

HUMN2001 - Aesthetics CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT

Basic Info/Requirements:

- 25% of the total grade.
- DUE DATE: June 1
- Length: minimum 700-1000 words (not counting title page information), 12 pt. font, standard margins, in a standard font (Times, Calibri, Arial, etc.).
- Citations should follow either MLA or Chicago Manuals of Style.
- In-text or footnote citations are expected of all used references.
- All references should be given in a bibliography in accordance with the style guide chosen.

Overview

This assignment will focus on a particular concept or idea from an individual assigned text. In deciding on a concept, you should also think about what you may want to write about for the final essay and chose your concept accordingly.

You will begin by elaborating the meaning of the concept/idea within the context of the relevant text and then proceed to work out its implications, as well as its relation to other assigned texts or related concepts. You should also critically reflect on its importance as well as its limitations, its practical and/or conceptual issues. This conceptual analysis can be done following a OPVCL model (origin, purpose, value, context, limitations), but it should focus on the logical analysis and interpretation of the primary text. Any assigned text may be used as the primary text, but relation to other assigned texts, as well as other secondary research is encouraged, though not required. The emphasis will be on the elaboration of the concept from your text with as much precision and detail as possible. In making this conceptual analysis, ample evidence, paraphrase, direct quotation and reference of your primary text is expected.

Example

Let us suppose you want to focus on the concept of Form (*eidos*) in Plato's *Republic* "Book X." First, you may want to gather all the textual occurrences of the concept as you understand it (e.g. in the discussion of the Form of the bed, etc.). Next, you will want to read this material closely and use this as evidence to try and construct an initial definition of the concept (e.g. the Form of something exhibits such and such qualities, characteristics, etc. It is related to ordinary beds in such and such a way. It is related to images and imitations of beds in such and such a way, etc.) Then, using this you can analyze other parts of the text to deepen and substantiate your initial claim, as well as to elaborate how the concept operates in Plato's philosophical system and what kinds of problems it is employed to solve or explain (e.g. Form is deeply related other concepts that are essential to Plato's moral philosophy and theory of knowledge in such and such a way... Because Plato believes that truth is a certain way, Form stands as an explanation of how truth exists, and this is related to wisdom and virtue in a particular way, etc. And these in turn affect his concept of art...). In this part of the work, you may be interested to know what experts on Plato's philosophy have said about the concept of Form. Isolating what the concept does in practice can also lead you to an understanding and elaboration of what the importance of the concept is used for. Next, you can detail what might be problematic or implausible about Plato's concept and why it seems this way. You can also look at related concepts in other texts or thinkers (for example the idea of form/matter in

Aristotle, or what the difference is between Plato’s idea of Form and what Wei-Ming calls the ‘standards of inspiration’ in Mencian thought, etc.). Optionally, alongside these considerations, you may or may not be interested in looking at other works by the author, or other sources that may help with the context or origin of the concept (e.g. other books in the *Republic* where the theory of forms is elaborated, or the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy article of Plato’s concept of form). However, if one does this it should be understood that these are secondary to the careful textual analysis of the concept in the primary text. All other considerations are subsidiary.

Further Resources on Citation and Conceptual Analysis:

MLA Style Guide:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html

Chicago Style Guide:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmos_formatting_and_style_guide/chicago_manual_of_style_17th_edition.html

Conceptual Analysis (read the ‘What is it?’ section on the left):

<https://libguides.usc.edu/humanitiesresearch/conceptual>