

MORAVIAN COLLEGE
Syllabus
Art History 310
ART HISTORY WORKSHOP: METHODS, CRITICISM & EXHIBITION PRACTICE

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Office: South Hall, Church St. Campus

Hours: Mon & Wed 4-5:00 pm

What is it you want to know about a work of art? Who made it? What's it about? When and where was it made? Why was it made? Is it "good" or "bad" art? The questions that you ask, and how you go about finding the answers, lead straight to issues of methodology.

This course will 1) survey the major art historians, the questions they asked (and the answers they proposed), from the "who" of biography and connoisseurship through the "what" of iconography to the "when, where, why" of social history; 2) survey modern art criticism in America; and 3) consider contemporary exhibition practice.

The goal of the course is to become familiar with the development of the discipline and practice of art history and its theoretical underpinnings, both in the classroom and in museums.

Class format is lecture, discussion and student projects/ presentations.

REQUIRED TEXTS for purchase

- 1) W. Eugene Kleinbauer, MODERN PERSPECTIVES IN WESTERN ART HISTORY
- 2) Patricia Hills, MODERN ART IN THE USA: ISSUES AND CONTROVERSIES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

- 3) One art magazine subscription: either ART IN AMERICA or ART NEWS or ARTFORUM
- 4) Wink & Phipps, MUSEUM GOERS GUIDE

RECOMMENDED READINGS in Reeves Library, including *Art in America*, *Art News*, *Artforum*, and *The New York Times* (Friday edition)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Students must attend all classes and bring the appropriate required text to each class
- Three assignments: short papers and/or projects (including power point presentations)
- Field trip to New York City, and short paper (exhibition critique)

Grading: one-third is determined by written work; one-third by final project; and one-third by class participation and attendance.

LOOKING ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

"You cannot say more than you see." Henry David Thoreau

A Looking Assignment is an exercise in visual analysis, synthesis and evaluation. It is to be done from looking at actual works of art, and not reproductions.

Part I: describe a work of art in one and a half to two pages (35-46 lines--no less, no more);
Part II: describe a second work in a like number of pages; and
Part III: answer the question given to you in class by comparing/ contrasting the two artworks.

Begin Parts I and II with standard identification of the artwork, as well as location, that is, the museum where the artwork can be found (viz.: Artist; Title; Date; Medium; Location).

First consider the materials (oil paint, marble, etc), size (ignore the frame or pedestal), and palette (colors). Be sure to pay close attention to the painter's brushstroke or the sculptor's touch: that is, address the physical reality of the object that cannot be seen in reproduction.

Next, before you join any image or narrative that is represented, consider the overall composition. For example, before identifying something as a "Virgin and Child with Two Saints," realized that first it is a "Composition with Four Figures" (and in a particular setting such as landscape or interior). Note whether the figures are full-length or cut-off, clothed or nude; make note of where the figures are placed in the composition (center or off-center). Only then go on to identify the figures and their relationship to one another, or the narrative that they are enacting.

If the work is a sculpture, be sure to look at it from all sides; if an out-of-doors sculpture, be sure to take its site into consideration.

Determine what is of primary, secondary, and tertiary importance in the work as a whole, and organize your analysis accordingly. Do not, in other words, describe the work simply from left to right, nor from top to bottom. (This results in just so many randomly piled facts, like unstrung beads.) The point of this exercise is to hone your powers of observation so that you can rapidly identify what is relevant or extraneous. Ultimately, your goal is to develop a richly structured information base of visual knowledge. You can not say everything in two pages, so make sure you identify and say the most important things, and in the order of their importance as you perceive it.

In Part III you are considering patterns, associations, or disconnections between the two works.

Attention! Ignore the following at the peril of a markdown!

The paper should be between four to five pages in length. Papers that are too short, as well as those that are too long, will have to be rewritten to receive a grade. (Use the following as guidelines: 1) double spacing will produce a 26-line page; 2) the margin should be 1" all around; 3) use a standard font, such as Times New Roman, 12 point).

The quality of your writing is an important component of your grade. Papers that are not proofread will be marked down. Consult *THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE* by Strunk & White. Titles of paintings are treated the same as titles of books (underline or *italicize*, but do not put in “quotation marks”).

SAMPLE LOOKING ASSIGNMENTS from previous semesters are on reserve in the Library for you to consult. In addition, consider the following visual description taken from the Museum of Modern Art’s audio tour. The picture in question is The Bather by Cézanne.

“This is a framed, vertical, rectangular picture, over four feet in height. It’s dominated by the figure of a young man. He’s wearing only a pair of white briefs and is standing alone in a bare landscape. The ground is pinkish and flat and suggests a sandy beach. It is tinged in some areas with green. In places, there appear to be shallow, bluish pools—left behind by the tide perhaps. The figure’s naked body is painted in pale pinkish flesh tones, but shadowed by the same greens, blues and violets as the sky and watery ground. . . . He seems poised to move towards us. But he’s caught in a moment of stillness in the hazy, dream-like landscape.”

CURATORIAL FILE TEMPLATE for a catalogue raisonné entry

1. Name of Artist
2. Nationality of Artist
3. Birth and Death Dates of Artist
4. Title of Art Work
5. Short description of subject matter, color, brushstroke, and condition of painting.
6. Date (e.g., c. 1876)
7. Media & support (e.g., oil on canvas)
8. Size of art work (give both inches & centimeters: 1cm = .3937 in.). Do not include size of frame.
9. Internal Verification: Signed? Initialed? Dated? Inscribed? Where (front &/ or back)? If on front, in which quadrant? (upper or lower, left or right—abbreviate as: u.l., l.l., u.r., l.r.)?
10. Note if anything on verso of canvas, including exhibition labels on stretchers.
11. Is frame contemporary, or otherwise noteworthy?
12. If there is a catalogue raisonné for the artist, give full citation and number for this artwork. (Full citation includes author, title, place of publication, publisher, and date.) If the painting is of a local landscape, can a contemporary photograph of the location be had?
13. Present Owner: Payne Gallery, Moravian College
14. Inventory number: 2010.XXXX (i. e., year the artwork entered the collection, followed by a number designating its place in that year's acquisition queue)
15. Provenance (a list in chronological order of all previous owners—institutional and private—of this artwork, with date of acquisition)
16. Exhibition History (a list in chronological order of all previous exhibitions of this artwork prior to its acquisition by Payne Gallery). An Exhibition History records date, place, name of exhibition, whether or not there was a catalogue, and, if there was, the number of this artwork in said catalogue.
17. Literature (a list in chronological order all published material in which this artwork is illustrated). Literature gives a full citation and illustration number.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS for Spring 2013

I/ III: METHODOLOGY, Weeks 1-5 / Thinking about Art History (or the History of Art?)

Week 1: Introduction to the Course & Syllabus

- Syllabus and “Why did you choose art history?” *Assignment: write your ideal resumé? Is it academic? Journalist’s? Curatorial?*
- Read Kleinbauer . . . (What is Art History?)
- Look at current issues of *CAA newsletter*

NB: Thursday, Jan 17th, 6:30 p.m. in Payne Gallery: Opening reception, exhibition of paintings by Constance Darrow Diamond

Week 2: Biography

-Historical

- Read Vasari, LIVES OF THE ARTISTS (Giotto, Michaelangelo & two selections of your own choosing) [N6922.V492 1946]
- Consult Lipton, Eunice, ALIAS OLYMPIA: A WOMAN’S SEARCH FOR MANET’S NOTORIOUS MODEL & HER OWN DESIRE [ND553.M3 L56 1992b]

-Reference

- Consult THE DICTIONARY OF ART [Ref N31.D5 1996], American
- Consult THIEME-BECKER [Ref N40.T42 1960], German
- Consult BENEZIT [Ref N40.T42 1960], French
- *Assignment: write a biographical entry for an artist you know.*

Week 3: Intrinsic Perspectives

- Connoisseurship

- Read Wollheim, Richard, ON ART AND THE MIND (“Giovanni Morelli and the Origins of Scientific Connoisseurship”)
- Read Kleinbauer . . . (Wöfflin, PRINCIPLES OF ART HISTORY)
- *Assignment: bring 3-5 postcards of your favorite paintings. Be prepared to analyze the images according to Wöfflin’s principles.*

- Iconography and Iconology

- Read Kleinbauer . . . (Panofsky, JAN VAN EYCK’S ‘ARNOLFINI PORTRAIT’)
- Read Foucault, Michel, THE ORDER OF THINGS (“Las Meninas”)
- Look at current issues of *Art Bulletin* and *Burlington Magazine*

Week 4: Extrinsic Perspectives

-Art History and Psychology

- Read Kleinbauer . . . (Kris, A PSYCHOTIC ARTIST OF THE MIDDLE AGES)
- Read selections in Freud, Sigmund, LEONARDO DA VINCI
- Read Schapiro, Meyer, THEORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF ART: STYLE, ARTIST, AND SOCIETY (“Freud and Leonardo: An Art Historical Study”)

-Art History and Perception

- Read Kleinbauer . . . (Gombrich, LIGHT, FORM, AND TEXTURE IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY PAINTING)

- Read Baxandall, Michael, *THE LIMWOOD SCULPTORS OF RENAISSANCE GERMANY* (“The Period Eye,” 143-63)

Week 5: Extrinsic Perspectives: Art History, Society, and Culture

-Marxism

- Read Berger, John, *WAYS OF SEEING*, 1972
- Read Clark, T. J., *THE PAINTING OF MODERN LIFE: PARIS IN THE ART OF MANET AND HIS FOLLOWERS* (ch 4: “A Bar at the Folies-Bergere”), 1984
- Read Heller, S, “What Are They Doing to Art History?” *ART NEWS*, Jan 1997
- Look at current issues of *Art History*

-Feminism

- Read Nochlin, L, *Why Art There No Great Women Artists?* In *WOMAN IN SEXIST SOCIETY: STUDIES IN POWER AND POWERLESSNESS*, eds. V. Gornick and B. Moran, 1971.
- Read selections in Pollock, Griselda, *DIFFERENCING THE CANON: FEMINIST DESIRE AND THE WRITING OF ART’S HISTORIES*
- Look at current issues of *Women’s Art Journal*

NB: Feb 13-16, College Art Association (CAA) convention in New York City

II/ III. ART CRITICISM, Weeks 6-10 / Thinking about Works of Art

Week 6: 1940s to Mid-1950s

- Read Hills, ch 4 (1940s to Mid-1950s)
- Read selections in Greenberg, *ART AND CULTURE*
- Read Venturi, Lionel, *HISTORY OF ART CRITICISM* (Introduction, chs 1 & 13, pp 3-36 and 323-45)
- *Assignment: write a review of the exhibition and catalogue of sculpture by Karl Stirner in Payne Gallery for a Moravian publication (newspaper, Comenian, etc.)*

NB: Thursday, Feb 21st, 6:30 p.m. in Payne Gallery: Opening reception of sculpture by Karl Stirner

Week 7: 1955 to Mid-1960s

- Read Hills, ch 5 (1955-1967), especially articles published in *Artforum*
- Read selections in Newman, *CHALLENGING ART: ARTFORUM 1962-1974*
- Read current issues of *Artforum*

Week 8: **SPRING BREAK**

Week 9: Mid-1960s to 1980

- Read Hills, ch 6 (1968-1980)
- Read Siegel, K, “Critical Realist: Sidney Tillim,” *ARTFORUM*, Sep 2003
- Listen on CD to Tillim, Sidney, *Bugs Bunny Meets the Sublime* (Skowhegan lecture, 1992)
- Read current issues of *Art in America*

Week 10: 1980s to 1990s

- Read Hills, ch 7 (1980s-1990s), excluding pp 423-54
- Read the Friday edition of the New York Times and local papers
- Read current issues of *October*

III/ III. EXHIBITION PRACTICE, Weeks 11-15 / Thinking about Exhibitions

Week 11: Patronage, Taste, Collecting: Regional Museums (Trip to Allentown Art Museum and the Kemerer Art Museum)

- Read Wallach, Alan, EXHIBITING CONTRACTION: ESSAYS ON THE ART MUSEUM IN THE UNITED STATES (selections)
- Read Maleuvre, Didier, MUSEUM MEMORIES: HISTORY, TECHNOLOGY, ART (“Bringing The Museum Home: The Domestic Interior in the Nineteenth-Century”)
- Look at current issues of Museum Studies
- *Assignment: review a museum exhibition*

Week 12: Patronage, Taste, Collecting: National Museums (TRIP TO Metropolitan Museum of Art—web site: metmuseum.org)

- Read Hills, ch 7, The Construction of Knowledge: Museums, Art History and Studio Practices, pp 423-32.
- Read the Friday *New York Times*
- *Assignment: in the Met compare the galleries of Ancient Greek, American & 19th c. Art.* Consult Wink & Phipps.

Week 13: Independent Exhibitions I: Community Arts Centers, Commercial and College Galleries (Trip to Banana Factory, Third Street Galleries, Zollner Art Center)

- Read Hills, ch 1, Armory Show, Independents Show of 1917, and New York Dada, pp 32-42.
- Read week-end editions of The Morning Call and The Express Times.
- *Assignment: review the Payne Gallery Senior Show exhibition*

NB: Sunday, Apr 14th, 2:00 p.m. in Payne Gallery: Opening reception, Senior Show

Weeks 14 & 15: Independent Exhibitions II: Virtual Exhibitions

- Read Malraux, Andre, MUSEUM WITHOUT WALLS
- *Power Point Presentations of an exhibition (historical or contemporary) for Payne Gallery for which you are the curator*

Week 16: EXAM WEEK

- Write a catalogue raisonné entry for a work (of your choosing) in the permanent collection of Payne Gallery. See above: Curatorial File Template.