

January 6, 2017 e-mail copy

GPH-205: Common course questions and answers



A student sent me an e-mail asking some questions about the course. What this student asked may be on the minds of others so my responses might be of use to you too. What follows below is the text of the student’s e-mail and my answers. **BTW I need your confirmation form and schedule by Sunday January 8 in order to file an “attendance report” with the registrar!** Please complete it and send it to me at the dedicated course gmail address if you have not already done this! Thanks ☺ Jim

Hi Professor Janossy!

I am a student in your online GPH-205 class and just had a couple clarifying questions regarding the outline of the class.

I am in the process of planning my completion dates and was wondering if for instance I chose Unit 1 to be due on Sunday January 15th, then would the USF form, Project 1, the potential extra credit, and the reflective essay be due by then before 11:59 PM?

*Also, as I am skimming through the workbook I see a surplus of information correlating to the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans to be written for the USF for, but not for the other civilizations. Would the information for those civilizations be more in **The Story of Art** book?*

Thank you for your time,

J.C.

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Hi J.C. thanks for this email and your insightful questions! Here's some information that will help you:

The due date you specify for each unit is when the work listed at the bottom of the unit’s web page is due. You have the whole due date to work on it since the deadline is 11:59 PM that date, which is one minute before midnight. I say it that way to try to avoid confusion since “midnight” might be taken two ways (start of the date or end of it). By 11:59 PM I mean: the end of it.

Note that for Unit 1, only the first page of the reflective essay, on Lascaux, is due, not the whole essay! I need to see that just to be able to confirm (for your benefit) that you understand the intended first-person nature of the writing! It’s much better to get this review than to develop your whole essay during the course and then learn that you didn’t meet the requirement by adopting an unintended approach! The facts you need for Lascaux are on the copy of USF1 you’ll find on page 4 of the course workbook. I provide them as an example of the intended concise format and content of your USF entries. Make sure you review workbook pages 50-54 which describe the essay work.

Regarding extra credit: You can submit extra credit for any unit any time in the term, up to the ultimate work submission deadline. The same goes for any revision of your work. The critical thing is to get your initial submission of the work for each unit in by the deadline you set, to stay on track. You can, of course, submit work ahead of time, and I encourage you to submit work as you complete it; don't hold on to all the work in a unit to submit it all at one time. I can give you feedback faster if you submit it as you complete each item or part of each project.

The purpose of the workbook is twofold:

1. *The Story of Art* is the primary reading material for the course but the workbook supplements it with additional writings on technology and eras that I have developed or gotten permission from other authors to include:

*** The additional reading in the workbook covers technology aspects not covered by *The Story of Art* since that's more of a general overview of art history (actually a classic in its field, by a pre-eminent scholar!).** It's much handier for students to have the supplementary reading in one e-book rather than as a bunch of separate handouts. You can (and should!) download the workbook once and keep it on your computer or portable device for reading without any need for a continuous internet connection. Put it on multiple devices if you like. It's much easier to keep track of your progress this way since the material is arranged in the workbook in the sequence in which you need to encounter it.

*** While *The Story of Art* covers almost all of the civilizations we study, for some reason it gives no coverage to a few more that we absolutely should cover.** For example it omits coverage of the Persian Empire, which is strange because it was as large or even larger than Rome and predates it, and Cyrus the Great (576 to 530 BC) was a Persian king who freed the Jews from Babylonian bondage and encouraged them to repopulate Jerusalem; Cyrus is one of the few non-Jewish rulers of history mentioned and commended in the Hebrew Bible ("Old Testament"). Persia is now named Iran and is primarily Islamic *Shiite*, as is Iraq. The other 85% of the Islamic world is Islamic *Sunni*. This is hugely relevant to the current world situation since a great deal of the turmoil in the Middle East is actually the result of the more than thousand year old tension between these two Islamic sects. Members of the minority (in Iraq) Sunni sect controlled Iraq for hundreds of years but the American invasion of 2003 and subsequent downfall of the Hussein regime brought the Shiites to power there. Personally I feel that a lot of Americans misunderstand the geopolitics of the Middle East because of sheer ignorance of history, including the prominence of Persia in pre-Islamic times. If nothing else it gives some idea of why Iran attempts to carve out a place of prominence in the region—it doesn't consider itself an "upstart" nation, it has a very lengthy history of greatness that its people and leaders know full well and in which they take pride. I provide some coverage of the past glories of Persia in the workbook and also in 42 minutes of a video documentary which is part of the assigned viewing for session #4. Similarly, I provide additional coverage of the Sumerians in a one-page handout which is item #7 of the Helpful Hints, and coverage of the North African civilization that is a precursor to the Egypt civilization in a video in the viewing playlist for session #2.

2. The workbook contains the course assignments, that is, a unit summary form for each unit and the documentation about the unit project, as well as study aids. For example, an assignment checklist is in the workbook on page 3, concept summaries exist on page 90 on the scientific perspectives, pages 107-114 on color theory, and page 115 on the genres of art. Having authored several traditional textbooks I appreciate the benefit to learners of placing work assignments close at hand to where material related to each is located and providing concise summaries of important things to serve as reference items.

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A brief background explanation as well: I have not only taught classes for many years at DePaul, I have trained other faculty in online teaching practices and techniques. In that training I recommend that instructors gather all of the kinds of things for a course that I put into the workbook into a similar publication for another very valid reason, aside from the benefit to students. A workbook like this is clearly copyright by the author. It can be made available to anyone the author chooses, free or at cost, and it safeguards the intellectual property of the author in a way that is not possible when original material is put into an online system owned by someone else. This isn't just a matter of placement; there are well established legal precedents that when you use an employer's tools to create something it's a "work for hire" and the employer owns it.

When academics write books that are published in the traditional way they can clearly own the rights to it, this is very well established. If on the other hand a faculty member writes material and puts it into a system like D2L it not only hides the material from the world at large, there's a good chance that it becomes the common property of the institution. In my case I am not very concerned about having my work used by others. Rather, I don't want to have the audience it's made available to decided upon (and limited by) an anonymous administrator or technician in a group such as that which operates D2L for DePaul. I am interested in making this material available to the world at large; I think knowledge should be shared! D2L is a "closed" system by intent.

I create a workbook for every class I teach and I think the effort and planning required to do this helps put the material into better shape and organization than would loose handout pages. In the past this workbook was actually distributed in printed form by the bookstore and Amazon. I made it free in the fourth edition since this makes it even more accessible to students and others, and I had already earned a decent royalty on past sales, even at the economical price the workbook used to sell for (\$28.95). **So... long story short, *The Story of Art* is the kind of textbook normally assigned for a course and the workbook and accompanying web site IS the course!**

I hope this helps you in your approach to your schedule and the work of the course in general. You can re-plan your schedule up to two times if the need arises during the term, and every student receives a total of seven grace days that I apply as needed to cover minor lateness. So it's fine just to take a good attempt at a practical schedule for yourself, you have these buffers in case something comes up. Stuff happens! That's why I make provide these flexibilities and allowances in the way I conduct the class!

☺ Jim