**ARA 396: Professional Practices for Artists and Designers – Fall 2018**

**MIDTERM PAPER ASSIGNMENT  
(Professional Clarity/Acuity)**

**LENGTH AND DUE DATES**

Length: 1,500 – 2,000 words

Style: Chicago

(Optional) Draft Due for Review: Sept 27, 2018

**Due Date: Oct 4, 2018** – by start of class (1:30pm)

**ASSIGNMENT**

You will craft an essay that provides an overview of your current art/design practice and its place within both a historical arc and within current contemporary fields, with some closing future projections. Lean on your new habit of specific naming (mediums/materials, processes, audiences, goals, references) as you draft your narrative.

**GUIDELINES**

The general format of your essay should be as follows:

* Introduction: Who you are and what is your art/design practice? (Feel free to include a few images, if applicable.) Expand on the who, what, when, where and *WHY*.
* Historical arc: what were the most pertinent, influential building blocks or breakthrough cultural moments— through the history of civilization— that led to your practice? Make sure to anchor generalities with specific examples. Name specific practitioners. Lead up to the present day.

*I would recommend citing 3-5 sources within this section—peer-reviewed journals, text books, scholarly publications, critical essays, etc.*

* Your practice today: Give an overview of the field—think locally, nationally, globally. What are the big issues in your field or practice today? Is your work responding to those issues? If not, what is the general conversation you place your work within? Who are your audiences? Who are the present leaders of this field? Who would you say is working similarly to you, and how does your work compare or contrast?

*I would recommend citing 3-5 sources within this section— the above-mentioned sources will work, and also consider trade publications, respected voices in digital media, and primary research (interviews you conduct with working professionals).*

* Closing: What can you identify as immediate opportunities or threats in or to your industry, practice, potential for livelihood? Pertinent to your craft, what are your strengths, weaknesses? What are your next steps? How will you define success? Who or what are the gatekeepers to that success?

*I would recommend citing 1-3 sources within this section—considering all of the above as potential sources.*

**ALTERNATIVE: If you are able to cover most of the above information and couch it in a more specific thesis, please feel free to email me a synopsis of what you’d like to tackle. Most likely you will have my approval and support to move in this direction.**

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**GRADING RUBRIC (\_\_\_\_ / 100)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Excellent | Good | Needs Improvement | Poor |
| Overall Impression //  Meaning  +  Intention  (\_\_/ 50) | The narrative was investigative, as well as compelling and descriptive of a unique journey & perspective, couched within a well-researched, fact-checked and cited overview of the author’s field of practice. | This essay fulfilled the assignment and guidelines as outlined above. | This essay explored a handful of the questions posited in the guidelines above. It was unclear if the author gained any further understanding of their field, or any personal clarity. | This was a difficult read; it showed little interest, nor any honest intent to investigate personal motives or understandings of the broader context of the author’s work and practice. |
| Research  (\_\_\_/ 30) | The in-depth research conducted was obviously pertinent to the author and their practice. There was evidence of an expanded understanding of how these new knowledges and resources hold relevance to the author’s career trajectory. | Thoughtful research was present to some degree, with author’s original thoughts and responses in conjunction. There was maybe little evidence of new explorations and discovery, but a good integration of scholarly knowledges. | There was cursory and/or topical research conducted and seemingly to just have something to cite. The research did not much contribute to the substance or intent of the essay. | There are few if any outside resources referenced or included in this essay. |
| Grammar + Structure  (\_\_\_\_/ 10) | This was a well-written and engaging narrative with a thoughtful arc adherent to the guidelines; the author had an eye toward interest and clarity without spelling or grammatical errors. | The work was well-structured, followed the outlined guidelines, and only suffered from fairly commonplace spelling or grammatical errors. | The work was mostly logically-ordered and sensical, but there were enough spelling and grammatical errors to become a distraction. | There was little attempt at structuring this writing as a narrative essay; there were spelling and grammatical errors throughout that impeded legibility. |
| Sources + Citations  (\_\_\_/ 10) | There is a diverse array of critical writings, scholarly and trade publications, vetted web resources and primary research referenced. Citations are present for all pertinent content and formatted correctly. | There are a sufficient number of sources referenced to relay the primary content of the essay. Citations are present for all pertinent content and formatted correctly. | There are only a few sources cited, and they are primarily web-based or instructor-provided. Some content is missing citation. Citations are improperly formatted. | There are few if any sources cited, and the citations are difficult to track and reference due to improper formatting. |