COURSE OVERVIEW

This course presents an overview of modern visual art of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. We will survey most of the important modernist art movements between 1860-1960: Realism, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, German Expressionism, Cubism, Dada and Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, and Pop Art. Class lectures, discussions, and readings will focus primarily on the ideas and works of individual artists, but we will also consider questions related to cultural studies: How have ideas about racial, ethnic, and gender identities shaped artists' works and careers? How have the visual arts related to other contemporary cultural developments in literature, music, and theater, or intellectual concepts and politics?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe the general characteristics of the most important modern art movements.
- Discuss the lives and describe the style and subjects of the works of many of the most important modern artists.
- Associate works of modern art with specific modern art movements based on the style and subject of the works.
- Conduct research about modern works of art.
- Recognize and think critically about various art historical approaches to modern art.
- Recognize the relationship of the visual arts to other aspects of modern culture.
- Analyze and write about the style and subjects of modern works of art.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

• Required Readings
  Textbooks: On sale at the Campus bookstore
  Required: Herschel Chipp, ed. *Theories of Modern Art* (1968) (anthology of artists’ writings)
  Reference: On sale at the Campus bookstore
  Other Required Readings: Available as E-reserves on Blackboard. See below under Web Resources for how to access the Blackboard site for this class.

• Check Announcements: Check the Announcements section on Blackboard regularly for the latest news relating to the course. The syllabus is subject to change.

• Attend Class: Regular attendance is absolutely necessary to do well in this course. You must sign in at each class meeting. If you have more than three unexcused absences, your grade will drop by a full letter. This course is always oversubscribed, and if you don’t attend regularly, you are depriving someone else of the opportunity to take the course.

• Turn Off Cell Phone:
  Our classroom is a cell phone-free space! Please remember to turn your cell phone off before class. You may not leave class to make or receive a call, and please wait to check messages until class is over! If you sit in the back and play with personal electronic equipment rather than paying attention to class lecture/discussions, you will have to see the professor after class for permission to return to the next class meeting.

• Take good notes: It is very important to take careful and complete notes in class. Material presented in the lectures, discussions, and videos will be required for exams, as well as readings from the textbook and e-reserves. Good notes will facilitate a good grade.

• Discuss in Class: Participation in class discussions is required and worth 5% of your grade. You will not be able to participate if you do not do the required readings!

• Discuss Online: Participation online is required and worth 5% of your grade. Discussion Forum Topics will be offered with each Unit. You are required to respond to the two
Discussion Forum Topics for Unit 1. You are also required to respond to any 15 Discussion Forum Topics offered in Unit 2 through Unit 27. You may also earn .5 points for each additional Discussion Forum Post, up to 5 points, which will be added to your final grade. These extra credit posts may include responses to the posts of your classmates. LATE POSTS WILL NOT BE COUNTED.

All posts must be:

1) Signed with your full name
2) Respectful of others’ views
3) Written in Standard English with attention to proper grammar, diction, spelling, and capitalization
4) No longer than 150 words

Suggestion: Write out your answer in a document first, then cut and paste it into Discussion Forum section of the Blackboard site.

• **Take Exams:** There will be two exams, a mid-term and a final. The final will only cover material from the second half of the semester. Both exams will be open-book take-home format, with essay questions and terms. No memorization, but an emphasis on understanding important concepts about artworks and stylistic movements.

  **Exam timing:** Make-up exams can only be given in case of documented illness or other emergency. To merit a make-up exam, you must contact the professor by email or leave a message on her voice-mail (301.706.6117) before the scheduled test.

  If you have special requirements for taking exams, please have this confirmed through the AU Academic Support Services Center and consult with the professor at least three weeks before the scheduled exam (this is not usually necessary with take-home exams).

• **Write two short papers.** These papers comprise 35% of your grade for the course, so be sure you understand the paper assignments and talk to the professor if you have questions.

• **Visit Museums:** You must attend museums at least once during the semester to complete the course paper requirements. Washington, D.C. is one the greatest cities in the world to see Modern Art and almost all the museums are FREE! Enjoy this fabulous opportunity!

• **Participate in and report on the Washington Arts Scene:** This is optional! The professor will regularly post information on the class blog about notable Modern and Contemporary art exhibitions and installations at museum and gallery sites around town and about special events you may attend such as opening receptions, artist and curator talks, films, and lectures. You are also invited to post announcements and reviews of events.
COURSE WEB RESOURCES

- **Blackboard**: The web-based course delivery system used by most professors at American University. From our class Blackboard site you can access an online copy of the syllabus, handouts, the required articles for the course that are not in the textbook, the professor’s blog, the discussion forum, and other information and materials related to the course. To reach our Blackboard site, go to https://blackboard.american.edu, which will give you the log-in page. Log in with your AU ID and password. If you have any problem accessing the site or these materials, please contact the professor, 301.496.0404.

- **Group Email**: You will be automatically registered on the Blackboard class email list using your AU email address. If this is not the address you normally check, be sure to forward your AU email to your other account (Yahoo, Hotmail, AOL, etc). To find out how to do this, go to my.american.edu, then look in the Technology section for forwarding instructions.

- **MDID Image Website**: This course is taught using a digital image projection system called MDID (Madison Digital Image Database). You will have access to all the images shown in class on an MDID student website. To get to the website, use http://mdid.american.edu. This system requires password protection because of copyright requirements. **User ID: student** [just this word, not your name] **Password: Leonardo**

- **On-Line Research Resources**:
  **Grove Art On Line**
  This is the on-line equivalent of the multi-volume *Grove Dictionary of Art*. It includes entries on many aspects of the visual arts from prehistory through the present, including artist biographies.
  **Art Abstracts, Artbibliographies Modern, and Bibliography of Modern Art**
  These databases provide citations and abstracts of articles about art history.
  **J-Stor**
  Provides full-text back issues of core journals in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences.
  *You must cite digital sources just as you would a printed source!*

GRADING SYSTEM
Grade percentage formula:
Mid-term exam 25%
Collection Spotlight/Short research paper 15%
Art Acquisition/Short research paper 20%
Discussion in Class 5%
17 Online Discussion Forum Posts 5%
Final exam 30%

Extra credit:
Earn .5 points for each additional Discussion Forum Post, up to 5 points,
to be added to final average

Explanation of Grade Standards:
A = excellent understanding of the topic/question, an insightful and thoughtful response to the material covered, goes beyond basic limits of assignment, persuasive and logical argumentation, and no typographical or grammatical errors.
B = competent understanding of the topic/question, adequate grasp of information, logical argument, possibly a few organizational problems or grammatical errors, but shows overall coherence in discussion and has few or no problems with grammar or typing.
C = meets minimum requirements of the assignment but reveals superficial preparation through problems with factual information (omissions or errors) and logical argument, and may have grammatical and/or typographical errors.
D = inadequate work, does not follow directions, poor use of resources, serious writing problems
F = work not turned in or does not match assignment requirements

Note: The schedule and the requirements for this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.
FULFILLING GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

This course, **ARTH 210: Modern Art**, is part of the General Education Curriculum. It is one of the second-level General Education courses in Curricular Area I: The Creative Arts. If you are taking Modern Art for General Education credit, you should have already taken one of the following first-tier courses:

- ARTS 100 Art: The Studio Experience
- ARTH 105 Art: The Historical Experience
- COMM 105 Visual Literacy
- PERF 110 Understanding Music

**ARTH 210, Modern Art**, is also a prerequisite for several of the upper-level art history courses for majors and minors in Art History.
COURSE CALENDAR: LECTURE TOPICS AND REQUIRED READINGS

MA = Modern Art textbook
Chipp = Theories of Modern Art anthology of readings
BB = readings on E-reserves on Blackboard
SW = Strunk and White
DF = Discussion Forum
DFT = Discussion Forum Topic

Unit 1: Introduction
Tuesday, January 13

DF: Respond to Unit 1 DFTs by January 16 REQUIRED!!
PAPER 1 ASSIGNED

Unit 2: Courbet and Realism
Friday, January 16

SW: Elementary Rules of Usage 1
DF: Respond to Unit 2 DFTs by January 23.
BB: Optional: Frederick Gore, “Introduction,” in Painting: Some Basic Principles (Studio Vista, 1965): 6-20. (Particularly recommended if this is your first art history course.)

NO CLASS – INAUGURATION DAY
Tuesday, January 20

Unit 3 Realism, Daumier and Millet
Friday, January 23

BB: Chu 2003: “Progress, Modernity, and Modernism—French Visual Culture during the
Second Empire, 1852-70,” 259-291.


**SW:** Elementary Rules of Usage 2

**DF:** Respond to Unit 3 DFTs by January 27.

---

**Unit 4  Manet and Salon des Refusés**

**Tuesday, January 27**

**MA:** Chapter 1 – Modernism and Its Origins in the 19th Century


**SW:** Elementary Rules of Usage 3

**DF:** Respond to Unit 4 DFTs by January 30.

---

**Unit 5  Impressionism and Landscape – Monet, Pissaro**

**Friday, January 30**


**SW:** Elementary Rules of Usage 4

**DF:** Respond to Unit 5 DFTs by February 3.

---

**Unit 6  Impressionism and Society – Cassatt and Renoir**

**Tuesday, February 3**


**SW:** Elementary Rules of Usage 5

**DF:** Respond to Unit 6 DFTs by February 6.
Unit 7  Impressionism -- Degas and Cézanne
Friday, February 6

MA: Chapter 2 – Seurat, Cézanne, and the Language of Structure
SW: Elementary Rules of Usage 6
DF: Respond to Unit 7 DFTs by February 10.

Unit 8  Neo-Impressionism – Seurat and Post-Impressionism -- van Gogh
Tuesday, February 10

MA: Chapter 3 – Gauguin, van Gogh, and the Language of Vision
SW: Elementary Rules of Usage 7
DF: Respond to Unit 8 DFTs by February 13.
Optional: Chipp, Post-Impressionism: Van Gogh: 24-28, 29-35

Unit 9  Post-Impressionism -- Gauguin and the Nabi
Friday, February 13

SW: Elementary Rules of Usage 8
DF: Respond to Unit 9 DFTs by February 17.
Optional: Chipp, Gauguin: 48-52, 58-66

Unit 10 Rodin and Klimt  PAPER 1 DUE!
Tuesday, February 17

MA: Chapter 4 – Art Nouveau in Painting and Design
MA: Chapter 5 – Rodin: 61-67
**Unit 11 Matisse and The Fauves**

**Friday, February 20**

**MA:** Chapter 7 – Expressionism in France: Matisse and the Fauves

**BB:** Gill Perry, "The decorative, the expressive and the primitive," in Harrison et al., *Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction. The Early Twentieth Century* (Yale University Press, 1993): 46-61

**Chipp:** Vlaminck, 144-145.

**Chipp:** Matisse: 130-137

**SW:** Elementary Rules of Usage 10

**DF:** Respond to Unit 11 **DFTs** by February 24.

---

**Unit 12 German Expressionism -- Munch, Kirchner, and Die Brücke (The Bridge) Group**

**Tuesday, February 24**

**MA:** Chapter 8 – Expressionism in Germany: The Bridge: 101-117.


**SW:** Elementary Rules of Usage 11

**DF:** Respond to Unit 12 **DFTs** by February 27

---

**Unit 13 Cubism: Picasso and Braque**

**Friday, February 27**

**Video:** “New Ways of Seeing: Picasso, Braque, and the Cubist Revolution” (VHS 1761) Screened in Class – Professor at Conference

**MA:** Chapter 9 – The Cubist Revolution: Braque and Picasso


**SW:** Elementary Principles of Composition 12

**DF:** Respond to Unit 13 **DFTs** by March 3
Unit 14  Cubism
Tuesday, March 3


**Chipp:** Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger, from “Cubism” (1912), part IV: 214-216.


**SW:** Elementary Principles of Composition 13

**DF:** Respond to Unit 14 DTSs by March 6.

Unit 15  German Expressionism -- Kandinsky, Marc, and Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider)
Group, Modersohn-Becker
Friday, March 6

**MA:** Chapter 8 -- Expressionism in Germany: The Blue Rider 117-122


*Optional:* Chipp: Kirchner: 174-178, Kandinsky: 152-157, 168-170; Marc: 178-179


**SW:** Elementary Principles of Composition 14

**DF:** Respond to Unit 15 DFTs by March 17

**SPRING BREAK – Saturday March 7 – Sunday March 15**

Unit 16  Other Cubists
Tuesday, March 17

**MA:** Chapter 10 – From Cubism to Abstract Art: Futurism: 147-152.

**SW:** Elementary Principles of Composition 15

**DF:** Respond to Unit 16 DFTs by March 20.

**MID-TERM EXAM ASSIGNED**

Unit 17  Futurism
Friday, March 20

**MA:** Chapter 10 – From Cubism to Abstract Art: Futurism: 152-156.


**SW:** Elementary Principles of Composition 16

**DF:** Respond to Unit 17 DFTs by March 14.

Unit 18 De Stijl

Tuesday, March 24

**MA:** Chapter 10 – From Cubism to Abstract Art: 156-end.


**SW:** Elementary Principles of Composition 17

**DF:** Respond to Unit 18 DFTs by March 27.

Unit 19 Russian Avant Garde **MID-TERM EXAM DUE!**

Friday, March 27

**MA:** Chapter 10 – From Cubism to Abstract Art: Futurism: 160-162.


**SW:** Elementary Principles of Composition 18

**DF:** Respond to Unit 19 DFTs by March 31.

Unit 20 Modern Sculpture, Brancusi, and Boccioni

Tuesday, March 31

**MA:** Chapter 5 – Early Modern Sculpture to Brancusi, 67-80.


**SW:** Elementary Principles of Composition 19

**DF:** Respond to Unit 20 DFTs by April 3.

Unit 21 Early Modernism in America and the Armory Show
Tuesday, April 3


**MA:** Chapter 16 – American Art in the Wake of the Armory Show

**SW:** Elementary Principles of Composition 20

**DF:** Respond to Unit 21 DFTs by April 7.

---

**Unit 22 Fantasy – De Chirico, Rousseau, Chagall and Dada**

Friday, April 3

**MA:** Chapter 11 – Fantastic Art and Dada


**SW:** Elementary Principles of Composition 21

**DF:** Respond to Unit 22 DFTs by April 10.

---

**Unit 23 Surrealism**

Friday, April 10

**MA:** Chapter 12 – Surrealism: The Resolution of Dream and Reality


**SW:** Elementary Principles of Composition 22

**DF:** Respond to Unit 23 DFTs by April 14.

---

**Unit 24 Surrealism PAPER 2 DUE**

Tuesday, April 14


**SW:** A Few Matters of Form

**DF:** Respond to Unit 24 DFTs by April 17.
Unit 25 The School of Paris and Later Matisse
Friday, April 17

MA: Chapter 14 – The School of Paris: 215-223
SW: Words and Expressions Commonly Misused p. 39 – 44.

DF: Respond to Unit 25 DFTs by April 21.

Unit 26 Later Picasso and Miró
Tuesday, April 21

MA: Chapter 14 – Picasso, Miró and School of Paris: 223-233
Chipp: Picasso on Guernica: 487-489
SW: Words and Expressions Commonly Misused p. 45-49.
DF: Respond to Unit 26 DFTs by April 24.

Unit 27 Abstract Expressionism
Friday April 24

MA: Chapter 17 –The New York School: Abstract Expressionism
SW: Words and Expressions Commonly Misused p. 50-56.
DF: Respond to Unit 27 DFTs by April 28.

Unit 28 Johns, Rauschenberg, Warhol
Tuesday, April 28

MA: Chapter 19 – American Art of the Sixties: Pop Art, 298-308

**BB:** Leo Steinberg, “Contemporary Art and the Plight of its Public” (1962) in *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art* (Oxford University Press, 1972): 3-16.

**SW:** Words and Expressions Commonly Misused p. 57-65.

**Take-Home Final Due: TBA**
Assignment #1: Collection Spotlight 15%
Length: 3 pages, typed, double-spaced, not to exceed 750 words.
Due Friday, February 17, 12:30 pm

For your paper, you will be the art writer for the local on-line newspaper, the *Washington Rag.*
Each week you write about two works in the permanent collection in one of Washington’s
museums that are related in some way: they are by the same artist, but from different periods OR
they are by two different artists who represent the same subject in a similar styles. This week,
you may choose a pair of works from the Realist, Impressionist, or Post-Impressionist paintings or
sculptures at the National Gallery of Art, Phillips Collection, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Walters
Museum of Art, or Baltimore Museum of Art. In your column, you always include the following
information:

1. The artists, titles, dates, medium and the EXACT location of the pictures
2. The reason why you chose the two works – what makes this pair interesting to consider?
3. Information about artist or artists involved, including their nationality and birthdates, the
name of the artist’s style, and a brief summary of the characteristics of that style
4. A brief description of each of the works, comparing and contrasting details
5. A reproduction of each work. A photograph of yourself next to each of the works is ideal if
   the museum permits photography in the galleries.
Assignment #2: Acquisition Proposal  20%
Length: 5 pages, typed, double-spaced, not to exceed 1,250 words.
Due: April 24, 2:30 pm

For your paper, you will adopt the persona of a very insightful art curator, recommending an acquisition for the Great Museum of Art of any work of modern art by any artist covered in this course.

As this perceptive, knowledgeable, and persuasive curator, your job will be to convey to members of the Acquisition Committee the importance of the artist and this particular work by describing the style or the work, identifying its subject of the work, summarizing artist’s contribution to the history of modern art, and relating this particular work to what makes the artist significant. You should say how this work might be used to serve the museum’s public, for example for an exhibition or museum publication on a particular topic or for an educational program. Submit on an “Acquisition Proposal Form” (an example is attached; you may create your own) and attach an image of the work.

If you absolutely hate doing this kind of writing, you can write a more traditional research-style report on the artist, presenting the same kinds of information.

For either version, you must use parenthetical citation for any quotes (put the author’s name and page number or author name and website address in a parenthesis) and you must list your sources in a bibliography at the end of your paper. You must have at least three different sources, from the library or the web.
GREAT MUSEUM OF ART
Acquisition Proposal Form
due: April 24, 2009

Name of Work:
Artist:
Date:
Medium:

Description:

Significance of the Artist:

Significance of the Work:

How this Work May Be Used to Serve the Public:

Curator:
Date:
A WARNING ABOUT PLAGIARISM

Please be very careful when you are using sources for your paper to turn the original words into your own phrases and sentences. Do not copy any sequences of words without using quote marks and giving credit to the author. Do not copy an author’s IDEAS without giving credit even if you don’t use exact quotes! Turn the ideas you read into your own phrasing unless you are quoting exactly.

Read the following information about plagiarism and be very careful to avoid any aspect of this intellectual crime! If you turn in a plagiarized paper, it will result in an automatic grade of F (zero credit) for that project and possibly for the whole course. American University has an Academic Integrity Code that forbids cheating and plagiarism. When you register for courses at AU, you accept these rules.

Plagiarism can take several forms. The most dangerous is copying someone else’s paper and turning it in as your own work. Please understand that most professors can tell when someone turns in written work that is plagiarized from a scholarly source, or from a sophisticated text on the Internet. Last semester, with very little difficulty, I caught two students plagiarizing papers from Internet sources. DON’T TRY IT! If you do this, I am required to turn you in to the AU administration for cheating and you will receive an F for the course.

Plagiarism also includes misusing an author’s words or ideas in a more localized context. You may never quote an author’s exact words without citing your source. Changing one or two words and then using the rest of someone else’s written text is also plagiarism. Even using an innovative idea from an author without citing the source is plagiarism. Don’t be tempted: all these actions are unacceptable and professors can usually tell when writing doesn’t sound like student work.

Be careful when you are taking notes that you clearly distinguish between the source’s words and your own synthesis of ideas from what you are reading. Even though I may know the sources you are using, such as our textbook, you still have to cite quotations and attribute significant ideas properly. This kind of plagiarism, even if it seems to be accidental, will still earn you an F for the project and substantially pull down your grade for the course.
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING ON MODERN ART MOVEMENTS

For most individual artists, you can find books and information by looking up their names in Aladin. This very partial list suggests a place to start for further reading with books on artistic styles and movements, and on theories of aesthetic ideas and social history.

**Realism:**
Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (1971)
*The Cult of Images: Baudelaire and the 19th-Century Media Explosion* (1977)

**Impressionism:**

**Post-Impressionism:**
John Rewald, *Post-Impressionism* (1956)

**Fauvism:**

**German Expressionism:**
Peter Selz, *German Expressionist Painting* (1957)
Charles Harrison et al., *Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction. The Early Twentieth Century* (1993)
Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1947)

**Cubism:**
Charles Harrison et al., *Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction. The Early Twentieth Century* (1993)
Robert Rosenblum, *Cubism and Twentieth Century Art*

**Dada and Surrealism:**
William Rubin, *Dada and Surrealist Art* (1968)
Briony Fer et al., *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art Between the Wars* (1993)
Calvin Tomkins, *The World of Marcel Duchamp* (1966)

**Abstract Expressionism:**

**Pop Art and Politics**
Sidra Stich, *Made in U.S.A. An Americanization in Modern Art. The ’50s and ’60s* (1987)
Harriet Senie and Sally Webster, eds., *Critical Issues in Public Art* (1992)

**Diverse Voices in the Late 20th Century:**
Emmanuel Cooper, *The Sexual Perspective: Homosexuality and Art in the Last 100 Years in the West* (1986)
*The Decade Show. Frameworks of Identity in the 1980s* (1990)
MUSEUMS IN THE WASHINGTON METRO AREA
WITH COLLECTIONS OF MODERN ART

All these museums show important works of modern art. They all have great websites too, so check them out for information and directions and go visit some art in person!

On the Mall:
The National Gallery of Art, Constitution Ave. between 7th and 4th Street NW
   West Building (pre-20th century Impressionism and Post-Impressionism) and East Building (20th Century modern and postmodern art), and new Sculpture Garden
The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, 7th St. and Independence Ave., SW (south of mall)
Art Museum of the Americas, 201 18th Street NW (Latin American art)
Museum of African Art, 12th Street and Independence Ave SW (mostly underground!)

(The Viet Nam Veterans Memorial is also on the mall near 22nd Street and Constitution Ave. NW)

Elsewhere in DC:
The National Museum of American Art, 8th and G Streets NW (closed until July 2005)
The Corcoran Gallery, 17th Street and New York Ave. NW
The National Museum of Women in the Arts, 1250 New York Ave. NW
The Phillips Collection, 1600 21st Street NW (north of Mass. Ave near Dupont Circle)
Museum of Contemporary Art of Latin America, 18th Street just north of Constitution Ave.
The Kreeger Museum, Foxhall Road NW (by appointment only)

In Baltimore:
The Walters Art Museum, 600 N. Charles Street in downtown Baltimore
The Baltimore Museum of Art, near Johns Hopkins University on University Avenue
The Visionary Art Museum, 800 Key Highway (get directions on the website)