

INTRODUCTION TO MODERN ART (0030)

HISTORY OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SUMMER 2006

Instructor: Travis Nygard
Email: ten2@pitt.edu
Office hours: By Appointment
Office: 151 Frick Fine Arts Building
Mailbox: 104 Frick Fine Arts Building
Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 12:00 PM-03:15 PM
Location: 203 Frick Fine Arts

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will address critical issues in western painting, sculpture, design, photography, and architecture from the 19th century through the 1960s. The course will be devoted to discussion of the cultural practices of artistic Modernism in the West, with special attention to the work of the Realists, Impressionists, Expressionists, Cubists, Surrealists, Abstract Expressionists, and Pop artists, among others. The course is designed to provide students with strategies for critically thinking about art. Specifically, we will examine and build upon the methods used by scholars to address issues such as politics, gender, sexuality, class, race, and psychology in art. The syllabus, most readings, and other course materials will be available online.

WHY THIS CLASS IS FASCINATING TO ME (AND HOPEFULLY TO YOU TOO)

Studying modern art provides a unique perspective on both the past and the present. During the modern period our society changed at its roots. Nature was rethought. Industries were developed. Slavery ended. A middle class became dominant. Women demanded equality. Sex became understood clinically. Modern nations were born. And, most germane to this class, people began to make and experience images in radically new ways.

Visual technologies emerged, such as lithographic printing, photography, cinema, and television. Artists embraced these new technologies and rethought traditional artistic media, such as painting and sculpture. These artists struggled with the changes in society, sometimes as observers and at other times as participants. Although the modern period ended sometime during the 1960s or 70s (people now believe that we are post-modern or contemporary), these are the issues that we must live with or react to today.

It is probably clear that well-informed people should be conversant with large social issues as a whole, but why use art to understand them? Our society has become saturated with pictures, and we use modern art as part of our visual vocabulary. Through it we are

pandered to, manipulated, and comforted. Surrealism has become the mode of choice for music videos. Abstract expressionism is the art of corporate America. Dada and agit-prop remain the arts of political protest. Impressionist images are mass-produced on coffee mugs for middle class homes. Advertisements frequently quote specific artists, such as Andy Warhol or Jackson Pollock. In short, being visually literate is now a prerequisite for understanding our surroundings.

COURSEWEB

The syllabus, assignments, and resources will be posted on CourseWeb throughout the term. To access CourseWeb, sign in with your Pitt username and password:

<http://courseweb.pitt.edu>

SMALL GROUPS

Each of you will be assigned to a small group for the term. The goal is develop a strong working relationship within your group so that you can learn effectively together. These groups will be used for discussion and in-class assignments. At the end of the term I will ask you to evaluate your group's success based on three criteria: (1) effective speaking, (2) effective listening, and (3) fostering contributions from all members.

ATTRIBUTION OF SOURCES

To avoid plagiarism, any time that you summarize or quote another person's ideas you must cite them. Art history majors must use the humanities style of documentation with footnotes and a bibliography outlined in the Chicago Manual of Style (15th edition). It is the standard for our discipline, and therefore all majors need to be familiar with it. Non-majors may opt to use the MLA style. Citation guidelines are available here:

<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

Bibliographic software, such as EndNote, may be useful to you for formatting citations. EndNote is installed on all University lab machines, and a student copy can be purchased from the University for approximately \$5. I use it, and it took me about three days of experimentation to learn—it was worth the investment in time.

COMMUNICATION

My primary means of communication with you outside of class will be email, via Courseweb. Because I will use this to send assignments and announcements, you should check your email frequently during the term. Courseweb allows me to send emails only to your University address, so you must be either checking that account or forwarding its messages. You can forward your University email by changing your account settings here: <http://accounts.pitt.edu>

DISTRACTIONS

Our classroom environment will be best if we can minimize distractions. As such, I recommend turning off cell phones. Also, many people (including me) are easily distracted by the smell, sound, and appearance of food, so I ask that you do not eat during class. Beverages are fine.

ATTENDANCE AND LATE WORK

All work must be uploaded on the day that it is due before midnight. As such, if you are confused about an assignment you could ask me a last minute question in class, revise that evening, and still upload it on time. I recommend turning in your assignments well-before midnight, just in case you have computer trouble.

In general I will not accept late work. My reason is that the class will be progressing through the material quickly, and accepting late work would allow you to fall behind in your studies.

If you have a documented medical emergency or documented funeral of a close family member, please meet with me individually to discuss your situation.

If you know in advance that you will need to miss a class for personal reasons, then I may allow you to turn in an assignment up to one class period late if you petition me on the *second day of class (June 29)*. To do this, you must turn in a typed memo to me that lists when and why you will be absent, and the date that you will turn in your assignment.

There will be a de-facto attendance policy. I will assign in-class work each day that I will collect and grade. If you miss class you will forfeit the points from the in-class work. For medical emergencies, funerals, and pre-arranged absences, you may make up the in-class work by turning in a 3-4 page paper for each missed day responding to that day's assigned readings. The first page must be a summary of the readings, and the next 2-3 pages must be an original response to them.

LIBRARY EXPERTISE, POLICIES, AND HOURS

For your papers you will need to do research in the Fine Arts Library. To help facilitate your work Ray Anne Lockard and I will be working together to teach you skills. Ray Anne is the art history reference librarian and bibliographer. As such, she knows of innumerable resources that will be useful to you. She is available both in-person (her office is located in the administrative area, past the reference collection) as well as by email (frickart@pitt.edu).

Please note that the Fine Arts Library is a non-circulating special collection. As such, you will work by reading books there or photocopying portions to take home. Most of the materials are in closed stacks. To access these materials you will either fill out a call slip or print out the PittCat record for the page at the circulation desk, who will retrieve it for you. If you will use a book on more than one visit, you may ask a page to keep it on a shelf in the reading room for up to 30 days.

The Fine Arts Library hours during the summer are as follows:

Monday-Thursday: 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Friday: 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Saturday: Noon – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday: Closed

COLLABORATION

In general, I encourage collaboration. You may work with any of your peers on any assignment, and multiple people can turn in the same paper if you discuss it with me first. If you choose to collaborate on an assignment I may alter the requirements slightly. For example, I might ask for a 6 instead of a 3 page paper.

It is great if you discuss your assignments with each other, but please disclose that at the end of the final product. For example, you might say, “I would like to acknowledge the insights of <name> who critiqued my ideas and suggested some further questions.” This is a matter of academic respect, and if you look in almost any art history book you will find a similar list of acknowledgements in it.

ASSESSMENT

| <u>Assignment</u> | <u>Percent of final grade.</u> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Quiz on the syllabus. | 3 |
| Daily in-class exercises. | 24 |
| Daily in-class lecture responses. | 14 |
| Five at-home exercises. | 50 |
| Group participation. | 9 |
| <hr/> Total | <hr/> 100 |

GRADING SCALE

| | |
|----|---------|
| A | 93-100% |
| A- | 90-92% |
| B+ | 87-89% |
| B | 83-86% |
| B- | 80-82% |
| C+ | 77-79% |
| C | 73-76% |
| C- | 70-72% |
| D+ | 67-69% |
| D | 63-66% |
| D- | 60-62% |
| F | 0-59% |

FORMATTING

All papers should be double spaced with Times New Roman or Times font in size 12, and have 1" margins on the top and bottom and 1.25" margins on the sides.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity (<http://www.pitt.edu/~provost/ai1.html>). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

DISABILITIES

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and the Disability Resources and Services (<http://www.dr.s.pitt.edu/policies.html>) no later than the 2nd week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Office is located in 216 William Pitt Union.

READINGS

There are three textbooks for this course available for purchase in the Book Center for about \$55, and they are also on reserve in the Frick Fine Arts Library. Please bring the assigned readings to class each day, as we will refer to them in discussions.

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. Any edition is fine. However, note that the first edition lacks a chapter on ecocriticism, so I am putting that chapter on e-reserves.

Brettell, Richard R. *Modern Art, 1851-1929: Capitalism and Representation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Taylor, Joshua Charles. *Learning to Look: A Handbook for the Visual Arts*. 2d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Several of the readings for the course are available on e-reserve through the library. You can access electronic reserve materials through PittCat using the password that I give you in class. Please *write down the password* because the University forbids me from writing it on this syllabus or telling it to you over email. <http://pittcat.pitt.edu>

SCHEDULE

- Textbook
- Electronic Reserves
- On reserve in Frick Fine Arts Library

June 27. Introduction to the course.

The goal of this class is to introduce you to the field of art history as a whole, and to familiarize you with major modern art movements.

Homework:

Familiarize yourself with the syllabus and course policies posted online (there will be a short quiz on it Thursday). Also, read the following section from the Brettell book as a review of the art movements that we discussed in class today, and read the section on psychology from the Barry book to prepare for Thursday's class.

- Peter Barry, "Psychoanalytic Criticism," in *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) pp. 96-108. (Skip Lacan)
- Richard R. Brettell, "Realism to Surrealism," in *Modern Art, 1851-1929: Capitalism and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) pp. 9-48.

June 29. Psychology and art.

The goal of this class is to acquaint you with the ways that art historians use psychoanalysis to understand images. Although the reading about psychoanalysis focused on literature, similar strategies apply to art, and I will clarify them through our discussions and lectures. We will also do several administrative things. First, you will sign up for individual meetings with me on July 6th. Secondly, we will tour the Fine Arts Library. Thirdly, I will introduce you to the Turnitin software. Finally, I will assign the first at-home exercise, which focuses on art terminology and requires your textbook *Learning to Look*.

Quiz:

Course policies and the syllabus.

Note:

If you plan to petition me about a planned absence, it must be done today. See section on attendance above.

Homework:

To prepare for your meeting with me on the 6th, please look through the following two books on reserve in the Frick Fine Arts library, and pick one example of modern art from them that you will focus on for the remainder of the term. Photocopy the image and bring it to our meeting.

- Gillian H. Belnap and Phillip M. Johnston, *The Carnegie Museum of Art Collection Highlights* (Pittsburgh: The Carnegie Museum of Art, 1995)
- Franz Schulze, *Building a Masterpiece: Milwaukee Art Museum* (New York: Hudson Hills Press and Milwaukee Art Museum, 2001)

To prepare for class on the 11th, review materials prepared by Ray Anne Lockard about the library that will be distributed in class. Also read the following materials on Marxism, class, and criticizing art.

- Peter Barry, "Marxist Criticism," in *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) pp. 156-171.
- Richard R. Brettell, "Social Class and Class Consciousness," in *Modern Art, 1851-1929: Capitalism and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) pp. 155-180.
- Terry Michael Barrett, "Interpreting Art," in *Criticizing Art: Understanding the Contemporary* (Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield Pub. Co., 2000) pp. 87-120.

July 4. No Class.

The University is closed.

July 6. Individual Meetings

No Class.

You will meet with me individually today to discuss the work of art that you have chosen to focus on for your project.

July 11. Class and art.

The goal of this class is to familiarize you with the ways that art historians think about class and the economy to understand the content and production of art. You will also be introduced to the concept of ideology, which will be essential for understanding most of the remaining theoretical approaches in the course. We will also discuss ways to read effectively when articles contain jargon and how to pick out the difference between a justified argument and an unjustified opinion in art history. Finally, I will assign at-home exercise 2, which is a formal description of your focus object.

Due:

At-home exercise 1.

Homework:

Read the following sections of your textbooks to prepare for the next class. Also, choose one of the remaining articles to read. Each group member must read a different article. As you read, determine what the argument, or thesis, is of the author and write it down. I will collect them in class.

- Peter Barry, "Feminist Criticism," in *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) pp. 121-138.
- Richard R. Brettell, "Sexuality and the Body," in *Modern Art, 1851-1929: Capitalism and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) pp. 131-154.
- Stephen F. Eisenman, "Communism in Furs: A Dream of Prehistory in William Morris's *John Ball*," *Art Bulletin* 87, no. 1 (2005): pp. 92-110
- Patricia Leighton, "The White Peril and L'art Nègre: Picasso, Primitivism, and Anticolonialism," *The Art Bulletin* 72, no. 4 (1990): pp. 609-30.
- Michael Jennings, "Agriculture, Industry, and the Birth of the Photo-Essay in the Late Weimar Republic," *October*, 93 (2000), pp. 23-56.
- Jieun Rhee, "Performing the Other: Yoko Ono's 'Cut Piece'" *Art History*, 28, no. 1 (2005): pp. 96-118.

- Laura 'Lou' Bailey and Lizzie Thynne, "Beyond Representation: Claude Cahun's Monstrous Mischief-Making," *History of Photography*, 29, no. 2 (2005): pp. 135-148.

July 13. Gender and art.

The goal of this class is to examine theories of gender that have been influential in art history, especially feminism. In addition, we will examine databases for finding citations, such as Art Bibliographies Modern, and discuss how to determine the quality of a source of art historical information. To help you evaluate sources effectively, we will discuss strategies for academic reading, including the use of abstracts, headings, and tables of contents. Finally, I will assign at-home exercise 3, which involves both library and Internet-based research on your focus object.

Due:

At-home exercise 2.

Homework:

Read the chapter by Barry and take Kate Bornstein's Gender Aptitude Test and bring your results to class tomorrow.

- Peter Barry, "Lesbian/Gay Criticism," in *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) pp.139-155.
- Bornstein, Kate. "Welcome to Your Gender Workbook." In *My Gender Workbook: How to Become a Real Man, a Real Woman, the Real You, or Something Else Entirely* (London: Routledge, 1998) pp. 1-24.

July 18. Sexuality and gender transgression in art.

The goal of this class is to become familiar with the ways that art historians interpret sexuality and gender transgression in art. We will discuss how to determine the intended audience for art historical sources. We will use Bornstein's test as the basis for a discussion of how our personal identities shape our research (sometimes called reflexivity). Also, we will discuss how to find research questions and challenges.

Homework:

Everyone must read the chapter from the Barry book. Because you are spending a lot of time doing independent research, divide up the reading by Berger among the members of your group (you will teach the content that you read to your fellow group members in class). Also, take the online Ecological Footprint quiz, write down your score, and bring it to class.

- Peter Barry, "Ecocriticism," in *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) pp. 248-271.
- Martin Berger, "Landscape Photography and the White Gaze," in *Sight Unseen: Whiteness and American Visual Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) pp. 43-79..
- Earth Day Foundation's Ecological Footprint Quiz:
<http://www.earthday.net/footprint/>

July 20. Nature and art.

The goal of this class is to familiarize you with ways of thinking about nature and art together. We will be considering nature in two ways: first, as a timeless fact, and secondly as a product of 19th century scientific thought. We will use the ecological footprint quiz as the basis for a reflexive reflection on the environment and art. Finally, I will assign at-home exercise 4, which asks you to examine the questions that have already been addressed by other researchers about your focus object.

Due:

At-home exercise 3.

Homework:

Read the article by Berger.

- Maurice Berger, "Are Art Museums Racist?" *Art in America*, September 1990, pp. 69-77.

July 25. Race and art.

The goal of this class is to familiarize you with the ways that race has impacted the history of art, and to apply that information to the study of museums. The last two theoretical topics in the course (race and nation) are not covered in the Barry book. As such, we will derive our understanding of them as a class. I will also assign at-home exercise 5, in which you apply one of the theoretical lenses that we have discussed in class (psychology, class, gender, sexuality, nature, and race) to your focus object.

Due:

At-home exercise 4.

July 27. Carnegie Museum visit.

The goal of this class is to apply our understanding of nature and race to the museum displays. We will meet in the classroom and walk over together.

Note:

Pens are not allowed in the galleries, but pencils are fine. Book bags are not allowed in the galleries, but for \$.50 you can check them in a locker. (Small purses held in front of your body are permitted.)

Homework:

Read the following chapter from the Brettell book for the 1st.

- Richard R. Brettell, "Nationalism and Internationalism in Modern Art," in *Modern Art, 1851-1929: Capitalism and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) pp. 197-210.

August 1. Nation and art.

The goal of this class is to examine how modern art has sometimes supported and at other times resisted nationalist movements. To help us determine what questions art historians ask about nationhood we will also watch a documentary about the Nazi exhibition "Degenerate Art."

Due:

At-home exercise 5.

Homework:

Write your evaluation of group participation.

August 3. Capstone.

To end the course we will watch and analyze Andy Warhol's movie *Blood for Dracula*. This is a complex film that can be interpreted using any of the theories discussed during the term.

Due:

Evaluation of group participation.