

Beth S. Gersh-Nesic, Ph.D.  
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## Realism in Art

### Syllabus Spring 2014

AAR3550/4 credits

#### Course Overview

Various artists from the 17th century to the present have worked in a style that can be termed “realist.” This course explores the definition of “realism” in art and examines why these artists chose to work in an empirical style. How do their styles differ and what does their work tell us about the societies in which they lived? Students choose and place in social context a 20th-century or contemporary “realist” to discover how the meaning of “realism” has evolved over the centuries.

#### Course Objective:

The purpose of this course is to teach you about the history of Realism in art with particular attention to the historical, political and cultural contexts. We will also learn about the technical innovations that influenced making art. The list of “Outcomes” will explain more.

#### Calendar and topics:

January 27 - Introduction to Realism vs. Idealization  
February 3 - A Survey of Roman – Baroque Realism  
February 10 - Millet, Bonheur and the Barbizon School  
February 17 - Gustave Courbet and Realist Movement  
February 24 - Edouard Manet  
March 3 - English Realism  
March 10 - German and Scandinavian Realism  
March 17 - American Realism – **proposals due**  
March 24 – Spring Break – **online Midterm**  
March 31 – International Impressionism  
April 7 - The Ashcan School - **ID Test**  
April 14 - Hopper, Rockwell and other Regionalists  
April 21 - Student presentations – **first draft due**  
April 28 - Student presentations  
May 5 - Student presentations  
May 12 – **ID exam – final draft due**

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### **Required Books:**

- Linda Nochlin, *Realism*, Penguin Book, 1971.
- Linda Nochlin, *Realism and Tradition in Art, 1848-1900*, Prentice-Hall, 1966.
- Brendan Prendeville, *Realism in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Painting*, Thames and Hudson, 2000.

### **Additional Readings/Sources:**

- Smarthistory lectures online
- Charles Baudelaire “The Painter of Modern Life”
- Other articles provided on Moodle
- Belinda Thomson, *Impressionism: Origins, Practice and Reception*, Thames and Hudson, 2000
- Robert Herbert, *Impressionism: Art, Leisure and Parisian Society*, 1988.
- Monographs for research papers

### **Grade Assessment:**

- Attendance and participation – you will receive a grade for your preparation each week. – 10%
- Midterm – 20%
- Two slide-identification tests - 20 %
- Research paper – 25% (**must include proposal, first draft and polished paper**)
- Powerpoint presentation in class – 25%

### **Course Structure:**

Each Moodle module focuses on the tasks for the week:

- read the assigned chapters and/or articles
- view the video episode that correlates to the topic of the week
- read the lecture, if posted (not all modules have lectures)
- watch a Smarthistory video or other relevant video, if posted
- prepare for and respond in class to readings and videos that review the previous week’s lecture in the classroom. (In other words, the assignments on Moodle are homework to reinforce the topic the professor addresses in class. We begin with a review of the previous week’s topic through an exercise in class.)

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## **Anticipated Outcomes:**

- Recognize and analyze realism in Roman, Renaissance and Baroque art.
- Understand the historical, cultural and political context of the Realist Movements in 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.
- Recognize and analyze the works by major Realist artists.
- Be able to use art history's vocabulary confidently.
- Be able to research and write an in-depth analysis of Realist artists from Ancient Rome to today.
- Be able to understand and analyze scholarly books and articles on art history.

## **Writing assignments: Research paper and Powerpoint**

- Proposal for your paper is **due on March 17 (St. Patrick's Day)**
- Research paper is **due on April 21**
- Powerpoint completed on day of presentation – preparation will be discussed in class
- Revised research paper, **due on May 12 (last day)**

## **How to submit the paper:**

Please submit the paper on Moodle and send the paper to me as an attachment through email at [beth.gersh-nesic@purchase.edu](mailto:beth.gersh-nesic@purchase.edu) so that I can confirm that I have your paper. **If you do not hear from me after you send me your paper, please write to me asap.** [Late papers will not be accepted.](#)

In order to write the paper, you will draw on the following:

### **General Art History Training**

The entire course exercises four 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 vocabulary and methodologies ("tools" for analyzing works of art or architecture)

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### **Art history methodologies (“Tools of the Trade”)**

- 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, “queer” theory and semiotics).

### **This course fulfills to SUNY Learning Outcome for The Arts.**

*The expected outcome of Realism in Art is that students will demonstrate an understanding of at least one principal form of artistic expression and the creative process inherent therein.*

### **LIBERAL STUDIES OUTCOMES**

This course meets the following outcomes for the Liberal Studies Degree Completion Program:

- The ability to articulate and communicate clearly in written and spoken forms
- Research skills including the ability to analyze and synthesize information
- Responsibility to others and our community
- Respect, tolerance and openness to new ideas and ways of thinking
- To think critically, independently and creatively
- ARTS: Core knowledge of the field and related concepts, theories and ideas
- ARTS: An understanding of historical knowledge and events in the field
- A critical analysis of different art forms
- Visual literacy and the power of images

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### **STUDENTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO:**

- Read/view the required books, articles, videos, etc.
- Come to class prepared to discuss the homework assignments.
- Curate an exhibition on a subject explored in Realist art.
- Research this subject in books, periodicals, catalogues, websites and on site (museums or galleries or both).
- Obey the [Purchase College Academic Integrity Policy](#).
- Ask for help if you feel confused or overwhelmed . My email address is: [beth.gersh-nesic@purchase.edu](mailto:beth.gersh-nesic@purchase.edu)
- Manage your time effectively.
- Ask questions in class if you do not understand words, explanations, etc.
- Be prepared to work independently.
- Be familiar with your computer and Moodle.
- Adhere to requirements and deadlines outlined in the course syllabus.

### **Attendance:**

- The course consists of fifteen classes which meet every week. **NB: Spring Break is March 24-8.**
- **Three or more absences** will result in the next lower grade, for example an A will become an A-.

### **Classwork and homework:**

#### **Read, write, take exams and complete term papers**

- Every week we will discuss the **readings** listed on and the videos posted on the Moodle module. **Participate in the weekly class discussion will be graded.**
- Tests: 2 slide identification tests taken in class.
- One midterm online, opened and closed during Spring Break.
- **Your research paper requires a proposal, first draft and polished version** (note due dates on the syllabus). **Please submit the paper on Moodle and send the paper to me as an attachment through email at [beth.gersh-nesic@purchase.edu](mailto:beth.gersh-nesic@purchase.edu) so that I can confirm that I have your paper. If you do not hear from me after you send me your paper, please write to me asap.**

### **Grading for discussions:**

A – Prepared

F- Not prepared

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### **"NETIQUETTE" and CLASSROOM DISCUSSION 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
- Address emails to the professor (any professor) respectfully. “Hey” is not an acceptable form of address at the beginning of an email. “Get back to me” is also unacceptable.
- Please write your name and class/course in the Subject Line for each email to the professor.

### **Exams**

- **Two ID Tests** – identify title, artist, and date. Describe the work including narrative, iconography and other pertinent information, such as references to politics, history, class consciousness and material culture. **The works you must memorize for the exam are posted on the Moodle modules.**
- **Midterm online** – essays, true and false questions, multiple choice.

### **Research Paper and Powerpoint:**

Curate Your Own Exhibition on a Subject Addressed/Depicted in Realist Art (such as love, death, war, work, fashion, etc.)

***You must submit the proposal, draft and polished paper to receive full credit for the whole research paper assignment: If any of the three listed below are missing, you will receive an F.***

**Research proposal by Monday, March 17**

**First Draft due by Monday, April 21**

**Final polished paper due on May 12**

Please submit the paper on Moodle and send the paper to me as an attachment through email at [beth.gersh-nesic@purchase.edu](mailto:beth.gersh-nesic@purchase.edu) so that I can confirm that I have your paper. **If you do not hear from me after you send me your paper, please write to me asap.** **Late papers will not be accepted.**

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### **For the research paper:**

- Curate your own exhibition of works that support a thesis or theme.
- Choose at least 5 works or more.
- Write an exhibition catalogue for your exhibition.
- Create a powerpoint to share your show with the class.
- Be sure to analyze the works in terms of the methods covered in class. (Demonstrate your ability to use the art history methods discussed and practiced in the assignments.) Your proposal should include at least 2 methods you wish to implement for your thesis.
- Be sure to define your concept of Realism in order to defend the artist's type of Realism in Art
- Enlist at least 4 sources per work (minimum: one book, two websites and one article). **Wikipedia is not acceptable as a source.**
- Look for the museum where artwork belongs and consult that website.
- Look for exhibition websites where the work may have been discussed (i.e. Magritte at the MoMA this past fall).
- Length about 10 to 12 pages – or more.
- Read critically: 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 sufficient.

**Instructions on how to write an art history paper can be found on the “Introduction” module.** Please ask the professor for help. I am happy to guide your through the research and writing process.

**Full credit for the paper requires the submission of**

- 1. a proposal outline.**
- 2. a first draft**
- 3. a polished paper (early submissions welcome!)**

### **Bibliographic Style:**

Cite your sources in MLA style or in full footnote/endnote. We will go over this in class.

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## **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 actually belong to 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 you must cite the authors who provide you with the facts and opinions that you include in your paper. 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.**

### **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](http://docs.moodle.org/en/Moodle_Accessibility_Specification)

7) Academic Integrity Policy should be linked to:  
<http://www.purchase.edu/Policies/academicintegrity.aspx>