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ARH 3180 American Art
Purchase College, Spring 2015
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Syllabus

- Jan. 22 Introductions; What is American Art?
Jan. 29 Colonial Art: New Mexico to “Bermuda”
Feb. 5 Federalist Period
Feb. 12 No class [Professor at Conference] (**True and False Test - online**)
Feb. 19 American Romanticism
Feb. 26 American Renaissance
Mar. 5 American Realism – **proposals for papers due.**
Mar. 12 American Early 20th-century Art
Mar. 19 Streamlines to Breadlines
Mar. 26 American Abstract Expressionism – Minimalism
Apr. 2 Spring Break
Apr. 9 Pop Art and Appropriation (**True and False Test - online**)
Apr. 16 Contemporary American Art 1st **Draft of paper due today**
Apr. 23 Contemporary American Art.
Apr. 30 Sharing our papers
May 7 Sharing our papers (**True and False Test - online**)
ID Exam; Sharing our papers. Polished papers due.

Required reading:

Robert Hughes, *American Visions: The Epic History of Art in American* (New York: Knopf, 1997).

Suggested Reading:

- Barbara Novak, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century: Realism, Idealism and the American Experience* (New York: Westview Press, 1969, 1979, 2007).
H. Barbara Weinberg, *American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life, 1885-1915* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1994).
Milton W. Brown, *American Painting: From the Amory Show to the Depression* (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1955, 1970).
Lowery Stokes Sims, *African American Art: 200 Years* (New York: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 2008)
Lucy R. Lippard, *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990)
Matthew Baigell, *Jewish-American Artists and the Holocaust*, New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 1997.
Norman Kleeblatt, *Action/Abstraction: Pollock, de Kooning and American Art, 1940-1976* (New York and New Haven: The Jewish Museum/Yale University Press, 2008).
Irving Sandler, *The Triumph of American Painting: A History of Abstract Expressionism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976).
A monograph on any American artist.

Course Description:

A study of American painting and sculpture from colonial times to the present, focusing on American contributions to Romanticism, Realism, Impressionism, Abstraction, Pop Art, and Postmodernism. Lectures also cover African-American art, Latino-American art, and Jewish artists as part of this opportunity to learn about American history through art.

Course Objective:

This survey of art history will focus on western art from colonial art to the twentieth-first century to order to gain a greater understanding of American history, culture and identity. You will learn about the artist/architects, titles and dates of paintings, sculptures and buildings discussed in *American Visions*

Course Structure:

Each Moodle module focuses on the task of the week.

You will -

- read the assigned chapter
- view the video episode that correlates to that chapter (note that the first chapter corresponds to the second video episode)
- discuss works of art in that chapter and implement a specific art history methodology or methodologies (as these exercises become cumulative).

The entire course exercises three major aspects of art history training:

- Recognition of major art works: artist, title, date, period.
- Keen visual analysis
- Connecting visual analysis to context and artistic intention (conscious or unconscious) mediated by different influences (political, personal, cultural, etc.)

Your paper should demonstrate your ability to select appropriate methodologies for understanding the artist you decided to research and present to the class.

Art history methodologies:

- Formal attributes of a work of art or a building, using appropriate vocabulary.
- Knowledge of narrative content, such as stories, history, biographies.
- Historical context
- Iconography and iconology
- Investigating material culture
- Deciphering psychological strategies.
- Recognizing class consciousness.
- Investigating economic influences, such as patronage, collecting and national economic support
- “Reception theory”
- Politically/culturally mediated methodologies (such as feminism, essentialism, gay/lesbian reception and semiotics)

Outcomes:

The end of the semester, you should know:

- The basic canon of American art and architecture
- How to analyze a work of art or an architectural example
- Art history vocabulary
- The names of important American artists, architects and collectors
- The history of American filtered through its art
- Robert Hughes' opinions on art, your own, your classmates and mine.
- Andy Warhol was obsessed with celebrity and death – like most of America – and other culturally germane tidbits.
- **Best of all**, you will sit at your computer and travel throughout America in time and place. You will see Plimouth Plantation in Massachusetts, megachurches in the midwest and interviews with artists living and, sadly, no longer with us.
- Know more about yourself. You will discover America beyond your immediate community and consider your own American identity as you discover the vast variety of American art.

STUDENTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO:

- Spend a minimum of 3 - 5 hours per week dedicated to this course (2 hours reading the book or pursuing researching for the paper, 1 hour watching the video, and ½ hour to several hours writing discussion posts and papers)
- Submit discussion answers by 12 noon on the day of class.
- Thoughtfully participate in discussions – look up information online, in books, in museums, etc. **and post images, links, and videos.**
- Obey the [Purchase College Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- Keep in frequent contact
- Manage your time effectively
- Ask questions if you do not understand
- Be prepared to work independently and in collaboration with fellow students.
- Be familiar with your computer and Moodle.
- Adhere to requirements and deadlines outlined in the course syllabus

Attendance:

The course consists of 14 classes which meet on Thursday and you must post a response to the weekly discussion. Failure to post on the discussion board will be considered an absence. Three absences will lower your grade by 10 points. Try to be timely – and please don't let yourself fall behind.

Classwork and homework:

Read, write, take quizzes and complete term papers

- Every week we meet on campus and discuss the weekly discussion that relates to the previous class.
- Every week you will find a list of “classroom” and “homework” tasks on the Moodle module for the week.
- Every week, you must keep up with the **reading** in *American Visions*; see the videos, and **respond to the question** on the daily discussion forum in **100 words**
- In addition, **you must write at least 25 words in response to another post.**
- **True and False quizzes** review the material in the Hughes book and video. You will write True or False next to each statement and supply the correct information for the false statements.
- **The Proposal for your paper is due on March 5th.**
- **The first draft of your paper is due April 16th.**
- **The final paper is due on May 7th, the last day of class.**

**Please submit the papers to Moodle and to me as an attachment through
Purchase email: beth.gersh-nesic@purchase.edu**

Weekly Discussion Responses:

You must respond to the weekly discussion question with a full and thoughtful response based on the book, website research, my lectures and any other sources you wish to consult.

Grading:

- A – 100 or more words on the topic and 25 words in response to a fellow student's post. Everything must be well written with no more than two typos, no abbreviations of any kind, capital letters in accordance with American English usage, and correct punctuation.
- B – Less than 100 words OR no response to another student's response OR more than 2 typos but less than 5.
- C – Less than 100-150 words AND no response to another student's response AND a few typos.
- F – Any texting usage, many typos, failure to capitalize, failure to punctuate properly, poorly written or a superficial response. (In other words, I will not read your response if it is sloppy.)

"NETIQUETTE" GUIDELINES—Students must:

- Communicate respectfully.
- Provide constructive and relevant feedback to peers.
- Be clear, use standard English, and do not abbreviate. Spell-check, revise, and edit before posting. Use appropriate subject headers.
- Be polite and careful. Do not use all UPPERCASE LETTERS or multiple exclamation marks, as they are difficult to read and sometimes it is difficult to understand the tone of the message.
- Avoid sarcasm and irony, which can be misinterpreted by readers.
- Be inclusive: send group messages to all members of the class and the instructor.
- Only kind emoticons will be accepted. ☺

Exams

- **ID Exam** – identify title, artist, date and movement.
- **True and False Tests** review the material in the Hughes book and video.

Term Project: American Art and Identity – a research paper

Proposals due by March 5th. (Details posted on Moodle.)

First drafts due by April 16th.

Polished papers due by May 7th.

Late papers will not be accepted.

For a research paper:

- Research one artist or architect whose work represents your sense of American identity.
- Analyze 4 examples of the artist's or architect's work, using at least two methods covered in class. (Demonstrate your ability to use the art history methods discussed and practiced in the assignments.)
- Describe how the artwork or architecture seems to characterize or define an American identity.
- Enlist at least 4 sources (minimum: one book, two websites and one article).
- Length about 7-10 pages.
- Be mindful of your sources' point of view (remember to cite your sources' information – not only when you quote these sources, but when you use the sources' facts and opinions).
- Analyze and synthesize the information pertaining to your topic
- Try to arrive at an original interpretation with the sources' evidence as support.

- **Be sure to focus on the art** – a short biography of one or two paragraphs is enough.
- **Only MLA or Chicago citation styles accepted.**

Instructions on how to write an art history paper are on Moodle.

Full credit for the paper requires the submission of

- 1. A proposal outline: artist and list of 4 works or description of alternative project.**
- 2. A first draft submitted on time (early submission welcome!!!)**
- 3. A polished paper submitted on time.**

If you do not submit any one of these components, you will receive an F for the entire research paper grade.

CITE YOUR SOURCES (MLA style or Chicago style footnote/endnote).

NB: Wikipedia may be used to organize your research, but may not count as a website source for your paper.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism will result in an F.

Plagiarism is stealing. Plagiarism occurs when the writer claims that the ideas, words, or concepts submitted under his or her name originated in the writing of another author. You must cite all the information you have learned from other sources. Your opinions or evaluations of the sources you have drawn upon may be original, but the ideas you have encountered belong to the authors. Respect them and give them credit for their efforts. References to facts, theories, or opinions (for example, “Vincent van Gogh is the greatest artist since Leonardo da Vinci”) without citing where you found this information will be considered plagiarism. Citing only direct quotations is not enough.

Assessment:

20% - attendance and discussion

50% - True and False Tests and ID Exam (identification of art works)

30% - Term paper: proposal, first draft and final paper inclusive – **all or nothing.**

Field Trip: Optional

Metropolitan Museum of Art, TBA

We will tour the American Wing.

Please review the following:

Academic Integrity Policy: <http://www.purchase.edu/Policies/academicintegrity.aspx>

ADA compliance: Documented Disabilities

Students with documented physical, learning, psychological and other disabilities are entitled to receive reasonable accommodations. If a student needs accommodations, he or she must first register with the Office of Special Student Services; please call 914-251-6390.

You can find a description of special student services provided by the Counseling Center at: <http://www.purchase.edu/Departments/SpecialStudentServices/>

Moodle is ADA compliant; you can find the accessibility specification for Moodle at: http://docs.moodle.org/en/Moodle_Accessibility_Specification