

ARTH 597.003: History of Modern Art
Dr. Emily Newman
Texas A&M University - Commerce

MW 11:00-12:15PM, ART 111

Office Hours: Wednesday, 10-11AM, by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The History of Modern Art is a focused class designed to introduce students to the major artistic movements in the United States and Europe from 1900 to 1960, while acquainting them with the discipline of art history and the skills necessary for the interpretation and analysis of visual information. We will discuss the artwork and major historical and cultural events that influenced the production of Modern art, along with concerns of art-producers and the arts establishment. This class will require students to *memorize* a number of images that represent the historical span of the course and to *demonstrate the analytical skills* necessary to communicate visual information. Our goal for this class is to create a strong foundation in modern art, while developing the skills necessary for discussing art in an informal setting, as well as an academic one. Students will also complete one major research project, developing their skills for researching and determining appropriate sources as well as utilizing proper citation techniques. Additionally, the students will also read a number of canonical articles in the field, and develop their reading comprehension skills as well as critical understanding.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- discuss and explain historically significant works of modern art
- become acquainted with the characteristic features of the major styles and movements popularized from the end of the 19th century to mid-20th century.
- learn to analyze the relationships among content, context, and style
- acquire a working knowledge of the specialized vocabulary used in art history
- become able to analyze important historical documents and criticism
- enhance visual literacy and critical thinking skills
- develop research skills appropriate of a graduate level

ASSESSMENT

Students' ability to meet the course objectives and learning outcomes will be evaluated through written assignments, class participation, exams, and essay questions.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Ann Dempsey, *Styles, Schools and Movements: The Essential Encyclopaedic Guide to Modern Art*, 2nd Edition (London: Thames and Hudson, 2011) ISBN: 0500288445

Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, ed. *Art in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002) ISBN: 0631227083

Additional readings will be made available on ecollege. You are expected to bring the book or reading to class on the day due, as well as paper and pen/pencil each class.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

- internet access
- access to eCollege, course documents (including pdfs of the slides shown in class) will be uploaded here

Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you use a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (8.0). Your courses also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating system.

WEB-ENHANCED COURSE

This is a web enhanced course through eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A & M University-Commerce. To use the eCollege features associated with this course go to: <https://leo.tamuc.edu/login.aspx>. You will need your CWID (Campus Wide I.D.) and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact technology services at 903-468- 6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Technical Support: Texas A & M University-Commerce provides students technical support in the use of eCollege. The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week:

- Chat support: Click on 'Live support' on the tool bar with the course to chat with an eCollege representative.
- Phone: 1-866-656-5511 (Toll free) to speak with eCollege technical support representative.
- E-mail: helpdesk@tamuc.edu to initiate a support request with eCollege technical support representative.
- Help: Click on the 'help' button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege.

HANDING IN ASSIGNMENTS

Each assignment must be handed in on time at the beginning of class and **will NOT be accepted via email**. For each class period late (and if not handed in at the start of class), the grade will be deducted one letter grade. **Assignments will NOT be accepted over ONE week late.**

FORMATTING

All written assignments must be typed using the following guidelines: 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1" margins, double-spaced, with page numbers. Papers must be stapled. *Artwork titles must be italicized.* Failure to format properly will result in a lower grade.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Statement on Student Behavior:

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenet of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct).

All students must show respect toward the instructor and the instructor's syllabus, presentations, assignments, and point of view. Students should respect each others' differences. If the instructor determines that a student is not being respectful towards other students or the instructor, it is the instructor's prerogative to ask the student to leave, to refer the student to the department head, and to consider referring the student to the Dean of Students who may consider requiring the student to drop the course. Please refer to pages 42 – 46 of the Texas A&M University-commerce Student guidebook's Codes of Conduct for details.

Prohibited during class:

- **Cell Phones/Blackberries/MP3 Players:** Please keep these devices off while class is in session. It is disrespectful to both your classmates. No cell phones are allowed during exam sessions. If you need to check the time, consult the clock in the classroom. Repeated use of these devices will result in being asked to leave.
- **Computers or tablets**
- **Sleeping**
- **Disruptive or distracting behavior:** Texting, conversing with other students during class, loud eating, etc.
- **Repeated entering/exiting the classroom:** Please be on time to class. Not only is disruptive to the class environment, but you could miss important class announcements. This is a short class, so there should be no need to come in and out throughout the class period. Additionally, repeated tardiness will count with your absences, and could result in a lower grade.

Academic Dishonesty: There is **no tolerance** for any kind of academic dishonesty in this course. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on exams, theft of instructional material or exams, representing the work of someone else as one's own, and misrepresenting absences. Academic dishonesty is a severe transgression in college and may result in referral to the Dean of Students, expulsion from class and/or the University, and a failing grade.

Discussion: In this class, we will look at a wide array of artwork, some of which might include nudity, intense language, violence, etc. Each person will bring their own experiences to the art, and should feel comfortable expressing their opinions and vulnerabilities. The classroom is a safe environment, and each student should behave with integrity and treat their peers with respect.

STATEMENT ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ADA ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services, Texas A&M
University-Commerce, Gee Library, Room 132, Phone (903) 886-5150 or
(903) 886-5835, Fax (903) 468-8148, StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

After contacting the Office of Student Disability Resources and Services, it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor of what accommodations are needed **IN ADVANCE** of when they are needed (for example, if testing accommodations are necessary, please inform the instructor with appropriate documentation at LEAST one week before the test date).

EMAIL POLICY:

For all emails sent, please **include full name, student ID, and the class** that you are attending. Do not send emails to myself and other professors at once, as each professor has different issues to address. You are allotted three absences for this course; plan accordingly and there is no need to contact me about unexcused absences that are incorporated into this allowance. For excused absences, you need to bring in a hard copy of appropriate documentation of your absence.

TEST AND GRADE POLICY:

Make-up exams will be administered **only** in instances of excused absences (and acceptable documentation) and may not be designed in the same format as the regularly-scheduled exam. When an excused absence causes a student to miss an exam, it is the student's responsibility to inform--or to have someone else notify--the instructor within **4 days** of the exam. If permitted, these exams **must** be made up within two weeks of the scheduled date, at a time and place determined by the professor.

Assignments are due at the start of the class on the assigned date. Late work will only be accepted for one week after the due date, and the grade will be penalized. Concerning grade decisions, I will not discuss specific grades on ANY assignment or test the day it is returned. If you have concerns regarding a grade, email me **within one week of receiving the assignment back** clearly explaining why you think the assignment was assessed incorrectly. Upon receipt of the email, we will set an appointment to address the concern.

***** THERE WILL BE NO EXTRA CREDIT*****

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Grade Breakdown:

10% Participation/Reading Responses
25% Research Project
20% Test 1
20% Test 2
25% Final Exam

Participation: Each person is expected to come to class prepared, which means having done the reading and/or worksheet and ready to engage in the class. The class should not just be a lecture, rather, people are encouraged to speak up, contribute to the conversation and ask questions. At the beginning of class, students may be asked to write up responses to the readings, which will count towards the reading. A major part of the participation requirement is ATTENDANCE, which is mandatory.

Attendance: Each student in this course is allowed no more than **three** unexcused absences. Each absence after three results in the lowering of the grade by 1/3 of a letter grade. When a student accrues **more than eight unexcused absences** the instructor has the right to drop the student from the course or to give a failing grade.

Unexcused absences require no explanation. For an absence to be considered excused, appropriate documentation must be presented. Excused absences are defined in The Student Guidebook and various university policies, but the policy employed in this class is confined to the following: (1) Participation in pre - approved University activities such as athletic events, sponsored field trips, and travel for specific University - related academic reasons; (2) Verifiable legal proceedings; (3) Documented cases of illness, injury, or emergencies. **All such excuses must be shown to the instructor in original, written, documentary form within 7 days of the absence(s) together with a photocopy for the instructor's records.** (Please understand that this copy is a student's only record of an absence.) In lieu of documentation, the absences become unexcused and are counted as such.

Exams:

Throughout the course, you will have three exams. They will have three components: slide identifications (where you must identify the artist/title/date/style), short answer questions, and an essay question regarding readings and styles discussed. These will NOT be cumulative - only covering material immediately preceding the exam.

Assignment:

There will be one research project, of which more information will be handed out later. The assignment must be handed in on time at the beginning of class and **will NOT be accepted via email.** For each class period late (and if not handed in at the start of class), the grade will be deducted one letter grade. **Assignments will NOT be accepted over ONE week late.**

Reading Response Papers:

You are required to complete a short response paper for each of the following:

1/29 – Carol Duncan, “Virility and Domination in Twentieth Century Vanguard Painting”

2/10 – Rosalind Krauss, “In the Name of Picasso”

3/3 – Wanda Korn, “The Great American Thing”

3/19 – Benjamin Buchloh, “From Factura to Factography”

4/21 – David Craven, “Abstract Expressionism and Third World Art”

These responses are designed to show that you have a critical understanding of the reading. They should be 2-4 pages, and composed of three parts.

1. Make very clear the thesis and main argument of the article.
2. Summarize the article in YOUR WORDS. Use quotes from the article only sparingly. *If you use quotes, you must make sure to put the page number from where the quote is taken. Artwork titles must be italicized.*
3. Address the author’s argument. What were its strengths? What worked? At the same time, be critical and address the issues and the problems the article brings up.

FORMATTING

All written assignments must be typed using the following guidelines: 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1” margins, double-spaced, with page numbers. *Artwork titles must be italicized.* Failure to format properly will result in a lower grade.

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR A RESPONSE PAPER

- I. Introduction
 - a. Identify the article being criticized
 - b. Present thesis of the article discussed
 - c. Preview your argument – what are the steps you will take to prove your argument (this could be something like- the author successfully supports her/his thesis with strong evidence or the author makes a good point, s/he fails to support it, etc.)
- II. Short summary of the article
 - a. Does not need to be comprehensive
 - b. Present only what the reader needs to know to understand your argument
- III. Your argument - likely will involve a number of sub-arguments –mini-theses you prove to prove your larger argument true. For example, if your thesis was that the author’s presumption is that photography is not art, you might prove this by:
 - i. Clarifying how the author is defining art
 - ii. Explaining how photography does not meet that definition
 - iii. Outlining the author’s discussion of how that affects the photography.
- IV. Conclusion
 - a. Reflect on how you have proven your argument.
 - b. Point out the importance of your argument.

Modern Art 1900-1960 - Class Schedule*

The Foundations of Modernism: End of the 19th Century to WWI

1/13 – The Making of Modern Art

1/15 – Post-Impressionism

Paul Signac, from *Eugène Delacroix to Neo-Impressionism*, 15-18

Paul Gauguin, Letter to Fontainas, 18-20

1/20 - MLK DAY - NO CLASS

1/22 – Arts and Crafts/Skyscraper

Wright, “The Art and Craft of the Machine,” handout

Sullivan, “The Tall Building Artistically Considered,” handout

1/27 – Symbolism and Art-Nouveau

Sigmund Freud, “On Dreams” selection, 21-27

1/29 – Matisse and Fauvism / Modern Sculpture

Henri Matisse, “Notes on a Painter,” 69-74

2/3 – NO CLASS

2/5 – German Expressionism

Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* selection, 82-88

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Programme of the Brucke, 65

Emil Nolde, “On Primitive Art,” 96

2/10 – Cubism

Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, *Rise of Cubism* selection, 208-13

Georges Braque, “Thoughts on Painting,” 214-15

2/12 - NO CLASS

2/17 - TBA

2/19 – European Abstraction after Cubism

F.T. Marinetti, “The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism,” 146-50

Kasimir Malevich, “Non-Objective Art and Suprematism,” 292-93

2/24 – TEST #1

all readings in ART IN THEORY: 1900-2000, unless otherwise noted

Modern Art 1900-1960 - Class Schedule*

Art During and Between WWI and WWII

2/26 – Constructivism and Dada

Hugo Ball, "Dada Fragments," 250-52

Marcel Duchamp, "The Richard Mutt Case," 252

Tristan Tzara, "Dada Manifesto 1918," 252-56

3/3 – American Art Pre 1920

3/5 – De Stijl

De Stijl, "Manifesto I," 281

Piet Mondrian, "Dialogue on the New Plastic," 284-89

Mondrian, *Neo-Plasticism: The General Principle of Plastic Equivalence*, 289-91

3/10 and 3/12 – NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

3/17 – Germany/France

Otto Dix, "The Object is Primary," 408

3/19 – Bauhaus and Modern Architecture

Walter Gropius, "The Theory and Organization of the Bauhaus," 309-313

3/24 – Surrealism

André Breton, from the First Manifesto of Surrealism, 447-52

Salvador Dalí, "The Stinking Ass," 486-89

Max Ernst, "What is Surrealism?" 491-92

3/26 – Photography

Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 520-7

3/31 – American Art

Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," 539-48

4/2 – TEST #2

all readings in ART IN THEORY: 1900-2000, unless otherwise noted

Modern Art 1900-1960 - Class Schedule*

Postwar Art: 1945-1960

4/7 – Architectural Developments

4/9 – North American Figurative Art

André Breton, Diego Rivera, and Leon Trotsky, “Towards a Free Revolutionary Art,” 532-536

Diego Rivera, “The Revolutionary Spirit in Modern Art,” 421-23

David A. Siqueiros, “Towards a Transformation of the Plastic Arts,” 429-31

4/14 – Abstract Expressionism I

Harold Rosenberg, from “The American Action Painters,” 589-92

Clement Greenberg, “Towards a Newer Laocoon,” 562-68

4/16 - NO CLASS

4/21 – Abstract Expressionism II

Barnett Newman, “The Sublime is Now,” 580-82

4/23 – Post-War Sculpture and Photography

Jean-Paul Sartre, “The Search for the Absolute,” 611-15

4/28 – Post-War European Art

Jean Dubuffet, “Crude Art Preferred to Cultural Art,” 605-8

Tapie, from *An Other Art*, 629-30

4/30 – Reactions to AB EX in the 1950s

Allan Kaprow, “Legacy of Jackson Pollock”, *handout*

MAY 7TH - FINAL EXAM 10:30AM-12:30PM

*subject to change

all readings in ART IN THEORY: 1900-2000, unless otherwise noted