

UNIT 3 ASSIGNMENT SEQUENCE—HUMANITIES

Genre	Purpose	Audience	Role	Rhetorical Situation
Website	Present an art historical analysis	Website visitors	UNC Historical Society Intern	The UNC Historical Society has asked you to contribute an art historical analysis to a website on tombstone art in the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery.

You are a “Digital Connections” undergraduate intern at the UNC Historical Society. “Digital Connections” interns are tasked with coming up with unique and interesting ways to present material related to local and North Carolina history. Your intern cohort has come up with an idea to write an art historical analysis of interesting headstones, art and architecture from the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery at UNC. You will pick a trend, topic, style, symbol or group (i.e. children, women, soldiers, etc) and write a 3-4 page paper analyzing the art of your tombstone group. You will describe the tombstones and explain interesting patterns of decoration, and what the art and architecture of the tombstone is supposed to express; you will also want to analyze how the art of the headstone reflects the life and/or death of the deceased to whom it belongs.

Step 1: Old Chapel Hill Cemetery Visit (Thursday, March 27 & Thursday, April 3)

We will spend half a class period visiting the cemetery to get inspiration for the project. We’ll use this time to get a brief introduction to the cemetery and to gather evidence about possible topics for your essay. You should refer to the suggested list of topics before visiting to see if anything immediately appeals to you—then you’ll have something to focus on during your visit.

While at the OCHC you’ll be given a worksheet to fill out to help you begin to narrow down your choice of topic. We will spend a second class period at the cemetery the next week, where you’ll be able to gather the specific evidence you need for your project.

Step 2: Pick a Topic (final choice due Tuesday, April 1)

You should narrow down your focus to a single subject by Thursday, April 3. Below are a list of suggested topics, trends or groups you might wish to study. This list is by no means exhaustive, and you might wish to combine some of these topics or come up with your own!

Possible topics:

A symbol on gravestones (animals, flowers, vases, Masonic symbols, etc)
Tombstones of children
Tombstones of women
Tombstones of soldiers
African-American tombstones (in the segregated section)
UNC tombstones (famous alumni or people associated with the university)
The Dialectic or Philanthropic Society enclosures
Family enclosures
Husband/wife duel plots
Tower or obelisk gravestones
Decorations on tombstones by time period (i.e. World War I, Victorian, etc)

Please note that, whatever you choose, you will need to narrow down the scope of the project to make it doable in 3-4 pages. Thus, you might be interested in the decorations on the tombstones of women, but you couldn't possibly find time to study all the grave markers of all the women in the cemetery. Instead, you might decide to focus on grave markers of women from before 1900, or grave markers of women with flowers or trees.

Feeder 3.1—Data Collection (final draft due Thursday, April 10)

This feeder focuses on the collection and organization of the primary evidence that you will use in your art historical essay. You have a topic, and now you need to find appropriate examples upon which to construct an argument—six of them for the final project, in fact. This does *not* mean that you should select the first six examples you find, or six random examples. You need to select the best and most representative examples of your topic or theme. Some of you may find that you can only find six examples, and in this case you should study them all.

For your feeder you should select six examples of your topic or theme, and come up with a way of categorizing and organizing pertinent information. Essentially, you should break down your example into basic characteristics which you can then compare/contrast to other instances. A chart is usually the best way to do this, but I will give you first a questionnaire that asks you to look at 14 different characteristics for each monument. Only a few of these may be ultimately important, but it is important to be exhaustive about the type of information you collect because quotidian details may reveal an interesting pattern!

For example:



The image on the right is of the gravestone of George A. Blount, the six-year-old son of a Civil War soldier. The grave is located in Green Law Cemetery in Columbus, OH. The gravestone contains a sculpture of the child reclining on top of the headstone, on a drapery with tassels. The inscription reads “George A., son of L.A.S.A Blount. Born September 26, 1867, Died February 14, 1873.” The inscription is located on a plaque carved out of the same stone as the tomb. The inscription and monument is elevated, and set before it is a smaller marker with the words “Our George” inscribed.

My topic might be the tombstones of children, and so this would be an interesting example. The characteristics I would be interested in (i.e. the characteristics of the monument that I think would impact how the monument looked, and the messages the art was attempting to express) would perhaps be: year the deceased died, age of deceased, sex of the deceased, profession of the deceased's parents, how the deceased died, the way the deceased is described in the inscription and the art of the tombstone. I would use these same characteristics to study the monument of George A. Blount and five other monuments.

By comparing these characteristics I would be able to discern any patterns in the depiction of children or architecture of tombstones dedicated to children, or perhaps see how the profession of the parents or age of the deceased impacted how the gravestone looked. Maybe this monument is unique because he is seated on a blanket; maybe this is unique because of the lettering and mention of his father's profession—I won't know until I collect information from a number of other monuments. Using the questionnaire handout (see Sakai

Unit 3 folder, “Old Chapel Hill Cemetery Assignment PART II) I would have all of this information easily accessible and it would then be easy to compare different monuments.

Feeder 3.2-- Art Object Analysis (final draft due Thursday, April 17)

Art historians must learn to precisely describe a piece of art that they’re working on. The description serves to help guide the reader through a photograph of the piece (some details are not always easy to discern) but also allows the reader to understand how the art historians perceives and interprets elements of the object. The description of a piece gives a thorough overview of what the art historian sees, and begins to put the piece in its art historical context by referring to historical and artistic elements and trends. For example, I might describe the Mona Lisa in great detail, listing the colors used in the painting, the pose of subject and her clothing, but I would also make reference to elements held in common with Da Vinci’s other works, and the historical circumstances surrounding the piece’s composition.

For feeder, you will write a one paragraph close analysis of one of your gravestones, giving a very detailed description of every aspect of the gravestone, including the condition you find it in today. Then, you will use your library sources to write a one-paragraph summary giving some sort of historical or artistic context for the piece. If you are working on obelisk monuments, write a brief paragraph explaining the origin of the monument type, where you find examples, and what it means.

The piece should include in-text citations from at least three sources and a bibliography in APA style.

Unit 3 Project—Website Entry (final draft due Thursday, April 24)

Your final project will be an art historical essay included on a website dedicated to the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery (‘Memorials in Stone’: ochceng105.web.unc.edu). The goal of this art historical essay is to inform website visitors about the art and architecture of tombstone and memorials found in the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery. Your final essay should follow these guidelines:

- Be 3-4 pages in length (double-spaced, with regular margins)
- Include historical details based on primary research done at the OCHC
- Give a thorough and interesting overview of your topic, including the close analysis of pertinent examples (at least 6) of your subject or topic from OCHC
- Give historical context to the art and symbols; include examples (at least 4) from other cemeteries and tombstones (these do not count towards your 6 examples)
- Come to some sort of conclusion about the meaning of the art, architecture, style or symbol, backed up by your OCHC evidence and research material
- Included a bibliography of at least 5 scholarly sources, formatted in proper APA style; you should also use in-text citations in the body of your essay.