

## **TEN WORKS OF WESTERN ART: Syllabus**

### Description:

*Canon: a set of artistic works established as genuine and complete.*

This course will consist of close encounters with ten great works of art from the modern Western tradition (i.e. Europe, Britain and the U.S. from the 14<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries). Instead of a Renaissance-to-modern survey, we will delve deeply into each of the ten works that will form our “canon,” chosen both for their extraordinariness and for their capacity to represent different times and places, different media, different themes and different purposes. Along the way we will ask what makes these works “genuine and complete,” extraordinary and/or representative, and debate whether or not they properly belong in our “canon.” We will also address the changing notions of what art is and what functions it fulfills. Each of these ten works of art will be looked at in relation to relevant art objects in Yale’s collections (and once in the Metropolitan Museum in New York), as well as corollary works of poetry, literature and film. This will be done through readings, seminar discussions, close looking, presentations in the galleries, and three short (3-5 pp.) and one longer (10 pp.) close looking and research papers. By the end of the five-week session, each of the students in the class will form their own canon of ten works, and argue for it according to their own values, reasoning, and judgment, and their own rules of quality, range and comprehensiveness, “genuineness” and “completeness.”

### Books suggested for purchase:

Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida  
Michael Baxandall, Painting and Experience in 15<sup>th</sup> Century Italy  
Norman Bryson, Looking at the Overlooked  
Bradford Collins, 12 Views of Manet’s Bar  
Michel Foucault, The Order of Things  
Lawrence Gowing, Vermeer  
William Ivins, Prints and Visual Communication  
Rosalind Krauss, Bachelors  
Wolfgang Schivelbusch, The Railway Journey  
Edward Snow, Inside Bruegel (available on Kindle)

## **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

### **July 3: Giotto’s Arena Chapel, fresco.**

Read: Michael Baxandall, Painting and Experience in 15<sup>th</sup> Century Italy, chapter 1  
Cennino d’Andrea Cennini, The Craftsman’s Handbook, selection  
Michel Pastoureau, Blue: The History of a Colour, consult  
Giorgio Vasari, “The Life of Giotto...,” The Lives of the Artists

**July 5: Pieter Bruegel's Children's Games.**

**Visit to Art Gallery to look at early Italian as well as 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> century Northern works.**

Read: W. H. Auden, "Musée des Beaux Arts"

Edward Snow, Inside Bruegel: A Play of Images in Children's Games, selection

William Carlos Williams, "Pictures from Bruegel"

**July 10: Jan Vermeer's Girl with a Pearl Earring.**

**Watch film.**

Read: Tracy Chevalier, Girl with a Pearl Earring, suggested

Lawrence Gowing, Vermeer, selection

Edward Snow, A Study of Vermeer, selection

**July 12: Diego Velazquez's Las Meninas.**

**Visit to Art Gallery to look at portraits.**

Read: Michel Foucault, The Order of Things, selection

Enriqueta Harris, Velazquez, consult

First short paper due.

**July 17: Jean Siméon Chardin's The Ray.**

Read: Carol Armstrong, Still Lives, selection

Denis Diderot, Salons, selections

Norman Bryson, Looking at the Overlooked, selection

**July 19: Francisco y Lucientes Goya's The Disasters of War, print series.**

**Visit to Art Gallery's print collection.**

Read: William Ivins, Prints and Visual Communication (or R. Benson, The Printed Picture)

A.E.P. Sanchez & J. Gallego, Goya: The Complete Etchings and Lithographs, consult

Second short paper due.

**July 24: J.M.W. Turner's Rain, Steam and Speed.**

**Visit to Yale Center for British Art.**

Read: John Gage, Turner: Rain, Steam, and Speed, selections

Wolfgang Schivelbush, The Railway Journey, selections

**July 26: Edouard Manet's Bar at the Folies-Bergères.**

**Visit to Art Gallery to look at Manet's Young Woman Reclining in Spanish Costume.**

Read: Carol Armstrong, Manet Manette, selection

Bradford Collins, ed., 12 Views of Manet's Bar, selections

Third short paper due.

Weekend visit to Metropolitan Museum of Art

**July 31: Eva Hesse's Contingent, sculpture.**

**Visit to Art Gallery to look at Hesse's work and abstract painting and sculpture.**

Read: Rosalind Krauss, Bachelors, selection

Linda Nochlin, Women, Art, and Power, selection

**August 2: Zoe Leonard's Analogue, photographs.**  
**Visit to Art Gallery's photographic collection.**  
Read: Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida.

Final paper due following week.

**TEN WORKS OF WESTERN ART**

List of Works:

1. Giotto di Bondone (1267-1337, Italian), Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padova, fresco, 1305
2. Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525-1569, Flemish), Children's Games, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, oil on oakwood, 118 x 61 cm., 1560
3. Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675, Dutch), Girl with a Pearl Earring, Mauritshuis, The Hague, oil on canvas, 46.5 x 40 cm., 1665
4. Diego Velázquez, (1599-1660, Spanish), Las Meniñas (The Maids of Honor), The Prado, Madrid, oil on canvas, 278 x 318 cm., c. 1656
5. Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin (1699-1779, French), The Ray, The Louvre, Paris, oil on canvas, 114.5 x 146 cm., 1726
6. Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes(1746-1828, Spanish), Disasters of War, etching, aquatint and drypoint, 82 plates, 1810-1820
7. Joseph Mallord William Turner (English, 1775-1851), Rain, Steam and Speed: The Great Western Railway, National Gallery, London, oil on canvas, 91 x 121.8 cm., 1844
8. Eugène Manet (1832-188, French), The Bar at the Folies-Bergère, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London, oil on canvas, 96 x 130 cm., 1882
9. Eva Hesse (1936-1970, American), Contingent, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, fiberglass, latex and cheesecloth, 350 x 630 x 109 cm., 1969
10. Zoe Leonard (American, b. 1961), Analogue, Museum of Modern Art, NY, 412 C-prints and gelatin silver prints, 1998-2007