

### Take Home Essay Question

Write a five-page essay focused on the following assignment. The paper is due in class (or in my office before class) as part of the midterm, which begins at

*9:30 sharp on Wednesday, October 20.*

The essay should be typed or printed, as well as free of misspellings and typographical errors. You are not expected to do extensive research beyond the readings assigned for class, but you should definitely use class readings in your paper. You must properly footnote such materials in accordance with established academic standards. Use the Writing Center if you need help; I'm also available during office hours. I recommend that you finish Friday so that you can use the weekend to study for the rest of the midterm!

#### **N.B. Late papers will not be accepted.**

Choose TWO works from the list below (they are all on view at the Harvard University Art Museums – see admissions details below), and conduct a close comparative analysis. Examine the visual elements of the sculpture or painting (pay attention to the way your eye moves as you look, as well as what captures your attention – and use this to learn where the visual emphases are in the work). Describe these elements through an integrated comparison (i.e., don't list each work's attributes separately, but synthesize the two). Once you have completed this analysis, discuss how each work relates to the Abstract Expressionist movement. I am less interested in flat judgments than in your reasoned arguments: of all the different stylistic variations (and rhetorical claims) we have seen in Abstract Expressionism, which can be identified here? Are there any aspects of the works you are examining that do not fit the style as it was worked out in the late 1940s and 1950s? Situate your arguments in an understanding of the artist's overall production as we have gone over it in class and learned through course readings.

David Smith, *Doorway on wheels*, 1960. (Steel with paint)

Franz Kline, *High Street*, 1950. (Enamel on canvas)

Jackson Pollock, *No. 2*, 1950. (Enamel on canvas)

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Harvard University Art Museums, Sackler Building, 485 Broadway, Cambridge (Harvard Sq. T)  
Admission \$4 with student I.D., free on Saturdays *from 10 a.m. to noon* with proof of  
Massachusetts residency.

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4.651 Art Since 1940  
Fall 2010

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