

PAPER GUIDELINES

For this paper, you will write about a building on South Campus, McGauvran. The purpose of this exercise is to strengthen your skills at observation, analysis, and comparison, and your ability to communicate your conclusions. You are trying to “read” the building the way you would read a text. To begin, go visit it.

Write this paper specifically about McGauvran. To do this, focus your attention on examining the building itself. If you do use other sources, these must be properly acknowledged in footnotes. However, keep in mind there is no need for the internet on this assignment; I am not trying to test your skills on finding online resources, I am trying to get you to observe and consider a building you see everyday.

Your paper should be approximately five pages in length, double spaced, 12 point font. If you plagiarize, you will fail the course. Here is the university’s link on academic integrity:

<http://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Undergraduate/Policies/Academic-Policies/Academic-Integrity.aspx>

As you observe McGauvran, here are some guidelines on points to consider. Please read through them all first, because you may want to organize your final paper by grouping them in different ways.

I. Description:

Consider the building as a whole. Briefly describe its physical appearance. Start with basic questions. What materials are used? What structural system seems to support the building? What is its scale in comparison to the other buildings on the street (scale means size)--Does it dominate the street, does it fit in, is it much smaller? How does its scale affect your relationship with the building? (Is it overwhelming, inviting, comfortable, etc.). How are you directed to the entrance? Where are the entrances? How is it positioned with regard to other buildings? Does the decoration add to the purpose of the building? Can the arrangement of the interior be predicted from the appearance of the exterior? How does space flow on the interior—do the sizes of the spaces coincide with the purposes that take place within them? What are the acoustics like?

II. Analysis:

Now use some of your observations to consider larger questions: what can the scale, materials, colors, spaces entrances, tell us about its placement and orientation on South Campus? How does the building relate to the other buildings around it—do they work as a unified whole (that is, does there seem to be some organizing principle behind the placement and appearance of McGauvran with the other buildings in the quad)?

Think of the building through time as well as the present. Only the freshmen in the class won't recall its original appearance. Does the placement of the building tell us anything about the history of the campus and its relation to the city of Lowell?

III. Comparison:

How does the building relate to other buildings we have studied in class thus far? You can consider materials, purpose, orientation, or other themes. (Go back over some of the questions under "Description" and see if they remind you of questions we asked about ancient structures). You are trying to identify any themes in architecture that might span from the ancient world to the present; you can also consider how contemporary needs and materials and technology might change some of those themes.

*****The paper is due Wednesday March 2*****

Some hints on good writing:

Avoid Passive Voice:

Too often the use of forms of "to be" weaken your writing. Common uses:

1. The tower *was tilting* because of the soft soil on which it *was being built*.

Fix: The tower tilted because they built it on soft soil.

2. The tower *was to be* closed

Fix: They closed the tower. OR: they wanted to close the tower.

Avoid Colloquial Language

"Colloquial" means you are using words and phrases that are too informal.

For example, "The idea of soil extraction was put into play...."

"A team of the best of the best got together...."