Art Appreciation S1 A4: Images and Mediation Essay

Art Appreciation · Semester 1

At a glance:

Due: Monday December 21, 2026, before P4 at 10:45

Format: Individual take-home essay, 1,000–1,200 words, excluding bibliography and image captions

Category: A-Level Attainment; AP existing Major / Performance Task entry. Existing category weights apply.

Issued: December 1, after class

Sources: At least two assigned authors, including one foundational unit author; two specific visual cases, including one course case

Submission: Submit one document through the existing ManageBac task, with images or clearly identified figure references, captions and bibliography

Preparation: Reading, case work, models and writing share the existing thirty-minute daily allowance

Objectives:

Develop an argument about how images shape experience, value or knowledge. Test ideas from readings against specific images and contexts. Consider evidence that challenges your position and explain how it affects your conclusion.

Description:

Write a **1,000–1,200-word essay** answering one question below, or develop a focused question of your own with equivalent scope. The bibliography and image captions are outside the word count.

- **Does wider circulation give viewers more freedom?** Examine who can access, interpret and control images under particular conditions.
- **Can an image made without a camera do the work of a photograph?** Define the work you mean, such as recording an event, witnessing, remembering or artistic interpretation.
- **Do immersive exhibitions deepen our encounter with art?** Test a specific exhibition or documented presentation against what its reproductions enable viewers to see and do.

- **To what extent do recommendation platforms shape taste?** Use a bounded example and distinguish what your evidence shows from what you infer about a system.
- **Your own question.** Keep it answerable through the course material and available visual evidence. The worked practice question in the practice models is reserved for preparation.

Use **at least two assigned readings by different authors**, including at least one foundational unit text. The second may be another classic or a contemporary critic. Foundational authors include Berger, Benjamin, McLuhan, Steyerl and Sontag; additional choices include supported optional classic or contemporary texts listed in the course reading guide. A classic/classic pairing meets this requirement when both texts contribute to the argument. Use **two specific visual cases**, including at least one studied in the course. Analyze visible details and substantiate the contextual claims your argument depends on.

Your essay should make a claim that another informed reader could reasonably challenge. Bring the readings into conversation rather than summarizing each in turn. Address a substantial objection or counterexample. Reference quotations, paraphrases, factual claims and images so a reader can trace them. Use one consistent citation style, with page, section or paragraph locators where available.

No particular opinion is required. A careful disagreement with an author can meet the highest criteria. Reading summaries, lists of theorists and general claims about technology need to develop into an argument supported by the selected cases. You are not required to use Greenberg, Pop/Danto or the January feed investigation before those lessons have been taught.

Rubric:

The four criteria are equally weighted. The same criteria apply to every question and to a student-designed question. Existing program category weights remain separate from these task criteria.

Argument and judgment

- **Perceptive:** Sustains a precise, qualified claim; tests an objection that changes or sharpens the conclusion.
- **Convincing:** Develops a clear claim and addresses a relevant objection with reasons.
- **Competent:** Supports a claim, although qualification or the response to an objection is limited.
- **Partial:** States an opinion but relies mainly on assertion, summary or a dismissed objection.
- **Undeveloped:** No sustained answer to the question.

Visual analysis and context

- **Perceptive:** Explains how precise visual relationships and verified contexts support or challenge the claim; compares the cases throughout.
- **Convincing:** Uses specific visual evidence and relevant context to develop the comparison.
- **Competent:** Offers relevant observations, but links to the argument are sometimes general.
- **Partial:** Describes subjects or supplies context with little analysis of how the images work.
- **Undeveloped:** Cases are absent, misidentified or largely unsupported.

Reading and critical dialogue

- **Perceptive:** Interprets the readings accurately; puts a consequential difference between them to work and tests their limits through the cases.
- **Convincing:** Uses the readings accurately and connects their positions to the argument and cases.
- **Competent:** Understands central ideas but tends to apply them separately or generally.
- **Partial:** Names or summarizes writers without showing how their ideas explain the cases.
- **Undeveloped:** Readings are absent or fundamentally misunderstood.

Organization and evidence

- **Perceptive:** Each section develops the reasoning; precise prose, reliable references and image credits make the argument easy to assess.
- **Convincing:** Clear progression, understandable prose and traceable sources.
- **Competent:** Understandable organization; some repetition, unclear links or incomplete locators.
- **Partial:** Weak progression or substantial unsupported claims and missing references.
- **Undeveloped:** Reasoning and source use cannot be followed.

Language accuracy matters when it affects the argument's meaning. Ornate vocabulary, agreement with the teacher and confidence of tone do not substitute for evidence.

Readings and models: Use the reading guide for the five supported selections and their reading windows. The two complete practice essays answer a different preparation question. They are authored teaching models, with commentary, rather than past student work. You do not need to cite all five main readings or choose the hardest optional text.

Printable brief: Download the complete brief and rubric.