Introduction to a Global History of Art: Renaissance to the Present

Yale College Summer Session 2021  
History of Art Department  
Session B: July 12 – August 13  
Monday and Wednesday, 1 – 4:15pm

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

This course surveys the history of art from the Renaissance to the present, beginning from the work of Raphael through to the work of contemporary African-American artist Kara Walker. It will encompass works across a wide range of mediums, including painting, sculpture, prints, photography, architecture, and the moving image. While there is a prominence of artists and works from Europe and the Americas, this course does not take for granted the Euro-American traditions of art as the nucleus of culture and civilization through the ages. Rather, it considers the visual cultural exchanges between Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa, keeping in mind that geographic borders were always permeable. Themes will include: the changing role of the artist over time, the concept of distinct art historical periods, and the power that images and objects have in enunciating and evoking social, economic, and technological development. Students will be familiarized with the practices of close looking, visual analysis, and art historical research. This course is designed to be taught virtually but will make extensive use of objects in Yale collections, which can be examined in person by students who are on campus (pending museum re-openings). Students will also have the opportunity to curate their own virtual exhibition as a group project, using the open-source geotemporal exhibit-builder Neatline.

Readings

There are no required textbooks to purchase. All readings will be made available for download on the course’s Canvas website. Course texts include both primary and secondary sources, which will hone critical skills in visual and literary analysis.

Assignments and Grading

Attendance and Participation (15%): Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to show up for each session having completed the assigned readings for the day. They should also actively engage in discussion.
One short formal analysis paper (15%) between 3 – 4 pages long, written about one work of art from before 1800. Students will ideally have had the chance to view this work in person, at a museum or gallery where they are located. Due before the midterm exam.

Take-home Midterm Exam (25%): Students will have 24 hours to complete a take-home midterm exam that comprises a slide ID section and a comparative analysis section.

Group Project (15%): Students will have the opportunity to collaborate on a virtual curatorial project using Neatline. In the final two sessions of the course, students will present their projects to the class. The project will be graded based on how well major course concepts have been integrated into the exhibit, and on student creativity in applying these concepts to works of art not discussed in the course.

Final Paper (30%): One longer, 5 – 6 page research paper that expands on the short formal analysis paper written earlier in the course. This assignment will familiarize students with the process of art historical research and writing.

**In-Class Etiquette**

Zoom school is difficult for everyone. In the interest of having meaningful and respectful conversations in class, students are encouraged to turn on their cameras and not be unduly distracted by their surroundings. If students have to leave their cameras off for any reason, they should contact the instructor before the session with a valid reason.

Text conversations in the Zoom chat room should be initiated with discretion, and should not be used to distract other members of the course.

Using your computer to perform activities other than paying attention to the lecture is discouraged. This is especially relevant in an art history course, where close-looking at images is a necessary component of learning.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty that will not be tolerated. It is defined as the use of someone else’s work, words, or ideas as if they were your own. Plagiarism is injurious to your learning and your personal ethics, and violates the codes of scholarly integrity on which the academy is built.

Yale takes academic dishonesty seriously, levying punishments including lowered grades and up to suspension from the university. For more information, review the Poorvu Center’s guidelines on ‘Citing Sources’ and ‘Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism.’
Course Schedule

1. Renaissance(s) of the European, Islamic, and African worlds (July 12, 2021)


2. Renaissance(s) of the European, Islamic, and African worlds, cont’d (July 14, 2021)

*European ‘Discovery’ of the Americas | Gender in the Renaissance*


3. A Global Baroque (July 19, 2021)


“A Brief History of Chocolate,” *Smithsonian Magazine*.

4. Rise of Empires and the Transatlantic Slave Trade (July 21, 2021)


5. **The Rococo Phenomenon (July 26, 2021)**


6. **Academies and Revolutions (July 28, 2021)**

Edgar Peters Bowron, “Academic Life Drawing in Rome, 1750-1790,” in *Visions of Antiquity. Neoclassical Figure Drawings*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1993, pp. 75-85


7. **Art and Industrial Modernity | Impressionism and the History of Photography (August 2, 2021)**


8. **Modernism in the Early Twentieth Century | The Harlem Renaissance (August 4, 2021)**

Selected manifestos from *Art in Theory, 1900 – 1990*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul J. Wood:
- Wassily Kandinsky, from *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, pp. 86 – 94
- Guillaume Apollinaire, ‘On the Subject in Modern Painting’, pp. 179 – 181


9. Modernism, post-1945 | Pop Art and Earthworks (August 9, 2021)


10. Contemporary Art | Installation and Performance Art (August 11, 2021)
