

AHST 2331.001 Understanding Art

The University of Texas at Dallas

Room AH2 1.204 • Fall 2013 • MWF 12:00–12:50



Pablo Picasso,
Guernica, 1937

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Office Hours: Mondays 10:00am-12:00 • Office Location: TBD

Course Description

This course offers an introduction to the study of the visual arts. It provides students the opportunity to understand the ways in which artworks reflect the cultural, political, and religious ideals of their time and space. Students will learn to think critically about art through analyzing its context and form, as they reflect on its relevance in contemporary experience.

Requirements

- There are no prerequisites for this course.
- Students must attend every class. Each student is allowed two unexcused absences, each absence after that will lower the final grade by a full letter. Students must respectfully engage in class discussions and participate with enthusiasm.
- Students are required to complete all the readings, assignments and exams. As part of some of the assignments, students are required to visit local museums.
- In order to succeed in this class, students must take notes on paper.
- No electronic devices, such as laptops, telephones, ipads, ipods, etc. are allowed in the classroom. If a student uses an electronic device, it will be removed for the duration of the class.
- There will be NO make-up quizzes or exams.
- There will be NO extra credit assignments.

Objectives

- To practice critical thinking as means of understanding works of art.
- Appreciation of the historical, cultural, technological, and biographical significance of artworks.
- Understanding of the ways art interacts with other disciplines.
- Introduction to the vocabulary and concepts essential to formal analysis.
- To engage in discussions about art.
- Critical reading and writing about art.
- Familiarization with the museums and artworks in the Dallas area.
- Increase awareness of the surrounding art and architecture.

Required Textbook:

1. Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1990.

Readings available at DOCUTEK:

The URL for the electronic reserve page for this course is:
<http://utdallas.docutek.com/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=1570>
The password will be provided in class.

1. The International Style: Theme and Variations 1925-65 (in *Modern Architecture: a Critical History* by Kenneth Frampton, 1992, p. 248-261)
2. Politics and Identity (in *Postmodernism: a Very Short Introduction* by Christopher Butler, 202, p. 44-61)
3. Excerpt from Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti: Florentine Painter, Sculptor, and Architect, 1475-1564 by Giorgio Vasari (in *Lives of the Artists* translated by George Bull, 1965, p. 325-339)
4. Futurism: Dynamism as the Expression of the Modern World (in *Theories of Modern Art: a Source Book by Artists and Critics* by Herschel B. Chipp, 1968, p. 281-293)
5. Excerpts from *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* by Charles Baudelaire, 1964, p. 1-4, 12-15)
6. Chapter IV (in *Perspective as Symbolic Form* by Erwin Panofsky, 1991, p. 67-72)
7. Introduction (in *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: a Historical Experiment* by Ernst Kris & Otto Kurz, 1979, p. 1-12)
8. Excerpts from *Filming Pancho: How Hollywood Shaped the Mexican Revolution* by Margarita De Orellana, 2009, 1-3, 105-108)
9. Excerpts from *Drawing in Early Renaissance Italy* by Francis Ames-Lewis, 1981, p. 19-23, 63-69)
10. The Rhinoceros (in *Prints and Pursuit of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* by Susan Dackerman, 2011. p. 163-171)
11. Excerpt from *History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography* by H.H. Arnason, 2003, p. 15-20)

Grading

The final grade will be based on one mid-term exam, one final exam (not cumulative), two quizzes, and five assignments.

Assignment #1	10%
Assignment #2	10%
Assignment #3	10%
Assignment #4	10%
Assignment #5	10%
Quiz #1	5%
Quiz #2	5%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%

Total: 100%

Assignments

All five assignments are 200 word short essays. They must be typed; please use 12 pt. font, and double space.

- Late assignments will NOT be received.
- Handwritten assignments will NOT be received.
- Electronic documents will NOT be received.

Assignment #1 Due Wednesday September 4. After reading the excerpt from Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*, and discussing it in class, choose the biography or the legend of a contemporary artist (or other public figure such as an athlete, politician, activist, etc.) and discuss how Vasari's 16th century account compares to the one you chose. Explain how/where you learned about that biography, and how you think it relates to Vasari's.

Assignment #2 Due Monday September 16. You are required to visit Dallas Museum of Art, located at: 1717 North Harwood, Dallas TX 75201. Choose one painting from any of the galleries. After citing the artist's name, title, and date, describe it and discuss why you think it is displayed in the DMA, why do you think it is relevant, and how it relates to contemporary experience. For more information about the DMA go to: <http://dallasmuseumofart.org>

Assignment #3 Due Monday September 30. You must visit Northpark mall, located at: 8687 North Central Expressway, Dallas, TX 75225. Walk through the mall and observe the art pieces that are displayed in it. Choose one artwork, cite its creator, title, date, and write an essay discussing how the experience of viewing that particular work of art in a shopping mall differs from those displayed in a museum.

Assignment #4 Due Monday, October 28. For this assignment, you are required to visit the Nasher Sculpture Center, located at: 2001 Flora St, Dallas, TX 75201. Choose one sculpture, cite the name of the artist who created it, its name, and date. After describing it, please discuss how the artist's choice of material affects the viewer's experience. For more information about the Nasher Sculpture Center go to: <http://www.nashersculpturecenter.org>

Assignment #5 Due Monday, November 11. Visit the Meadows Museum's exhibit: *The Stewart Album: Art, Letters, & Souvenirs to an American Patron in Paris*. Write 200 words about a piece from the exhibit. After describing it, discuss how it relates to our class discussion on collecting, as well as its relevance in contemporary society. Please note that this exhibit closes on November 10. The Meadows Museum is located at: 5900 Bishop Blvd., Dallas, TX 75205, and its webpage is: <http://www.meadowsmuseumdallas.org>.

For UT Dallas Policies and Procedures regarding classroom behavior, religious holidays, withdrawals, etc. go to: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

Calendar

26-Aug	Introduction	
28-Aug	What is art and who is the artist?	Giorgio Vasari, <i>Lives of the Artists (Volume I)</i> , pp. 325-339.
30-Aug	The role of the artist	Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, <i>Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist</i> , pp. 1-12.
2-Sep	Labor Day	No Class
4-Sep	Media: Drawing	Frances Ames-Lewis, <i>Drawing in Early Renaissance Italy</i> , pp.19-23, 63-69. Assignment # 1 due.
6-Sep	Media: Print	Susan Dackerman, <i>Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe</i> , pp. 163-171.
9-Sep	Media: Painting.	
11-Sep	Painting. Perspective	Erwin Panofsky, <i>Perspective as Symbolic Form</i> , pp. 67-72.
13-Sep	Painting. Fresco	
16-Sep	Painting. Color. Scrovegni Chappel	Assignment # 2 due.
18-Sep	Media: Sculpture	
20-Sep	Public Art	
23-Sep	Media: Architecture	
25-Sep	Architecture	
27-Sep	Modern Architecture	Kenneth Frampton, <i>Modern Architecture: A Critical History</i> , pp. 248-261.
30-Sep	Modernism	Charles Baudelaire, The Painter of Modern Life, pp. 1-4, 12-15. Assignment #3 due.
2-Oct	-isms.	Herschel B. Chipp, <i>Theories of Modern Art</i> , pp. 281-293.
4-Oct	-isms	
7-Oct	Cubism	
9-Oct	Multimedia - Parade	
11-Oct	Mid Term Exam	
14-Oct	Guest lecture-expressionism	
16-Oct	Pop Art	
18-Oct	Postmodernism	John Berger, <i>Ways of Seeing</i> , Essay 7.
21-Oct	Postmodernism	Christopher Butler, <i>Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction</i> , pp.44-61. Assignment # 4 due.
23-Oct	Conceptual art	
25-Oct	Conceptual art	
28-Oct	Critical art	
30-Oct	Collecting	John Berger, <i>Ways of Seeing</i> , Essays 4 and 5.
1-Nov	Collecting	In-class film: Herb and Dorothy
4-Nov	Media: Photography	Quiz on film: Herb and Dorothy. H.H. Arnason, <i>History of Modern Art</i> , pp. 15-20.
6-Nov	Original & Reproductions	John Berger, <i>Ways of Seeing</i> , Essay 1
8-Nov	Original & Reproductions	In-class Film: Nova's Mystery of a masterpiece.

11-Nov	Political art. Guernica	Assignment # 5 due. Quiz on film: Nova's Mystery of a Masterpiece.
13-Nov	Nationalism in art	Margarita de Orellana, <i>Filming Pancho: How Hollywood Shaped the Mexican Revolution</i> , pp. 1-3, 105-108.
15-Nov	Nationalism in art	In class-film: Frida Kahlo
18-Nov	Identity art	
20-Nov	Death in art	
22-Nov	Death in art	
25-Nov	Fall Break	No class
27-Nov	Fall Break	No class
29-Nov	Thanksgiving	No class
2-Dec	Nude vs. Naked	John Berger, <i>Ways of Seeing</i> , Essays 2 & 3.
4-Dec	Nude vs. Naked	
6-Dec	Art and Science. Leonardo	
9-Dec	Art and Science. Goya	
11-Dec	Exam	

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.