

## Final Research Paper

### *Paper Topics*

Research papers can focus on your own areas of interest. Alternatively, they can be structured around the following suggested topics. Papers should involve substantial reading and looking, and they should employ all the apparatus of a scholarly research paper (but see 5 below). Length should be more than 10 and less than 30 pages, not including backmatter. The goal is to use some of the critical tools that we have reviewed in class to examine art, architecture and/or theoretical problems raised by these objects (or, alternatively, problems that have not traditionally been seen as part of the discipline but could/should be).

Whatever method you choose in your final paper, the theories should themselves be scrutinized and historicized, and your own position in the discourse should be identified. The following suggestions are infinitely malleable.

1. An analysis of a single artwork/work of architecture (or group by a single author) using one of the methods we have discussed. You may choose whatever approach you like, but you must be aware of its limits, and address these explicitly in the paper (i.e., “this paper will not confront social context or issues of spectatorship....” etc.) Identify your approach and argue explicitly for its usefulness.
2. An examination of art and/or architecture that exhibits the use of particular theories. For example, one might write about 1960s painters who followed Greenbergian formalism in their work, or 19th century British architects responding to John Ruskin. Alternatively, there are scores of contemporary artists who use feminist and/or film theories in their work (explicitly or implicitly), or themselves make art that makes theory (participating in post-colonial discourses, for example).
3. An exploration of architecture, artworks, exhibition, installation, etc., through investigations of spectatorship, enunciation, narrativity, desire (gendered and engendered), the gaze, etc. There has been interesting work done along these lines on everything from Flemish panel paintings to shopping malls to Asian scrolls; opportunities abound.
4. A comparative analysis of two or more theories’ presentation of aesthetic objects, or any of the institutions that embrace them. It would be effective with this topic to choose specific works or movements that refute or instantiate the theories’ claims, or to examine ways in which knowledge of works was occluded by certain theories brought to bear on them.
5. Other possibilities for research projects might include approaches directly engaging or critiquing the theories in question, through the production of an artwork, website, architectural design or media project. Such alternatives are fine, but must be preceded and concluded with verbal components; i.e., there must be

both a formal proposal, approved by the professor well in advance, and a formal written statement about the piece (this can be a single-spaced page) to be presented with the project in class.

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