

Art History Before 1900 Syllabus
Prepared by Lisa Corine von Koch, August 13, 2012
Lisa Corine von Koch, Art and Art History
ARTHISTORY 111, Room 666
Art History Before 1900, 3 Credit Hours
Prerequisites: None

Office: Room 203
Office Hours: M 4-6pm, T/H 3:45-5:45pm
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Course description: The purpose of this class is to explore uniting thematic concepts in the artwork of all humans across all cultures up until the Twentieth Century.

Method: This course will be conducted more like a seminar and less like a lecture course. Student participation in the discussions will be mandatory; your contribution to the class dialogue is intended to encourage both broad and critical thinking about art.

Core Thematic Concepts:

- I. The Human figure/ Portraiture
- II. Landscape/ the Natural World
- III. God(s)
- IV. Death
- V. Sex/Love
- VI. Light

Supporting Materials and References:

There is no required textbook for this class, but there will be interesting articles from Jstor and other periodicals that I will post on Blackboard. Make sure that you do the reading in advance of the class, so that you can fully participate in the discussions! (*You can demonstrate your gratitude for not having to buy a book by doing your reading assignments!*)

Blackboard:

I use Blackboard to post all reading assignments, handouts, slide lectures from class and important information. Additionally, I will use your school email address through Blackboard. It is the student's responsibility to look over the material on Blackboard and check their email.

Quizzes:

There will be written quizzes on the vocabulary terms and key concepts, as well as questions taken directly from the reading assignments. If you do the reading, you will do VERY WELL on your quiz!

At the end of each unit, there will be a written essay in which I will display one or more works of art from the unit, which you must identify the artist, the title of the work, the date created and where in the world the work was made, or where the artist was from. Then, you will write your interpretation of the meaning and purpose of the work(s) of art, and if there are multiple works to choose from, you will write a comparison/contrast essay. Creative and critical thinking is expected! What you THINK about the works is more important than what you KNOW about the works.

Final Project: Fantasy Exhibition

You will choose one of the core themes and create a fantasy exhibition of works that relate to that theme. You will give the exhibition a title, and come up with a unique theory, hypothesis or approach to the theme and choose artworks which support your viewpoint. You must have a minimum of 30 works in your exhibition, 20 of which can be from the images seen in class, but 10 must be works that you find on your own. All types of artwork from all cultures, before 1900 are fair game.

You must create a floor plan to show how and where each work would be installed, and include the rationale behind the installation in your written materials. You will create a list of the works, including the artist, title, date, media, and size, and divide the list into two categories: works seen in class, and works you discovered on your own. This can be rendered by hand or on the computer. If you make a model, you will get MASSIVE extra credit points!!!

There are two written components for your exhibition. One will be a synopsis of your thesis and the overall theme of the exhibition, no more than a 300 words, which would be the didactic material displayed on the wall to clue viewers in to your intentions behind the collection of the work, and guide them as to how they experience the exhibition. You will also write a thesis for the exhibition, focusing on how these works relate to the theme you have selected, including why you placed certain works near to each other for comparison, complement or contrast. Write about the connections, differences, comparisons, and use of the theme in the works.

Extra Credit: Can be obtained by:

1. Entering your work into exhibitions, whether accepted or not. Please submit documentation to prove what you submitted to.
2. Hosting/curating/participating in an exhibition or art-related event. Submit documentation, tell me what you did.
3. Going to art exhibitions or artist lectures and writing a review. Please see guidelines on how to write a review on Blackboard, under the heading General Information. Submit writing through Dropbox, in the section Extra Credit.

Grading Breakdown:

Participation in Discussions: 25%
Quizzes: 25%
Final Project: 50%

Your final grade will be whatever percentage of the total possible points that you have earned. Top grades will be awarded for a combination of design excellence, conceptual depth, intelligent participation in discussion, and, most importantly, individual improvement. All assignments need to be completed in order to pass this class!

A= Excellent. Displays extra effort, creativity and knowledge, excellent attendance.
B= Above average. Meets requirements, shows good quality work, good attendance.
C= Average. Meets basic requirements, shows average work, good to poor attendance.
D= Below Average. Does not complete work, shows little effort, poor attendance.
F= Failing. Majority of requirements unfulfilled. No Credit.

ATTENDANCE POLICY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Attendance is required for the entire class period. Roll will be taken each session at the beginning of the period. Departures from full attendance such as arriving late, leaving early, and returning late from breaks will also be recorded throughout the class period.

Important points about Attendance Policy:

- **More than three absences will result in your final semester grade being lowered by a 1/2 of a letter grade. Your grade will be lowered for every absence thereafter. A partial absence of 1/3 will be given if you arrive late to class or leave class early; three of these will equal a whole absence.**
- **A seminar class demands your full participation; therefore consistent effort during class is important to your grade.**

In the event of an absence you are encouraged to see me during office hours. Additionally, you can contact everyone in the class through Blackboard, where all assignments, handouts and slide lectures will be posted. It is your responsibility to find out what you need to do to make up classes that you missed.

Disclaimers

- Students are responsible for policies covered in this Syllabus.
- Due to the nature of this course the syllabus is subject to change.
- Cell phones must be SILENT and OUT OF SIGHT during class time. No texting!!!
- Dress appropriately. (MEANING your clothing should not be disruptive or inappropriate, AND also that is appropriate for working with messy materials, so don't wear anything that will break your heart if it gets stained or dirty.
- Conversation in class must be conducive to a positive learning environment.
- Please label ALL of your drawing supplies, so that they don't get lost/mixed up.
- Clean all debris from your desk, easel and floor before you leave.
- Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this syllabus may result in withdrawal or non-passing grade.

Disabilities

Any students eligible for classroom accommodations are invited to meet with me to discuss their concerns and to present their disclosure forms from the Office of Accommodative Services. Please address concerns with me at the beginning of the semester, I can do nothing for you retroactively. This will be handled completely confidentially. Our University provides reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations and are not registered with the Accommodative Services Office, please contact this office in the Warren Student Services Center, Room 043 as soon as possible to establish your eligibility.

Inclusiveness and Diversity

This University and the Department of Art and Art History value inclusiveness of people and ideas. We respect the dignity of each individual, expressed through fairness and just treatment for all. We value individual diversity and recognize the unique contributions of all individuals. We promote open communication and the free exchange of thoughts and ideas.

Course Outline:

The Human Figure/Portraiture

- Painting, sculpture, photography, clothing/jewelry/costuming/ceremonial
- Commemoration
- Patrons and Propaganda
- Slice of life
- Extra Special Occasions/Historical

The Natural World/Landscape

- The environment, animals, plants
- Humans relationship to the natural world
- Real/observed vs. Imagined
- Science and discovery: (e.g. botanical illustrations, advent of the camera)

God(s)

- Representations from all religions (or not! e.g. Mohammad)
- Storytelling for the illiterate
- Mythology

Death

- Martyrs and Murders
- Battle Scenes
- Tombs
- Mortality and Flesh (humans and animals), *memento mori*

God(s) and Death

- The Afterlife: depictions of Paradise and Hell or Reincarnation

Sex and Love (or lack thereof)

- Fetishes and fertility symbols
- Flowers and Nudes
- Love: divine, familial and romantic
- Depictions of women/the male gaze (predominance of male artists up until 20th century)

Light

- Architecture
- Large outdoor sculpture
- Shared fascination between artists all around the world
- Eastern vs. Western depictions/concerns with light
- Innovations of paint chemistry and technology
- Beginnings of photography