

Evocative Object Essay

(This is adapted from Maeve Adams' "Evocative Object" assignment and uses some of the same language.)

This 4-7 paragraph essay will draw together your musings on 2-3 evocative objects that you have read, seen, or experienced. At least one of these evocative objects should be an essay or poem that we have read together, and one should be the artifact you brought in to discuss during Step 2. Over the course of the essay, you will build an argument related to your experience of the city.

The first paragraph should address only one of your sources. Describe/represent that source for a reader who is unfamiliar with it and share some initial thoughts about it. In the second paragraph, go further into your ideas and reflections. What questions can you ask and what speculative claims can you make? Whatever questions you ask should be philosophical—not easily answered with reference to fact. If you're having trouble coming up with an appropriate philosophical question, try thinking about relationships between abstract concepts—for example, the relationship between art and truth, between beauty and violence/pain/suffering, between aesthetic order and social justice, etc. Remember that this is a course in the humanities, meaning that we're interested in the abstractions that describe our human experience.

In the next paragraph, you'll go on to address your other 1-2 sources, describing and analyzing each for a reader who is unfamiliar with them. Remember, analysis = dissection + interpretation. Point out the details that interest you and offer your clear and persuasive interpretation of those details. While these details may already interest you, you must ensure they interest your reader as well.

Use your final paragraph to reflect on your topic more broadly, extending your inquiry into new territory or looking at it from a slightly different angle. Don't just repeat what you have already written.

Cover letter: Stapled to or included with your paper, please submit a cover letter of at least one paragraph that describes your process in writing this essay. What do you think you've done well and what did you struggle with? If you had more time, what ideas might you develop?

Format: This essay should be at least 3 full pages, double spaced, and in 12-point font. Make sure your name is on it, that you have run it through a grammar check (gmail's grammar check is excellent—to use it, just paste your essay into the body of an email), and that it is appropriately organized into paragraphs.