do not plagiarise! It is not worth the time or effort and definitely not the risks; have the faith in your own abilities to think and write critically. I certainly believe in all of you - you can do it!

Good Luck!