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Fall 2019 Knight Award for Writing Exercises and Handouts

The Knight Award for Writing Exercises recognizes excellence in short exercises and/or handouts designed to improve student writing. Appropriate topics may be drawn from the whole range of writing issues, large scale to small scale, such as development of theses, use of secondary sources, organization of evidence, awareness of audience, attention to sentence patterns (e.g., passive/active voice; coordination/ subordination), attention to diction, uses of punctuation, attention to mechanics (e.g., manuscript formats, apostrophes). Exercises and handouts may be developed for use in or out of class.

Submissions should comprise three parts: (1) A copy of the handouts or instructions that go to students. (2) An explanation of the exercise/ handout and of the principles behind it, addressed to future instructors who may use the material. (3) If possible, an example of a student response.

Submissions may range in length from one to four or five pages.

Winning entries will be deposited in a web accessible archive and made available to other instructors under a creative commons attribution, non-commercial license. (See creativecommons.org for more information about cc licensing. **No undergraduate student's writing will ever be published in this archive.**)

To facilitate future searching of the Institute's archive, we ask that you provide a brief descriptive abstract (about 75 words) of your document, and a short list of appropriate keywords that might not appear in the text. Examples might include terms like "rhetorical situation," "style," "citation," etc. **Any borrowings such as quotations from course texts or handbooks must be cited properly in the document itself.**

The two winning entries will receive \$350; second place winners (if any) will receive \$125.

Submissions are due in M101 McGraw Hall by Monday, December 16. No exceptions can be made.

Fall 2019 Knight Award for Writing Exercises and Handouts

~Please Print Clearly. Do **not** staple. Use paper clips only~

Instructor's name Aslihan Gunhan

Dept & Course # Arch 1901 Course title Architecture, Monuments and Heritage

Should I win a prize, I give the John S. Knight Institute permission to publish, quote from, and/or distribute copies of the writing exercises, and to distribute publicity to newspapers and other publications, local and/or national, about my winning the prize. I also grant the Knight Institute permission to deposit the writing exercises in a web accessible archive and make them available under a creative commons attribution, non-commercial license. I am prepared to send electronic versions of my text to Donna Newton (dlo1@cornell.edu) in the Knight Institute. I understand that I will receive the award for my prize-winning essay upon submission of the electronic text.

Writing to Read

Title of Writing Exercises

Instructor's signature

[Signature]

Date

Dec. 16th, 2019

ARCH 1901 – Topics in Architecture: Architecture Monuments and Heritage

Writing to Read Exercise

This assignment is tailored to function as a “Writing to Read” exercise that was conducted in the classroom. By giving the students short prompts, I asked them to consider themselves in different positions (like a journal editor, an author in the same field, a writing tutor) and give feedback to one specific essay which they collectively found unsuccessful.

Keywords: writing to read, criticism, positions, audience, feedback, prompt, language, author’s voice

ARCH 1901 – Topics in Architecture: Architecture Monuments and Heritage
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Writing to Read Exercise

The class is tailored to speak to the current issues on monumentality and heritage, and provide a common ground to experiment with different genres of writing. In order to understand the current debates, the first weeks focused on the seminal readings on monuments, specifically focusing on two essays by Alois Riegl and Lewis Mumford and reflections on them.

I picked two reflections on Alois Riegl's essay "The Modern Cult of Monuments": one by Mario Carpo,¹ and the other by Thordis Arrhenius.² While Carpo's essay provided an interesting discussion as it framed monumentality from a contemporary technological point of view, Thordis Arrhenius's essay did not satisfy the needs of the students and was highly criticized for being a dry summary. As I made this unsuccessful choice earlier in the semester and included Arrhenius's essay in the syllabus, I decided to take it as a challenge and functionalized it for a "Writing to Read" exercise. This was the first time students were writing critical reviews, so I gave them three different positions to help them formulate a different critical standpoint each time they responded to my questions. The first prompt asked them to be the editor of the journal, which published Arrhenius's essay. We talked about the goals and audience of academic journals, and they justified why they would or wouldn't include the essay in the journal. The second prompt asked them to be Mario Carpo. Since Carpo was more up-to-date in his reflection on Riegl, and provided more contemporary examples to make his case, this prompt gave us the chance to talk about temporality, hooks in articles, and the importance of relevant evidence. The third prompt asked them to imagine themselves as a writing tutor at the Knight Institute, and provide sentence-level feedback on Arrhenius's essay. The final prompt picked a quote from the essay, which favors a Eurocentric definition of monumentality. It was the first time I introduced them to concepts like global modernism, intertwined histories, inclusivity and the critique of the Western canon, and some of the students rephrased this sentence in a more inclusive way. After these writing prompts, I gave them one final question to discuss collectively. "What is "West," by

¹ Mario Carpo, "The Postmodern Cult of Monuments," *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory and Criticism*, Vol.4, No.2 (Winter 2007), pp. 50-60

² Thordis Arrhenius, "The Cult of Age in Mass-Society: Alois Riegl's Theory of Conservation." *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 1, no. 1 (2004): 75-81.

the way?" was a question I repeatedly asked throughout the semester, in order to challenge their preconceptions about modernism and the canon of architecture.

The writing to read exercise gave me the possibility to turn a relatively poor reading that I included in the syllabus into a useful tool to teach them how to criticize and justify their arguments, and acknowledge different audiences and authorial voices. On the one hand, we talked about sentences and language of the essay, on the other hand, we picked up the major arguments and flaws in the essay and turned them into broader discussion questions.

The students were asked to take notes to their notebooks and read from their notes if they wanted to answer these questions. Since this was the first in-class writing exercise, I did not collect their notes.

Writing to Read

Thordis Arrhenius...

And the last lecture (that focuses only) on Riegl!



Imagine you are the editor of the *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism*, would you accept Thordis Arrhenius's essay for publication?

-Why?



**Imagine you are Mario Carpo!
... And you are reading Thordis Arrhenius's essay as a
reviewer. How would you comment on her essay?**



Imagine you are a writing tutor at the Knight Institute, and Thordis Arrhenius is a first year student at Cornell. You are reading her article, and you have only one chance to write “good” on her paper. Which sentence would deserve it? And how would you explain your choice to her, in terms of content, structure, and language?

“While the intentional monument appears as a trans-historical and almost ubiquitous phenomenon, the unintentional monument is a datable invention of the West, whose origin Riegl traces back to the Italian Renaissance.” (76-77)

If you were to re-write this argument, in your own words, how would you rephrase it? How would you make it more clear?

... Oh, what is “West,” by the way?

Group discussion



“This final stage in the evolution of the cult of monuments would cross national and social strata. Age, Riegl argues, is a ubiquitous phenomenon that knows no borders; its expression is accessible to all and would overcome the nationalistic sentiments of his day.” (80)

How valid is this argument today?

Group discussion