

Transnational Feminism Through Art and Visual Culture: Final Research Paper Assignment

Essay Due Date: Wednesday, December 12th in class

Paper Topic Proposal Due Date: Wednesday, November 28th in class

In-class Presentation on Research: Wednesday, December 12th in class

Essay length: 6-10 pages not including footnotes, bibliography, or images

General Guidelines

Over the course of this semester, we have been studying the works of feminist artists vis-à-vis the historical and political contexts of their production. Because the constraints of the semester system only permitted us to examine a limited number of artistic engagements with the political, the fundamental goal of this term paper is that you "go deep," and closely analyze 3-4 works. You may opt to focus on works and artists we have studied in class, or you may choose to research a country, historical phenomenon, artist, etc. that we have not discussed.

Possible topics include:

- 1) A review of the works of a single artist across time, and focusing on no less than 4 works.
- 2) An exploration of a problem, question, or issue through the work of multiple artists/works.
- 3) An exploration of art produced in response to a particular historical / political phenomenon (e.g. cross-border migration, race and identity in the United States, war and militarism, etc).
- 4) A topic of your choosing with the permission of the instructor

Special attention, of course, should be paid to historical, political, social, and cultural context. This can, and should, include issues concerning formations of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ideas of "nation" within the specific contexts you are looking at. In framing your essay, you might ask the following of the art works/performances you are examining: how does the work of art converse with, contradict, build upon, or complicate ideas and theories we have encountered (or, perhaps theories you have encountered in other contexts)? What genres, styles, and forms does it draw from and experiment with, and how does its treatment of such generic and aesthetic conventions create new social meanings and imaginaries? Through which sensual registers does it make its claims? How do the affects (i.e. sentiments and feeling) mediated by the work contribute different understandings of the social and political problems and histories with which it engages?

Creative project option

You are also invited to explore a theme related to feminism and social justice vis-à-vis a creative project of your own design. You may choose to make a film, performance, or series of visual art works (or anything else you may be interested in creating). You will be asked to provide a project statement of 6-10 pages that does the following:

1. **Provides an overview of the topic you are exploring.** You should provide some relevant information about your topic—the political and historical context, a literature review of texts that inform your interpretation of/perspective on the issues you are interrogating, etc.
2. **Explains your own conceptual engagement with your chosen topic:** Your statement should explain how you are engaging with the issue/topic you have chosen. How does your project serve as a reflection upon your issue?
3. **Describes your own formal engagement with your topic:** Finally, your statement should explain your own approach to visually exploring/responding to your topic. What medium

did you decide to work with and why? How do the formal qualities of your work support and reflect your unique exploration of the questions, problems, and/or issues you have researched?

Evaluation

Your work will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- 1) Comprehension of the works' formal qualities:
 - Your essay should accurately and thoroughly identify the major and minor formal qualities of the works you discuss (including your own) using appropriate vocabulary.
- 2) Comprehension of the works'/objects' context of production
 - Your essay should accurately and thoroughly summarize the basic and more nuanced contextual elements of the works production (e.g. time, place, culture, style, movement, relationship to socio-political events)
- 3) Application of observations and contextual knowledge in producing an analysis of the objects/works
 - Based on your discussion of the works' contexts and formal qualities, your paper should produce an analysis that offers a convincing argument regarding ways in which the works relate to one another, and to your topic in general.
- 4) Organization, clarity, and style of writing
 - Your essay should have few if any grammar issues, present a logical flow of information, and use an academic tone.
 - Your essay should have an introduction providing an overview of the context and artists you will be discussing in your paper. Your introduction should also articulate the argument (thesis) you plan to make through your analysis of the works you discuss.
 - Your essay should have a concluding paragraph summarizing the main points of your analysis.
 - Each paragraph of the body of your essay should be well-developed, with a central topic that relates to the thesis.
- 5) Essay follows formatting guideline (see below)

Presentation of work: Please come prepared to deliver a 5-10 minute informal presentation of your paper/project during our final class on December 12th.

About Your Sources: Your analysis should draw from a minimum of 5 sources. You may use texts that we have read in class as part of your project, but you are strongly encouraged to use outside sources. Please refrain from replicating, or merely citing, analyses of art works in secondary sources; the goal is to develop your own critical readings, interpretations, and insights into the literature, rather than reviewing those of others.

Formatting and citations: Please follow the MLA or Chicago Style Guide when formatting citations for all sources (including course literature). Your paper should be a minimum of 6-8 pages double-spaced, not including footnotes, bibliography, or images. Images should be included in an appendix at the end of your paper. Please use 1-inch margins and 12-point font throughout your essay.

Paper proposal: Please bring your proposal for your final paper to class on Wednesday, November 28th. This proposal should be between 150 and 300 words and indicate 1) the research topic you will be exploring in your paper; 2) the artists/works that you will be using to explore this question; 3) a working thesis for your paper and 4) a working bibliography.