**Re-thinking the survey: Museum collections/interpretive materials/communications and the popular press**
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Offer students some suggestions (but any well fleshed-out museum website or arts section would work), for example:
- The Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection
- The Metropolitan Museum of Art, blogs on collection insights
- a MoMA audio guide
- *The New York Times* Arts section

**Learning goals:**
After completion of this assignment, students will be able to:
- Navigate museum and/or press resources to identify a work of art/architecture that they are interested in.
- Review course content and identify key thematic strands in the course in order to identify a work of art that would fit within the course's narrative.
- Argue for the art historical significance of a previously unknown work of art (reviewing what, exactly, constitutes art historical significance).
- Evaluate the inclusions and omissions in a given course, reflecting on what has been taught and why.

**Assignment:**
   This assignment asks students to look through online resources or visit a museum to find an object that has not been discussed in the course. Students are tasked not only with finding an object that interests them by navigating through various resources offered by museums, but also with arguing for this object's inclusion in the survey course as it has just been taught (ie, matching the new object to recurring themes, locating it within a culture we have studied or pointing to an absence or omission within the course). One could argue for the incorporation of virtually *any* museum object in a survey class (or indeed, many objects outside of museum collections), so the emphasis of the assignment is on the student's argument, they way they position the object in art history. One way to modify this assignment would be to specify *which* resource collection students should work from (ie dictating that the work should be one posted by a particular Instagram account). Versions of this assignment at the end of the semester can be given as extra credit or as a make-up final exam; it offers a good opportunity for students to reflect back on the course as a whole. A goal of this assignment is to make students a little more comfortable navigating the various resources provided by museums and encourages them to continue engaging with these even after the course is over.
   Student responses in the past have demonstrated keen insights into how object choice affects the narratives told in class. For example, one student explored how including Hatshepsut in an ancient Egyptian module would nuance our discussion of power and Egyptian kingship by the mere fact that it is a representation of a female ruler,

but that the object would still fit in well with the course because the iconography of power remained so consistent.

**Re-thinking the survey**

**Select a work of art/architecture made between 1400 CE and the present that you believe is particularly significant but has not appeared in our class. Argue for its inclusion in the Art 1012 course in 1-2 page paper.**

A standard feature of an art historical education, the art history survey class attempts to provide both depth and breadth in an introduction to the field of art history over a huge chronological span. This necessarily involves skipping many important works of art. In this assignment, you will think about the omissions involved in constructing an art history survey.

Choose an object that has not come up during class time, but you believe deserves a place in the art history survey. Consider: Where does your chosen object fit within the history of art as we have studied it in this class? Does it represent a geographical area or a culture we did not study explicitly? Is it a type of object, or made of a material, that we have not studied in great depth? Is it exceptional in form and/or content for its period or style, or is it typical in some way?

1) **Note:** A museum visit is not required for this paper, but it is welcome. You may choose an object you have previously written about in the class, that you have prior knowledge of, or that was mentioned in a reading but not discussed in class. In any case, you will still be expected to make a compelling argument on its behalf. Alternatively, you might choose your work from an online museum collection, an exhibition, or an article.

2) **Finding your object:** One way to find an object is by browsing online museum collections and information produced by the museums. See, for example: the Met collection. Museums often have active blogs or social media accounts that can provide another way of finding new objects or Instagram accounts like @metmuseum; @themuseumofmodernart; @whitneymuseum. Museums may make interpretive materials like audio guides available online. Alternatively, reading arts news can spotlight interesting objects and ideas.

3) **Assignment Description:** This paper is argument driven, and as such should include a clear thesis statement and body text, grounded in historical and formal evidence, that supports your thesis statement. You should think both about what our survey class has covered and what we have had to leave out.
    The goal of this assignment is to think critically about art history and how it is represented in the classroom. Refer to works we have studied in class, and compare them to the object you have chosen. Be specific and purposeful in your argument!

<u>Writing a strong thesis statement:</u>

*For example:* "The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Temple of Dendur should be included in the Art History survey syllabus because it presents an example of a different form of Ancient Egyptian architecture, showing that Egyptian architecture was not limited to the pyramids of the Old Kingdom."

*Instead of:* "The Temple of Dendur should be included in Art 1011 because it is a very significant work of architecture."

4) **Research is not required for this paper, beyond the finding of the object:** Draw on knowledge you have from our class meetings, readings, and the assignments you have written. Information that is new to you when you read something on the museum website or a related source must be cited appropriately using the MLA style of citation.

   Beyond that, in terms of contextualizing the object, further research beyond what has been covered in class may not be necessary. If you find yourself needing additional historical information for your argument, I recommend you limit yourself to museum resources and resources listed on the syllabus, or a standard art history textbook (*Gardner's Art Through the Ages: A Global History*, 15th edn, is on reserve in the Baruch Library). Appropriately cited, of course!

5) **Format:** your paper should be 1-2 pages long (not including images) and should be double-spaced, using 11 or 12 point Times New Roman font and 1 inch margins. At the end of your assignment, please include an image of your chosen work with full ID information (Artist/Maker/Culture, Name/Title, Date/Era, Geographic Location, Medium/Material, Size, Museum collection and Accession Number if relevant) at the end of your assignment. Please also indicate, in the back matter of your assignment, how you found the object.

**Grading Rubric**

**10 points:** Follow formatting instructions; paper shows an understanding of the assignment and answers the prompt
**30 points:** Object choice and justification; Object is connected with objects we have studied; Argument shows reflection on both chosen object and course content
**35 points:** Object is well described and contextualized within art history. Author shows a good grasp of how the object fits within broader narratives.
**15 points:** Structure and organization (introduction with thesis statement, body text, and conclusion are all present. Paper is organized coherently and grounded in sound logic.)
**10 points:** Spelling and grammar

**Total:** 100 points