**40B WQ 2021**

**First Essay Question
Due: Feb. 1, 11:59 pm**

**Assignment:** Choose one of the questions below and write a 3-4 page, double spaced essay. For your answer draw from lectures, discussion sections, the assigned readings, and the Met timeline when pertinent. Use MLA in text citation for references or quotations drawn from the assigned readings. MLA in-text citation style uses the author's last name and the page number from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken, for example: (Smith 163). For the Met timeline, include a footnote with the http link where you found the idea or quote.

**Approach:** We are looking for composed and thoughtful essays with clearly defined theses and points of view. Please underline your thesis. Remember to use the question as a starting point, but do not simply restate it as your thesis. Choose your examples of art and architecture carefully to make sure they work together in your essay to help develop your thesis. Think hard about what the question is asking you to demonstrate. Remember that even if the question does not explicitly ask you for historical information, we assume that you will frame your answer with the relevant background information that you have learned in class. For instance, Question #1 assumes that in answering, you will provide the historical context to which it refers and to the reading (Cormack) that explores debates about icons in the Byzantine period. It would not be enough to simply list which icons were acceptable and not acceptable with a few characteristics for each. You must provide the historical background in which these decisions and ideas about icons were debated and worked out. Y

**Questions:**

#1 What kinds of icons (in the Byzantine Empire) were deemed more acceptable than others and why? In your essay you should examine in depth two examples of icons discussed in class and in readings to address the question.

#2 What special powers do (Christian) reliquaries grant to relics and vice versa? In your essay you should discuss in depth three example of relics/reliquaries from the art and architecture we have seen in class to develop your thesis/argument.

#3 In what ways did church architecture and decoration in the Romanesque and Gothic periods address the practices of pilgrimage? In developing your essay you should discuss three examples of art and architecture seen in class.

#4 How do Medieval manuscripts (from Hiberno-Saxon to late Medieval French) depict/imagine both the ideal and less than ideal relationship between words and images? In developing your essay you should discuss three examples of manuscript illumination seen and discussed in class and readings.

**Essay grading rubric**

**An “A” essay:**

* Answers the specific question that was asked and formulates a considered and thoughtful thesis based on the question (i.e., does not simply restate the question as the thesis)
* Chooses examples of art and architecture thoughtfully for how they fit together in the essay, and for how each demonstrates different aspects of the problem at hand (students will be counted down if their examples appear to be haphazard, random, or they do not cohere in the essay)
* Incorporates pertinent and detailed information from class discussions, lectures and assigned readings (whenever applicable), providing needed evidence. For questions that infer knowledge of specific readings (i.e. Cormack), essay should show mastery of the author’s arguments and apply it in the essay clearly and logically, using minimal, but specific and well chosen paraphrases or quotes to illustrate the author’s points
* Maintains focus/avoids being sidetracked by tangents
* Presents all information clearly and concisely in an organized manner and avoids distracting grammar/spelling/etc. problems

**A “B” essay:**

* Answers the specific question asked and formulates a thesis that doesn’t restate the question, per se, but may be vague, or unspecified, and is not as well thought out or assiduous as one would find in an “A” essay
* Chooses examples of art and architecture that somewhat fit together in the essay, but does not always convincingly demonstrate how each object or site represents different aspects of the problem at hand: i.e. examples are explained in part, sometimes well, but sometimes carelessly, they do not fully cohere as visual examples in the essay, or objects/site are described in a list, often used to make the same point more than one
* Incorporates some information from class discussion and assigned readings, providing some necessary evidence, but may not always used references and quotes in relevant ways
* Usually maintains focus, but may occasionally digress from the specific topic, or present evidence or references that do not exactly fit the thesis laid out in essay
* May have minor organizational problems and contain a few distracting grammar/spelling/etc. problems

**A “C” essay:**

* Essay does not relate directly to the question or address all required elements, restates the question as a thesis, and presents a lack of understanding of issues addressed in the question
* Chooses artworks and monuments randomly, without demonstrating how they fit together to demonstrate different aspects of the thesis
* Does not adequately incorporate information from class discussion and assigned readings, and relies on unsupported statements or generalities, and makes general and unsupported assertions about the works and/or ideas without providing any fruitful discussion
* Sometimes strays from the specific topic
* Presents information in a manner that is sometimes unclear, and/or has significant organization problems and exhibits a significant number of distracting grammar/spelling/etc. problems

**A “D” essay:**

* Does not directly answer the specific question asked and does not formulate a thesis
* Does not choose relevant works of art or architecture
* Does not incorporate information from class discussion and assigned readings, or does so minimally and/or irrelevantly
* Substantially digresses from the specific topic, or uses irrelevant generalities to fill out the essay
* Has significant problems with clarity, concision, and organization, making the information presented difficult for the reader to understand and contains substantial distracting grammar/spelling/etc. problems that muddle the information presented

**An “F” essay:**

* F is reserved for those who simply don’t turn in an essay, or so completely ignore the prompt that it is as if they are turning in a paper for another assignment all together.