

PROMPT — ESSAY I

Select two texts we have read (or viewed) in the first unit. The texts should be ‘in dialogue’ in some way. Keeping in mind Harris’s model for *forwarding* an argument, I want you to pair and analyze your chosen texts. You need not (probably *should* not) give equal space and attention to both; rather, inquire into *one* text and advance your inquiry into that text by borrowing ideas and terms used in another. Some questions you might pose as part of your inquiry include, but are not limited to: 1). What does one text emphasize which the other ignores? 2). How can the ideas of one author modify, qualify, or help us make sense of the work of another? 3). Are both texts operating under the same definition and/or understanding of travel?

Your success will depend in large part on the resonance and relevance of your chosen pair. Think carefully about which texts are concerned with similar themes, ideas, or subjects. Some fruitful pairings might be: Adler & Iyer; De Botton & Kincaid; Percy & Barthes; Calvino & Coppola.

Your work will be assessed based on how well and thoughtfully you integrate both texts and modify the resulting conversation *using your own voice*.

A word on grading: While your first officially graded assignment will be your midterm portfolio, I will provide a provisional grade for this essay. This grade will reflect the strength of your writing *at this point in the semester*. In other words, I will preface your grade with the following: “If you were to submit this at the end of our class as part of your final portfolio, your grade would be ____.” This grade is provisional because *you will be given ample opportunity to revise after receiving feedback from both me and your peers*.

Use MLA format and submit as a .doc or .pages file via Collab (under ‘Assignments’)

1600-2000 words

Due:

PROMPT — ESSAY 2

- 1). Read Thomas Jefferson's report on the University of Virginia (1818) and review the supplementary sources provided below. Note the attention Jefferson pays to the layout, architecture, and spatial ideal of his 'Academical Village';
- 2). Next, "travel" to a site, space, or building on Grounds (the Rotunda, the lawn, one of the many gardens east or west of the range, Alderman Library, or even Monticello) and *describe*;
- 3). Inquire into how your understanding and/or appreciation of the place is modified/aided by Jefferson's writing and your acquaintance with the history of the university, its ideals, and design. In other words, put the place in dialogue with Jefferson's vision and analyze the symbolism and latent meaning of the place you visit. Quote Jefferson and at least one of the sources listed below.

Use MLA format and submit to my box outside Bryan 219 (left side, top row, third box from left) by Monday, March 28 — 8PM.

Submit a photograph of the site you choose *on the day of your visit* via e-mail or stapled to your paper. If you choose to write about Monticello, attach a photograph of your ticket with the date visible—note that you can go for free if you bring a paying guest.

Make use of the sources listed below. Note, however, that these sources are merely suggestive of the range and breadth of available materials. While these resources are sufficient to compose an essay answering the prompt, evidence of additional research and reading will not go unrecognized. This assignment will involve creativity, both in the descriptive prose introducing your inquiry and in the direction your inquiry takes. View this as an opportunity to compose your own travel writing. You will be evaluated on the presence and originality of your voice and the extent to which you integrate and modify your description of your chosen site with research and *analysis*. The use of first person is acceptable, particularly in the descriptive portion, but I encourage you to experiment with a variety of styles—do not forget to revise as you write.

1500-1600 words

Due:

LIST OF SOURCES

Thomas Jefferson's Plan for an Academical Village

<https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/jeffersons-plan-academical-village>

National Park Service's website about the University of Virginia

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/92uva/92uva.htm>

Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XV

<http://jefferson-notes.herokuapp.com/milestones/college-buildings-roads>