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Art 55 History of Modern Art

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CUNY Bronx Community College

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MODERN ART

Course description: This course offers a comprehensive study of late 19th to late 20th-century art and architecture in Europe and the U.S. We will look at major movements such as Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Cubism, Futurism, Dada, De Stijl, Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Minimalism, and Conceptual Art, and we will also study modern architecture. Students will learn to understand the rise of the avant-garde and the history, development, and meaning of abstract forms. We will spend the semester learning to make sense of the concept of “modern art.”

There is no textbook for this course. All readings are online.

Course Requirements:

Attendance, participation, in-class work, and general preparedness for class: 10%

Short quiz #1: 15%

Midterm: 15%

Museum paper (3-4pp; museum visit will be required to write the paper): 20%

In-class essay: 10%

Short quiz #2: 10%

Final: 20%

- Attendance in class is required. Students who are absent for 3 or more classes will have their grades lowered. Absences for illnesses require a note from a doctor. Consistently leaving early or arriving late will also adversely affect your grade; 3 lates or early-leaves will equal an absence.
- Cell phones must be off. No texting, checking email, using the internet, etc allowed during class hours.
- There are no makeup exams, and late assignments will be graded down.
- You are responsible for all deadlines, due dates, and exams even if you are absent.
- Additional information might be posted from time to time on the Course’s Blackboard website. Please make sure you regularly check the email address you use for official BCC correspondence.
- The BCC Writing Center is available to help anyone who needs extra assistance or guidance. Visit the website for hours, location, services, etc: <http://www.bcc.cuny.edu/Writing-Center/>
- Please see the end of the syllabus for learning outcomes and CUNY’s academic integrity policies.
- You do not need to bring the big textbook to class unless you find it helpful.

Schedule of classes and assignments:

Reading assignments for the week should be completed in advance of the scheduled class.

WEEK 1:

Courbet and Manet and the rise of the avant-garde

Students will recognize the main characteristics of Realism, including naturalistic painting but non-academic themes or linearity. The focus on social content and non-heroic figures will be a main topic of discussion. Realist art will be connected to the rise of the avant-garde in France and the shocking aspects of the art of the Salon des Refusés.

READINGS AND VIDEOS:

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-arthistory/chapter/realism/>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-arthistory/chapter/the-rise-of-modernism/>

<http://oer2go.org/mods/en-boundless/www.boundless.com/art-history/textbooks/boundless-art-history-textbook/european-and-american-art-in-the-18th-and-19th-centuries-34/academic-art-215/academic-painting-and-sculpture-767-10841/index.html>

OPTIONAL:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/becoming-modern/intro-becoming-modern/a/becoming-modern>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/becoming-modern/avant-garde-france/realism/a/manet-olympia>

<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-courbet-gustave.htm>

WEEK 2:

Impressionism

Impressionist art will continue the trend towards a rejection of academic rules, and students will recognize themes of modernization and modern life as the dynamic style of the painters is analyzed. Students will understand the link between the Impressionist capturing of a quickly passing moment and an apparently quick style of painting. Students will also be able to recognize the dramatic differences between a Renaissance understanding of naturalism and an Impressionist one.

READINGS AND VIDEOS:

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-masteryart1/chapter/reading-impressionism/>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-arthistory/chapter/impressionism/>

WEEK 3:

Post-Impressionism

Students will identify the ways the Post-Impressionist artists rejected naturalism. While some focused on abstract color and others focused on rejecting the dynamism of impressionism, all the post-impressionists found ways to emphasize the flatness of the picture plane and the potentials of non-naturalistic representation, and students will be able to articulate these developments.

READINGS AND VIDEOS:

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/sac-artappreciation/chapter/reading-impressionism/>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-arthistory/chapter/european-art-in-the-early-20th-century/>

OPTIONAL:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/becoming-modern/avant-garde-france/post-impressionism/a/an-introduction-to-paul-czanne>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/becoming-modern/avant-garde-france/post-impressionism/a/czanne-the-basket-of-apples>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/becoming-modern/avant-garde-france/post-impressionism/v/gauguin-vision-after-the-sermon>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/later-europe-and-americas/modernity-ap/a/van-gogh-the-starry-night>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/later-europe-and-americas/modernity-ap/a/gauguin-where-do-we-come-from-what-are-we-where-are-we-going>

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-post-impressionism.htm>

WEEK 4: SHORT QUIZ

Art Nouveau, German Expressionism, and Fauvism

Students will understand that an increased focus on “the new” and an active rejection of history will now define the modern art world; they will recognize the flowing, organic, abstract forms of art nouveau. The expressionist color students encountered in Gauguin and van Gogh will combine with a primitivist sensibility in the work of the German and French Expressionists.

READINGS AND VIDEOS:

Continue from week before: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/sac-artappreciation/chapter/reading-impressionism/>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-masteryart1/chapter/reading-african-influences-in-modern-art/>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-arthistory/chapter/europe-from-1920-1945-ce/>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-masteryart1/chapter/video-ernst-ludwig-kirchner-street-dresden-1908/>

OPTIONAL:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/early-abstraction/modal/a/matisse-bonheur-de-vivre>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/later-europe-and-americas/modernity-ap/a/kirchner-self-portrait-as-a-soldier>

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-art-nouveau.htm>

WEEK 5: Cubism

Students will see how the formal experimentations begun with Paul Cézanne are taken up by Picasso and Braque and led in a new direction. We will chart Picasso's development, his own understanding of primitivism, and his emphasis on the picture plane, leading to radical formal undertakings in both analytic and synthetic cubism.

READINGS AND VIDEOS:

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-arthistory2/chapter/picasso-still-life-with-chair-caning/>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-arthistory2/chapter/picasso-les-demoiselles-davignon/>

<http://oer2go.org/mods/en-boundless/www.boundless.com/art-history/textbooks/boundless-art-history-textbook/europe-and-america-from-1900-1950-ce-36/european-art-in-the-early-20th-century-223/primitivism-and-cubism-788-6925/index.html>

OPTIONAL:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/early-abstraction/cubism/a/inventing-cubism>

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-cubism.htm>

WEEK 6: Futurism

Students will be able to identify how futurist art is formally rooted in cubist's fragmentation of the object, but emphasizes a return of color and new content: the celebration of speed, technology, and movement. The futurists were interested in the excitement of modernism vibrating off the canvas and into the surrounding space. We will also consider the rise of the manifesto as art became increasingly political and abstract.

READINGS AND VIDEOS:

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-masteryart1/chapter/reading-italian-futurism-an-introduction/>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-masteryart1/chapter/reading-italian-futurism-an-introduction/>

OPTIONAL:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/wwi-dada/art-great-war/a/italian-futurism-an-introduction>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/wwi-dada/art-great-war/v/dynamism-soccer-player-boccioni>

<https://www.theartstory.org/movement-futurism.htm>

WEEK 7: MIDTERM**The Russian Avant-Garde and De Stijl**

We will focus on the development of two related but quite different branches of Russian art in the early 20th-century: Suprematism and Constructivism; students will learn to recognize the art and understand its aims. The Russian Revolution will form the context for both movements. We will talk about a desire to “redesign” the world, and use that concept to segue into the work of the De Stijl painters and architects and the idea of universal values in art. Students will be able to articulate differences between the total abstraction of Malevich vs that of Mondrian.

READINGS AND VIDEOS:

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-arthistory/chapter/europe-from-1920-1945-ce/>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-masteryart1/chapter/video-ernst-ludwig-kirchner-street-dresden-1908/>

OPTIONAL:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/later-europe-and-americas/modernity-ap/a/mondrian-composition>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/beginners-guide-20-21/v/art-context>

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-constructivism.htm>

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-suprematism.htm>

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-de-stijl.htm>

WEEK 8: MUSEUM ASSIGNMENT DISTRIBUTED

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-masteryart1/chapter/reading-writing-about-art/>

OPTIONAL:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/introduction-ap-arthistory/v/visual-analysis>

Dada and Surrealism

We will turn from the severe rationalist branch of modern art to the irrationalist endeavors of Dada and Surrealism. The anarchic pacifism of Dada's "anti-art" sensibility will be considered; Marcel Duchamp's readymades will be the focus of our discussion, and students will be able to understand Duchamp's questioning of prior definitions of art. We will see how some of these irrationalist aims play out and appear in different form in Surrealism. Students will understand the concepts of the automatic and the unconscious and how they manifest themselves in the intentions of painters such as Miró.

READINGS AND VIDEOS:

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-arthistory2/chapter/duchamp-fountain/>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-masteryart1/chapter/video-marcel-duchamp-fountain-1917/>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-masteryart1/chapter/video-marcel-duchamp-fountain-1917/>

OPTIONAL:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/later-europe-and-americas/modernity-ap/v/marcel-duchamp-fountain-1917>

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-surrealism.htm>

<https://www.theartstory.org/artist-duchamp-marcel.htm>

WEEK 9:

The Bauhaus and International Style/Modern Architecture

The desire of the founders of the Bauhaus to link art, technology, and craft will be the focus of the discussion. Students will grow to understand the importance modern artists and architects placed upon mass production and the machine as they sought to revolutionize forms and redesign the world. Gropius's 1925 Bauhaus building in Dessau will lead to a larger discussion of international style architecture. Students will recognize asymmetry, lightness, and the liberal use of glass as aesthetic hallmarks of the new architecture.

READINGS AND VIDEOS:

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-arthistory/chapter/modern-architecture/>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-arthistory/chapter/the-beginning-of-modern-architecture/>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-masteryart1/chapter/reading-art-in-nazi-germany/>

OPTIONAL:

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-bauhaus.htm>

WEEK 10: New York in the 1950s: Abstract Expressionism

Students will first understand why the center of the international art world moved from Europe to New York in the aftermath of World War II. We will consider the impact of European émigrés on the rise of the NYC avant-garde, and then turn our attention to the abstract expressionists. Students will be able to articulate the concerns of artists such as Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and David Smith, whose large-scale works often embraced complete abstraction and sought to explore existentialist ideals, the artists's process, and Jungian thought. Students will now be able to discuss and explain important differences between the complete abstraction of artists such as Pollock, for instance, and that of Mondrian, as we continue to trace the historical development and meaning of abstract forms.

READINGS AND VIDEOS:

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-arthistory/chapter/abstract-expressionism/>

OPTIONAL:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/special-topics-art-history/creating-conserving/how-to-paint/v/moma-painting-technique-pollock>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/abstract-exp-nyschool/abstract-expressionism/a/abstract-expressionism-an-introduction>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/abstract-exp-nyschool/abstract-expressionism/v/barnett-newman-onement-i-1948>

<https://www.theartstory.org/movement-abstract-expressionism.htm>

<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-pollock-jackson.htm>

<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-rothko-mark.htm>

<https://www.theartstory.org/artist-newman-barnett.htm>

WEEK 11: Neo-Dada into Pop Art

Students will be able to see the recognizable subject matter of Neo-Dada and Pop Art as a strong rejection of Abstract Expressionism. As we move from Jasper Johns's flags to high Pop Art, Warhol's attention to "everything the abstract expressionists tried so hard not to notice" will be the basis of our discussion, and the extreme detachment of the artist from the painterly surface of AbEx will be analyzed.

READINGS AND VIDEOS:

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-masteryart1/chapter/reading-warhols-gold-marilyn-monroe/>

OPTIONAL:

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-pop-art.htm>

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-neo-dada.htm>

WEEK 12: IN-CLASS ESSAY / MUSEUM ASSIGNMENT DUE **Minimalism**

Students will learn to understand how the severe rejection of the emotional, psychological, and painterly presence of the artist in AbEx leads to the rise of minimalism, which also abandons the easily identifiable subject matter of Pop, though retains some of its coolness.

READINGS AND VIDEOS:

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/sac-artappreciation/chapter/reading-the-origins-of-abstract-expressionism/>

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-masteryart1/chapter/oer-1-26/>

OPTIONAL:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/minimalism-earthworks/a/an-introduction-to-minimalism>

<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-judd-donald.htm>

WEEK 13: TAKE-HOME QUIZ DISTRIBUTED **Process art, Conceptual art, and Earthworks**

Students will recognize the minimalism at the root of much process and conceptual art, which nonetheless sought to soften minimalism's hard, unchanging edges and allow – in different forms – for an art that embraced change, nature, and a return of content, and also saw a way for a reappearance of a human and/or emotional presence. Students will understand how these ideas also appear in Earthworks, whose impact on the art world was felt not just in terms of scale but in its extreme rejection of the traditional museum/gallery world.

READINGS AND VIDEOS:

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/atd-sac-artappreciation/chapter/reading-conceptual-art/>

OPTIONAL:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/minimalism-earthworks/a/richard-serra-tilted-arc>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/minimalism-earthworks/v/smithson-jetty>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/minimalism-earthworks/a/smithsons-spiral-jetty>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/minimalism-earthworks/a/walter-de-maria-the-lightning-field>

<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-lewitt-sol.htm>

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-conceptual-art.htm>

<https://www.theartstory.org/artist-serra-richard.htm>

WEEK 14: TAKE-HOME QUIZ DUE

Pluralism, activism, and the return of representation and history

Feminist art, neo-realism, neo-expressionism, and postmodernism will form the basis for the discussion. The 1970s and 1980s will form a political and social context for this work, and students will see and recognize how artists often embraced a reappearance representational elements, but now influenced and informed by early 20th-century art movements.

READINGS AND VIDEOS:

OPTIONAL:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/global-culture/identity-body/identity-body-europe/a/anselm-kiefer-shulamite>

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-feminist-art-artworks.htm>

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-neo-expressionism.htm>

<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-basquiat-jean-michel.htm>

<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-close-chuck.htm>

<https://www.theartstory.org/artist-kiefer-anselm.htm>

FINAL EXAM: During Exam Period

Learning outcomes for the course:

1. To become familiar with significant works of visual art from the prehistoric period to the present in the western world, and to understand the larger cultural, social, and historical context of the works studied.
2. To develop skills of formal, stylistic, and historical analysis of works of art, and to use them in written assignments as well as orally in class or in a museum setting.
3. To be able to discuss works of art using rigorous art historical vocabulary, explaining the appearance, significance, and history of artworks.
4. To be able to compare and contrast works of art from different time periods in order to identify artistic conventions, to explain the development of visual forms and meanings, to analyze visual elements, and to support arguments with well-developed evidence.

CUNY has a strict policy on Academic Integrity. The policy on plagiarism says the following:

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own. The following are some examples of plagiarism, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

1. Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source.
2. Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source.
3. Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the source.
4. Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments.
5. Internet plagiarism includes submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source, and "cutting and pasting" from various sources without proper attribution.