

Beth S. Gersh-Nešić, Ph.D.
Introduction to Art History ARH 1500/CRN 201088
Purchase College, Spring 2016
Thursdays, 6:30-9:50, January 21 through May 5

Syllabus – Introduction to Art History

Subjects Covered in Class:

Jan. 21 - Intro to course and Prehistoric Art
Jan. 28 - Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia
Feb. 4 - Ancient Minoan, Mycenaean and Greek cultures
Feb. 11 - Etruscan and Roman Art
Feb. 18 - Medieval Art and Architecture
Feb. 25 - Early Renaissance Art
Mar. 3 - High Renaissance Art
Mar. 10 - Northern Renaissance Art and Mannerism
Mar. 17 - Baroque
Mar. 24 - Spring Break
Mar. 31 - Rococo and Neoclassicism
Apr. 7 - Romanticism
Apr. 14 - Realism, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism
Apr. 21 - Fauves and Cubism (First Draft due)
Apr. 28 - Dada and Surrealism
May 5 - Abstraction and Pop – Final ID Exam (Final Paper due)

Required Text:

Marilyn Stokstad and Michael Cothren, *Art: A Brief History* (any edition)
With REVEL companion quizzes embedded in online version.

Optional:

Waldemar Januszczak DVD: *Every Picture Tells a Story*

Course Objective:

This introduction to art history quickly provides an overview of western art from cave paintings to the twentieth-first century. Our objective is to learn about media, technique, composition, iconography, culture context and the lives of the artists in order to exercise the skills needed to analyze any work of art.

Outcomes:

You learn to how to:

- Remember the names of paintings, sculptures and buildings.
- Memorize or deduce the dates assigned to the works of art.
- Investigate the culture from which the work comes.
- Identify stylistic affiliations.
- Implement art historical methodology through writing.
- Improve your ability to write research papers.

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Requirements:

1. Read assigned chapters
2. Complete the quizzes for these chapters
3. Attend all classes and participate. More than 3 absences will lower your grade by 5 points. More than 5 absences will result in an F.
4. Post discussion of the week (due on Thurs. at 12 noon).
5. One paper on one work of art
6. Take the final ID exam on the last day of class in class.

Absences:

More than three absences will result in 5 points less. More than 5 absences will result in an F.

Reading:

Stokstad/Cothren, *Art: A Brief History*, any edition
Lectures by Professor Gersh-Nesic posted on Moodle
Research online and in books for your mystery story

Lectures:

Powerpoint lectures in class.
Written lectures on Moodle. These lectures will help you understand the classroom lectures.
Videos

Weekly Quizzes

Weekly Quizzes due in class

Writing Assignments (1 – 2 pages, first draft due April 21st)

- Describe one work of art
- Tell the story depicted in the painting or the biography of the sitter for a portrait
- Identify the iconography and explain the meaning
- Identify the historical context and connect the work to its contemporary meaning within that context
- Is there a class/ethnic/gender distinction that should be discussed?
- Why did you choose this painting? How does it make you feel?

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Bibliography for your paper:

Look inside *Art: A Brief History*

Assessment:

Paper: 25%

Weekly Quizzes 50%

Final Exam– 15%

Attendance, participation and discussion on Moodle – 10%

General Art History Training

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

- Recognition of major art works: artist, title, date, period or movement
- Keen visual analysis
- Connecting visual analysis to context and artistic intention (conscious or unconscious) mediated by different influences (political, personal, cultural, etc.)
- The ability to write about a work of art using appropriate art history methodologies (“tools” for analyzing works of art or architecture)

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 (such as consumer goods, fashion, entertainment)
- Deciphering psychological strategies.
- Recognizing class consciousness.
- Investigating economic influences, such as patronage, collecting and national economic support
- “Reception theory” (bringing your self-awareness of your perceptions into the conversation)
- Politically/culturally mediated methodologies (such as feminism, essentialism, gay/lesbian reception and semiotics)

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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