

Brooklyn College
Spring 2018
ARTD.1010/MWEA (Mondays and Wednesdays 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM)
Boylan 5145

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ARTD.1010 – Art: Its History and Meaning

Overview:

This course introduces students to the visual arts, applied arts, and architecture of the world from the ancient to postwar periods. Our goal will be less to gain a proper “introduction” to art history than to understand how images and things construct culture *as such*. Through thematic lectures, frequent short writing assignments, in-class activities, and free museum visits, we’ll explore how aesthetic form can shape historical dynamics such as political sovereignty, religious belief, cultural identity, senses of temporality, publics and audiences, understandings of the body, capitalism, and the ontological status of objects.

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus in order to accommodate class needs. These changes will be announced.

Evaluation:

Students will be expected to read all assigned material and come to class prepared to participate in discussion. Evaluation will consist of five, 500-word writing assignments and a final exam. One of these essays will require a visit to a museum in New York City, and another will require you to visit an architectural site in the city. The final grade will also factor in student participation and attendance.

Each writing assignment tackles a different skill regarding a specific work of art; the first asks students to conduct a close formal analysis of a work of art that they’ve seen in person; the second will ask students to contextualize a piece of contemporary art; the third will have students visiting and describing one example of architecture in New York; the fourth will be a comparison between two works; and the fifth, an analysis of a scholarly article on various topics. More detailed instructions regarding these assignments will be conveyed as the semester progresses.

To encourage a relaxed and habitual attitude toward writing, the writing assignments will be graded casually and generously. *However, no late work will be accepted.* The

objective is to get you to practice writing while enforcing and developing academic skills and discipline.

The final exam will be cumulative for the entire semester. It will last 80 minutes and consist of four 20-minute questions. It will consist of three comparisons, each with formal, historical, and architectural prompts. For the fourth question, students will be supplied with a theme, around which they'll have to *bring in examples from our class*. The test will be open-note, so it is crucial students develop note-taking skills in this class.

To enforce the successful completion of readings, two students at random will be asked to comment on assigned texts for each session. A “research question” will be provided to guide students’ reading before that reading’s lecture.

Attendance will be measured sporadically to evaluate attendance, through role call or collected, in-class assignments. *Coming to class more than 15 minutes late will be considered an absence.* The final participation grade will be a holistic consideration of attendance, participation in class, consultation in office hours, and related activities.

Grading will follow a standard CUNY scale (A+: 97 - 100%; A: 93 - 96%; A-: 90 - 92%; B+: 87 - 89%; B: 83 - 86%; B-: 80 - 82%; etc.).

- Assignments: 50% of the grade (10% each)
- Final Exam: 40% of the grade (10% each)
- Participation: 10% of the grade

Students can receive extra-credit for attending scholarly lectures and other academic programs throughout the semester on visual art and architecture, including those at Brooklyn College. I recommend you look up events held at the Institute of Fine Arts, part of New York University. Students can receive one point if they write a 500-word description of the event’s content and provide some proof of attendance, such as a signature or picture. Potential extra-credit events should be run by me first.

Class Content:

Each lecture will connect a specific moment in the history of art and architecture to a broad, transhistorical theme, such as “Propaganda,” “Temporality,” and “Audience.” These topics will help us situate the particular art under analysis in larger issues and even present-day cultural concerns.

It will be crucial that students take notes through-out the lecture. For proof of attendance in the beginning of the semester, students must show me their notes from the previous session.

Readings will all be available online: students do not need to purchase anything. They will be primary sources from the period and culture under analysis, expository essays outlining one aspect of our lecture, or even a contemporary news article tying in our

theme to the present day. Sometimes, readings will be drawn from difficult, even obscure sources, yet it is crucial students attempt to engage with these texts and figure out what they might be saying.

Classroom Courtesy:

To develop a beneficial pedagogical environment, three rather strict rules will be enforced:

1. *Computers are not allowed at any point during class:* they not only distract your classmates but discourage the close, sustained looking required for each session.
2. *Cell phones are not allowed on desks during lecture:* there is no reason you need your cell phone on your desk during lecture. While I will not police phone use during class, constant use will affect your participation grade.
3. *Students must sit on the left-hand side of the classroom:* because of the unique architecture of the classroom, students must sit on the left-hand side of the classroom, near the podium.

You are welcome to speak with me if any of these rules pose an issue for you.

Cheating and Plagiarism:

Brooklyn College has adopted the following policy on academic integrity:

“The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for policy implementation can be found at www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member **MUST** report the violation.”

For our writing assignments, the copying or excessive quotation of online material will result in a lower grade.

Accommodation:

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services (CSDS). Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at 718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the CSDS please provide me with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with me as is most comfortable for you.

CUNY Policy Statement:

It is the policy of the City University of New York and the constituent colleges and units of the university to recruit, employ, retain, promote, and provide benefits to employees and to admit and provide services to students without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, legally registered domestic partnership, disability, predisposing genetic characteristics, [HIV-status,] alienage, citizenship, military or veteran status, or status as a victim of domestic violence.

Sexual harassment, a form of sex discrimination, is prohibited under the university's Policy Against Sexual Harassment.

Non-Attendance Because of Religious Beliefs:

The New York State Education Law provides that no student shall be expelled or refused admission to an institution of higher education because he or she is unable to attend classes or participate in examinations or study or work requirements on any particular day or days because of religious beliefs. Students who are unable to attend classes on a particular day or days because of religious beliefs will be excused from any examination or study or work requirements. Faculty must make good-faith efforts to provide students absent from class because of religious beliefs equivalent opportunities to make up the work missed; no additional fees may be charged for this consideration.

Schedule and Readings:

- January 29: ***Class Overview, Study Skills, Analysis Methods***
- January 31: The Elements of Style
- Marjorie Munsterberg, "Formal Analysis," 2008-9.
- February 5: Propaganda: Ancient Mesopotamian Art
- Alastair Sooke, "Can Propaganda Be Great Art?" *BBC*, 2014.
- February 7: Eternity: Ancient Egyptian Art
- Chapters 6, 23, 26, and 43 of the Book of the Dead, ca. 1550 – 50 BCE.
- February 12: ***No class: Lincoln's birthday***
- February 14: ***Formal Analysis due***
Visit to Brooklyn Museum for Ancient Egypt collection
- February 19: ***No class: President's Day***

- February 20: ***Tuesday: follows Monday schedule***
Idealism: Ancient Greek Sculpture
 - David Macintosh, "Plato: A Theory of Forms," *Philosophy Now*, 2012.
- February 21: Idealism: Ancient Greek Architecture
 - "Polyclitus's *Canon* and the Idea of *Symmetria*," n.d.
- February 26: Corporeality: Hindu and South Asian Art
 - Vatsayana, Part II, Chapter 1 of the *Kama Sutra*, ca. 400 BCE – 200 CE.
- February 28: Society: Ancient Roman Sculpture and Architecture
 - Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, Book V, 30 – 15 BCE.
- March 5: Representation: Ancient Roman Wall Painting
 - Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, Book VII, Chapter 5, 30 – 15 BCE.
- March 7: ***Historical Analysis due***
Program: Early Christian and Jewish Art
 - Galerius and Constantine, "Edicts of Toleration," 311 and 313 CE.
- March 12: Iconoclasm: Byzantine Art
 - John of Damascus, from *Apologia Against Those Who Decry Holy Images*, ca. 726 CE.
- March 14: Theatricality: Indigenous Mesoamerican Art
 - Second letter of Hernan Cortés to Charles V, 1520 CE.
- March 19: Transformation: Kwakwaka'wakw Art
 - "Origin of the Seahawks Logo: The Story Unfolds," Burke Museum, 2015 CE.
- March 21: ***No class due to weather***
- March 26: Audience: Romanesque Art
 - Christine M. Bolli, "Pilgrimage Routes and the Cult of the Relic," *Smarthistory.org*, n. d.
- March 28: ***Comparison Analysis Due***
Guest lecture by Adam Levine
Luxury: Gothic Art
- April 2 – 4: ***No class: Spring Recess***
- April 9: Ornamentation: Islamic Art

- Terry Allen, from “Aniconicism and Figural Representation in Islamic Art,” 1988 CE.

April 11: ***No class: Friday schedule***

April 16: Purity: Shinto Architecture

- “Soul of Japan: An Introduction to Shinto and Ise Jingu,” Jingu Administration Office, 2013 CE.

April 18: ***Architectural Analysis due***

Abstraction: Song Dynasty Painting

- Maxwell K. Hearn, “Chinese Painting,” 2008 CE.

April 23: Convention: Italian Renaissance

- Leon Battista Alberti, from *On Painting*, 1434 CE.

April 25: Emotion: Italian Baroque

- Tridentine Creed, 1564 CE.

April 30: Medium: Photography

- *Camera Work* 14, pp. 17, 33-43, 1906 CE.

May 2: Temporality: French Impressionism

- Jules Castagnary, “The Exhibition on the Boulevard des Capucines,” 1874 CE.

May 7: Critique: Dada

- Tristan Tzara, “Dada Manifesto,” 1918 CE.

May 9: ***Article Analysis due***

Visit to Brooklyn Museum for “Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985” exhibition

May 14: Reduction: The International Style

- Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, introduction to *The International Style*, 1932 CE.

May 16: ***No class – Professor Henry away***

May 17: ***Final Exam – 10:00 AM***