



ART13: Introduction to Modern Art history

Basic Information

Instructor Name	Gordon Hughes
Home Institution	Rice University

Course Hours

The course has 20 class sessions in total. Each class session is 120 minutes in length. The course meets from Monday to Friday, for a total of 40 class hours (4 credit hours).

Course Description

This course introduces the major developments, key figures and significant works of modern art. Covering a period from roughly 1900 to the present, we will trace modernism's unfolding in the avant-garde practices of the 20th century as it moves into postmodernism and contemporary art. Beginning with turn-of-the century European art (Art Nouveau and Vienna Secession), we will follow the development of Fauvism (Matisse), Cubism (Picasso) and German Expressionism (Kandinsky) up to the First World War. We will then chart the various modernist movements that arise between the first and second world wars (Dada, Surrealism, The Russian Avant Garde, De Stijl, etc.). In the wake of the Second World War we will then trace the shift from Paris to New York as the cultural center of the avant-garde, and the rise of Abstract Expressionism, its divided legacies through the 1960s and 70s, and examine the development of the post-modern debates of the 1980s and 90s. The class will conclude with a look at recent trends in contemporary art.

The course is designed to teach you to look thoughtfully and sensitively at works of art and to acquire some sense of their role and position within the time and place in which they were produced. You will learn to articulate how many different factors-visual, cultural, political, historical-come together in each work of art.



Requirements

Attendance and active participation in class, completing homework assignments and readings (20%); midterm exam (40%); final exam (40%). All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

Readings

Textbook: Hal Foster, et al, Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism, Volumes 1 and 2, 3rd Edition (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2005)

Assignments

Each student is responsible for completing all of the assigned reading prior to class.

Examinations

The mid-term and final exam will test how well you understand and analyze the works of art presented in class and discussed in the readings. Both exams will consist of three parts: slide identifications, multiple choice, and short answer questions.

The first part of the exam will consist of approximately 10 short slide identifications. To understand the history of art you must learn dates, periods and the titles of artworks and the artist name. This is the basic information of art history, and without mastering it you will be unable to gain a coherent understanding of the larger movements and issues. In every case, it is important that you learn dates by thinking of how that single work relates to its larger stylistic and cultural context. DATES MAKE SENSE!

While it is important to commit names, dates, styles, etc., to memory in order to master the materials of this class, it is equally important that you do more than simply memorize the course material. In order for art history to be more than just an abstract set of historical facts, we must understand how and why works were created in a particular time and place, the circumstances and background behind them, the formal properties that constitute a given style and their continuing role in the subsequent history of art.



Code of Academic Integrity

You must familiarize yourself with the Code of Academic Integrity in the Beijing Jiaotong University. It is your responsibility to ensure your behavior does not violate this code. You must observe the policies regarding various forms of academic dishonesty. The following statement about academic dishonesty has been provided by the Beijing Jiaotong University, "Activities that have the effect or intention of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student's performance are prohibited." Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and may be handled by the Office of Student Conduct.

Inappropriate activity during exams (e.g., consulting notes or other students) may result in a zero on the exam and will be submitted to the Office of Student Conduct. As a student in this course, you will be held accountable for your actions.

Week 1

July 13.

Course Introduction: Moderization, Modernity, Modernism.

July 13.

Art Nouveau and the Fin-de-Siecle.

July 14.

Fauvism and German Expressionism

July 15

Cubism and Futurism

Week 2

July 18

La Grande Guerre: Art in France during World War One



The Return to Order

July 19

The Russian Revolution

July 20

Dada and Surrealism

July 21

Esprit Nouveau, The Bauhaus, and De Stijl

Reading:

July 22

The Rise of New York: Abstract Expressionism

Week 3

July 25

Not-So-Pure Painting (Johns and Rauchenberg) and the Divided Legacy of Legacy of Abstract Expressionism

July 26:

Fluxus and Nouveau Realisme, and The Situationist International

July 27 **MIDTERM EXAM**

July 28

British and American Pop Art

July 29

Minimalism and Conceptual Art

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Week 4

Aug. 1

Television, Video, and Expanded Cinema

Aug. 2

Site-Specific Art, Earthworks, and the Expanded Field of Sculpture

Aug. 3

Mourning and Memory in German Art

Italian Modernism After World War Two

Aug. 4

Institutional Critique and Performance Art

Aug. 5

Feminist Art, Activist Art, and the Politics of Identity

Week 5

Aug. 8

The Postmodernism Debates.

Trends in Contemporary Art.

Aug. 9 **FINAL EXAM**