

The Influence of Ways of Seeing in the Past upon Ways of Seeing in the Present

Beginning with the Ancient Greeks—and perhaps earlier—our sense of sight was regarded as the “Noblest of the Senses.” This privileging of vision over other senses, referred to as ocularcentrism, has continued into the 21st century, as historical background Martin Jay provides in his introduction to *Downcast Eyes* suggests.

Essay 1 asks you to join a conversation about seeing and vision not to just to argue for/against ocularcentrism, but to develop & support an “I SAY” argument about how theories of seeing in the past (whether ocularcentrist or anti-ocularcentrist) have influenced how we see in the present. Your argument will be an “I SAY” response to “THEY SAY” readings from Unit I. You will cite quotations from the readings as *evidence* to support an argument AND your observations and experience as evidence or as part of your *explanation* and *analysis* (the latter will need to be explicitly detailed examples!) You are not required to do outside research—though you can make connections to an appropriate example you have experienced or observed. You can use a quotation from an outside source as an eye-catching “hook” in the introduction,

In brainstorming, drafting and developing your ideas, you can draw upon (and use!) any writing that you have done in Freewrites, Hypothes.is annotations, Discussion Forum posts/replies, your Observation Blog posts, and PRELIMS assignments: Keyterm Catalog, ACE Paragraphs, etc. This will only be a 4-5-page essay, so you can't include EVERYTHING we've read, written about, and discussed. Instead try to focus your paper by making your Thesis Assertion a claim that you can support with 2-3 course readings. Consider the following to limit the focus:

FIRST: focus on **whether or not** (yes or no) you think A) theories of seeing from the past have influenced how we see in the present **OR** whether B) theories of seeing in the past have failed to influence how we see in the present **OR** whether C) there is a forgotten or neglected influence that our visual culture needs to return to.

SECOND: figure out what that element of **influence/failed influence** is: Consult your Keyterm Catalog to see what concepts related to seeing/vision you have collected there, or consider the following: technologies of seeing such as Galileo's spyglass/telescope, empirical data/empiricism, scientific method, religious dogma or tradition, ocularcentrism, anti-ocularcentrism, iconophobia, how the eyes work, superficiality vs. depth, etc.

THIRD: focus on **how** or **to what extent** the visual theory or technology of the past that you identified has influenced or failed to influence or stopped influencing how we see in the present—this will be the kernel, or heart of the I SAY assertion claim that will become the Thesis of your argument.

As you develop your argument for Essay 1... try to compose a Conference Draft that:

- Has an arguable, *evaluative Thesis* that avoids setting up a 5-paragraph essay: (Thesis can't be a list).
- Has a Thesis that conveys your I SAY view & is not just a summary of a THEY SAY idea the readings
- Has a fully developed introduction that begins with a hook, establishes **Motive**, provides context & is limited in focus, and transitions to your I SAY evaluative **Thesis**.
- Uses A-C-E (**Assert**, **Cite** & **Explain**) to organize argument ideas & analyze evidence in paragraphs
- Uses observations, prior knowledge, or experiences to make connections in the present.

Practice using the following "elements" from the "Elements of the Essay" handout:

- **Motive:** your reason why your argument matters & why readers should care: what's at stake?
- **Audience:** An audience of readers to whom you address the argument (I am not the audience)
- **Thesis:** an evaluative, focused I SAY claim that shows your interpretation/perspective
- **Evidence:** quotations from course readings that support your thesis/argument
- **Keyterms:** identify & incorporate *keyterms* to establish/narrow focus throughout the essay
- **Analysis:** clear, incisive explanations & interpretations of cited evidence that explains both the meaning & significance of evidence you cite to support your argument.

Requirements & Due Dates:

- *Conference Draft* (minimum 3 pgs) due as a DOC on course site by *Thursday, February 9th*
- Revision Plan & Evidence Chart due at your Conference on Friday
- 4-5+ page Revised Essay + revision materials due by 11:59pm by Friday, February 17th.