Art History: Theories and Approaches (ARH456 01)

Spring 2012
Professor Reva Wolf
Smiley Art Building (SAB) 118A
Tuesdays, 3:05-5:45

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Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, 1-3; by appt.

Course Description, Objectives, and Outcomes
What is art history? We examine this question by reading selected passages from the history of the discipline and from recent writings that call into question traditional approaches to the interpretation of art. We look at a wide variety of approaches that have been used to study art, including biography, psychoanalysis, formalism and style, periodization and national identity, iconography and iconology, patronage, feminism, Marxism, reception theory, and semiotics. This course is writing intensive, and can be used to fulfill the writing intensive (WI) requirement. Students conclude the course with a solid grounding in the history of art history and the debates surrounding the discipline. Students also gain skills for improving their writing and for pursuing in-depth research.

Requirements

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<th>% of grade</th>
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<td>The Research Paper:</td>
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<td>1. Topic proposal, two double-spaced, typewritten pages (due February 14)</td>
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<td>2. Preliminary bibliography (due March 6)</td>
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<td>3. Draft of paper (due April 10)</td>
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<td>4. Final paper (due May 8)</td>
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<td>Other Writing Assignments:</td>
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<td>5. Three in-class essays</td>
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<td>6. Midterm exam essay</td>
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<td>7. Final exam essay</td>
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For the term paper, each student will select one essay or book of significance to the subject matter of the course, and will write an in-depth analysis of it based on careful research. The paper topic will be developed in stages, as outlined above. Detailed and concrete guidelines for all required assignments will be distributed in class in a timely way. The guidelines will include tips on approach and organization. The SUNY New Paltz policy on academic integrity is strictly enforced (www.newpaltz.edu/advising/policies_integrity.html).

Miscellaneous SUNY New Paltz Academic Policies
The last date to withdraw from a course without a penalty is March 30. Students who have made arrangements with the Disability Resource Center will be appropriately accommodated. Student Evaluations of Instruction (SEIs) will be administered electronically between May 1 and May 8 and your feedback is valued.

Required Texts (available at the campus bookstore)
Schedule of Classes

January 24  Introduction and discussion of paper topics

January 31  Early approaches to the art object
Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, selected passage about portraits (Blackboard).

February 7  Biographical approaches
Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, selected passage about Apelles (Blackboard).
Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1568), selected passages from the life of Michelangelo (Blackboard).
In-class writing exercise

February 14  Approaches to understanding styles and periods: the Renaissance

approaches to understanding styles and periods: the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries
Roger de Piles, *The Principles of Painting with a Balance of Painters* (1708), selected passage (Blackboard).
REMINDER: TOPIC PROPOSALS DUE

February 21  Approaches to understanding styles and periods: the nineteenth century

February 28  Approaches to understanding styles and periods: the twentieth century
Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History* (1915), excerpt, in Preziosi, *The
March 6  **Formalist approaches**  
Roger Fry, Clement Greenberg  
**Review for midterm exam**  
**REMINDER:** PRELIMINARY RESEARCH PAPER BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE

March 13  **Midterm exam**

March 20  **Spring break**

March 27  **Iconographic and contextual approaches:** Aby Warburg, Erwin Panofsky  
Edgar Wind, “Warburg’s Conception of *Kunstwissenschaft*” (1930), and  
In-class writing exercise

April 3  **No Tuesday Classes (Friday Classes Meet)**

April 10  **Approaches to artistic production and reception**  
**Psychoanalytical approaches:** Sigmund Freud and beyond  
Sigmund Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*.  
**REMINDER:** DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE

April 17  **Politics and art history:** Marx through World War II  
**Politics and art history:** “Orientalism”  
In-class writing exercise

April 19  Art History Association Symposium on “Orientalism,” details TBA; highly recommended
April 24  **Feminism and art history**  
Linda Nochlin, “Women, Art, and Power” and Ludmilla Jordanova,  
“Linda Nochlin’s Lecture ‘Women, Art, and Power’,” both in Visual  
Theory: Painting and Interpretation, ed. Norman Bryson, Michael Ann  
Holly, and Keith Moxey (Blackboard).  
Craig Owens, “The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism”  

May 1  **Semiotics and art history / theories of authorship**  
Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author” (1968), in Barthes, Image / Music  
/ Text (Blackboard).  
History, 321-34.  
Michel Foucault, chapter 1 of The Order of Things: An Archaeology of  
the Human Sciences (1966), on Diego Velázquez’s painting Las Meninas  
(Blackboard).

May 8  **Conclusions and review for final exam**  
REMINDER: FINAL PAPER DUE

May 15  **Final exam, 2:45 pm**  
(Tuesday)

Note: This course outline is subject to minor revisions.