COURSE OBJECTIVES AND DESCRIPTION

The objectives of the course are as follows: (1) to provide students with a comprehensive overview of the major works, artists, and movements of American art from the colonial period through 1940; (2) to integrate these works of art within the broader social and intellectual history of the period; and (3) to help students develop their skills in visual analysis, image identification, and historical interpretation.

Among the issues we will examine are the following: the development of indigenous styles of architecture, the debt to European conventions in painting and sculpture, the place of the visual arts within a democracy, the attempt to define the experience of America through painting and sculpture, and the periodic attempt to break free of European precedent.

Art 334 is a survey of the visual arts produced within the geographic region that became the United States. Though the emphasis of the course is on the visual arts, the ideas covered are applicable to courses covering the same chronological period in American studies, history, and literature. This is an intermediate level course with no prerequisites. It satisfies the fine arts requirement and may also be used toward the American studies minor. Art 334 is a lecture course with discussion based on a variety of readings.

TEXTBOOKS


REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and participation in lectures, discussions, and field trips. Students are allowed no more than three unexcused absences. With each additional class missed, your grade will drop by 3.3% (for example, from a B to a B-).

Readings in textbooks as they are assigned. We will discuss these readings throughout the semester. Be prepared to assess the authors’ arguments, evidence, methodology, bias, and organization. I will call on you randomly to lead discussion of these readings. You should come to class prepared to lead discussion.
Two examinations involving:

Slide comparisons (identification, iconography, formal vocabulary, historical context, art historical significance).

Students are responsible for all material presented in class even if it is not included in the textbooks. Slides for identification and discussion will, however, be selected from those artists and images analyzed at length in class. The second examination is cumulative, although the emphasis will be on material covered since the first examination.

Makeup examinations are rarely given.

Four papers.
  A short visual analysis of one work of art. No more than two pages in length.
  A one-page proposal presenting the question you wish to pursue in your research paper, as well as your preliminary answer to that question (your thesis). Attach a copy of your working bibliography to the proposal. This proposal should grow from your visual analysis.
  A ten-page research paper incorporating a revised draft of your visual analysis, in which you will examine the meaning of the work in relation to broader historical, intellectual, and social issues. In addition to the ten pages of text, your paper must include endnotes, a full bibliography, a list of illustrations, and photocopies of any work of art you discuss.
  A revision of your third writing assignment. When you submit this paper, you must also include the proposal and ten-page draft that contain my comments.

THE WORK OF ART YOU SELECT MUST COME FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE MEMPHIS BROOKS MUSEUM OF ART.

Papers must be typed, double-spaced, numbered, and written according to the guidelines of the Chicago Manual of Style.

Sylvan Barnet’s book, *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*, is your source for proper citation, organization, research (archival, library, online), appropriate voice, and any other questions about writing the history of art.

Late papers are not accepted.

Papers receiving a grade of D or F will be returned for revision.

Failure to complete any graded assignment will result in a failing grade for the course.

**VISUAL ANALYSIS**

Your first writing assignment in this class is to produce a two-page visual analysis of one work of art.

As the art historian Sylvan Barnet notes, visual analysis is not the same thing as description. Whereas a description answers the question, “What does x look like?,“ a visual
analysis answers the somewhat awkward question, “How does x look?,” or better yet, “How does x mean?” To answer this question, you will have to resort to some description, but keep in mind that you must subordinate this to your analysis, which helps explain how and to what end your subject looks the way it does. Think of your essay as an argument that you wish to win. To do this you must advance a thesis and defend it.

Because this assignment deals with questions of composition, you will need to pay attention to visual form. This includes line, color, value, shape, texture, virtual space, and handling of paint (facture). Depending on your subject, you may need to address only some of these terms. You will find that careful attention to the art object will take time, and that you will see more the longer you look. If it helps, turn a reproduction of your subject upside down, or trace over it on tracing paper or clear plastic. Even sketching a copy of the work will help you move beyond description into analysis.

Keep in mind that this is not a research paper. You do not need to track visual or literary sources, nor do you need to worry about notes. All of your attention should be on the composition of the work because this is your primary evidence, the foundation that you will build upon for your research paper.

When you turn in your paper, please append a good color photocopy of the work. If you cannot secure a color photocopy, hand in the book in which you found your reproduction.

One final thought: looking is the process of visual discovery. What did you find?

PROPOSAL

The second part of your writing assignment is a one-page proposal in which you will present a brief overview of your proposed research on the same work of art used for the visual analysis. Here you should pose the question or questions you will pursue at greater length in your research paper. You must provide a thesis, a statement of the methodology you will use, and some indication of why your topic is important for our understanding of American art. With this assignment you must turn in a bibliography of books and articles you plan to use in your research.

RESEARCH PAPER

The third and fourth part of your writing assignment for this course is a ten-page, typed, double-spaced research paper incorporating a revised draft of your visual analysis. You must integrate this image within the broader social, political, cultural, and intellectual environment within which it was produced. Whereas the assignment for your first paper was to analyze an image visually, you should now place that image in a broader context. This means addressing the issues of subject matter, of expressive content (form and subject matter combined), and, most importantly, of meaning.

HONOR CODE

Remember that whenever you use another person’s ideas or words, you must acknowledge that they belong to that person. If you choose to quote someone (I would advise only quoting primary sources, such as an artist’s or critic’s writings), place his or her words in “quotation marks” and note the exact source, including author’s name, title of book or article,
place of publication, date, and page number. Whenever you use another person’s ideas, you must also acknowledge this in the same way. If you paraphrase another person’s writing without proper acknowledgment, for instance by copying the structure and organization of an essay or an entry in an encyclopedia, this too is an act of plagiarism. No matter how much you rewrite the original source, downloading a paper from the internet (or any other form of cutting and pasting), is also plagiarism. Most of the recent cases before the Honor Council have involved plagiarism. According to the Rhodes College Student Handbook “ignorance is not an excuse for these violations.”\footnote{Rhodes College Student Handbook 2005-2006.} If you are unclear about plagiarism, please see me before you turn in the paper.

**GRADING OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**

Your grade for each assignment will depend on several factors. First, you must demonstrate sufficient mastery of the terms and ideas we have discussed in class and in our readings. To do this, you must apply these terms correctly to the work you choose to analyze. Second, the skill with which you organize and write your essay will affect your grade. I expect clearly and concisely written papers in which you convey your passion for your chosen subject. Do not turn in your first or second draft. Allow yourself enough time to edit what you have written. Remember that the writing assignments are your only chance to turn in polished work for this course. Take advantage of this opportunity.

**GRADING**

Grading is designed to measure the success of each student’s understanding and assimilation of the materials presented in the course. I grade for improvement.

Each exam is worth 20% of your final grade. The combined paper assignments are worth 50% (visual analysis 10%, proposal 5%, combined average of research papers 35%), and class participation 10%.
WRITING

S.Y.A.D. Writing takes time.

Take NOTES as you conduct your research. Remember to record accurately your sources: author, title, date, place of publication, and page numbers.

DOUBLE CHECK quotations for accuracy. You probably made a mistake in writing down the quote.

Make an OUTLINE before you start writing.

INTRODUCTION. Set up your argument in your first paragraph. What is your thesis? What is the tone you wish to project?

DOCUMENTATION. In the writing of art history, you must work with primary materials. Your most important evidence is the work of art (or works of art). Primary materials also include statements by the artist, preliminary studies, letters and diary entries. Many of these are already in published form. You can also find them in archives, such as the Archives of American Art. Reviews from the artist’s life may count as primary evidence too. Historical studies are not primary evidence.

VOICE. Do not let other scholars speak for you. This means limiting how much you quote from secondary sources. If I want to know what Meyer Schapiro has to say about modernism, I will read his work.

TRANSITIONS. How do you get from one paragraph to the next?

TITLES of works of art are either underlined or italicized. Do not use “quotation marks” for titles.

NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY should follow the format outlined in the CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE. All of this material is available for ready reference in Sylvan Barnet’s A Short Guide to Writing About Art, which you are required to purchase for this course.

Avoid OVERSTATEMENT, GENERALIZATION, and VAGUE language.

REPETITION: cut it out. In a paper of less than twenty pages, you do not need to repeat things. When I get to the point that I cannot remember what a student said a page or two previously, I will retire. This will be long after you graduate.

CONCLUSIONS ARE NOT SUMMARIES. In this section of your paper you should point out what contribution your paper has made to the field of art history. Even at this stage of your training you should think about how your work will shape the field.

REVISION. Your paper will get better the more you revise.

STYLE. Pay attention to the craft of writing. Your goal, in relation to your readers, is to put a glide in their stride and a dip in their hip so they’ll climb on board your rocket ship.
Parson Capen House, Topsfield, MA, 1683, Colonial.
Eleazer Arnold House, Lincoln, RI, 1687, Colonial.
Arthur Allen House (“Bacon’s Castle”), Surrey County, VA, c. 1655, Colonial.
Stadthuys, New Amsterdam, 1679, Colonial.
Abraham Ackerman House, Hackensack, NJ, 1704, (Dutch) Colonial.
San Esteban, Acoma, NM, c. 1642, Colonial, (exterior and interior).
Old Ship Meeting House, Hingham, MA, 1681, Colonial (exterior and ground plan).
Capitol, Williamsburg, VA, 1701-5, Georgian.
Peter Harrison, Redwood Library, Newport, RI, 1748-50, Georgian.
______, Brick Market, Newport, RI, 1761-72, Georgian.
St. Michael’s Church, Charleston, SC, 1752-61, Georgian.
McPhedris-Warner House, Portsmouth, NH, 1718-23, Georgian.
Richard Taliaferro, Westover, Charles City County, VA, 1730-34, Georgian.
Miles Brewton House, Charleston, SC, 1765-69, Georgian.
Thomas Jefferson, Monticello, Charlottesville, VA, 1770-1809, Georgian.
______, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, 1817-26.
Benjamin Latrobe, Baltimore Cathedral, 1805-18, Federal.
Anonymous, Mrs. Freake and Baby Mary, c. 1674, Colonial.
Anonymous, Mr. Elizabeth Paddy Wensley, 1670-1690, Colonial.
Thomas Smith, Self-Portrait, c. 1690, Colonial.
John Smibert, The Bermuda Group, 1729, Colonial.
Robert Feke, Isaac Royal and His Family, 1741, Colonial.
John Singleton Copley, Boy with a Squirrel, 1765, Colonial.
______, Governor and Mrs. Thomas Mifflin, 1773, Colonial.
______, The Copley Family, 1776-77, Colonial.
______, Watson and the Shark, 1778, Grand Manner.
______, The Artist in His Museum, 1822, Federal.
Benjamin West, Agrippina Landing at Brundisium with the Ashes of Germanicus, 1768, Neoclassical.
______, Death of Wolfe, 1770, Grand Manner.
John Trumbull, Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1776, 1786-97, Grand Manner.
John Vanderlyn, Caius Marius Amidst the Ruins of Carthage, 1807, Grand Manner.
______, Ariadne Asleep on the Island of Naxos, 1812, Grand Manner.
______, Moonlit Landscape, 1819, Romanticism.
William Strickland, Merchant’s Exchange, Philadelphia, 1832-34, Greek Revival.
Town and Davis, Customs House, New York, 1834-42, Greek Revival.
Gaineswood, Demopolis, AL, 1842-60, Greek Revival.
A.J. Davis, Lyndhurst, Tarrytown, NY, 1841-1867, Picturesque.
A. J. Downing, Villa in the Italian Style, from Cottage Residences, 1842, Picturesque.
Richard Upjohn, Trinity Church, New York, 1839-46, Gothic Revival.
Trinity Church, Warsaw, NY, 1854, Gothic Revival.
Renwick Gallery, Washington, DC, 1859, Second Empire.
John Notman, Prospect, Princeton, NJ, 1849, Rundbogenstil.
McKim, Mead and White, Isaac Bell House, Newport, RI, 1882-83, Shingle Style (facade and plan).
Trinity Church, Boston, 1872-73, Romanesque Revival.
Crane Memorial Library, Quincy, MA, 1880-83, Romanesque Revival.
Thomas Sully, Lady with a Harp: Eliza Ridgely, 1818.
Benjamin Tevis, 1822.
John Neagle, Portrait of Pat Lyon at the Forge, 1826-27.
Samuel F. B. Morse, Professor Benjamin Silliman, 1825.
The Muse: Susan Walker Morse, 1836-37.
William Rush, Water Nymph and Bittern, 1809.
Self-Portrait (“Pine Knot” portrait), c. 1822.
Horatio Greenough, George Washington, 1832-41.
Hiram Powers, Andrew Jackson, c. 1835.
The Greek Slave, 1847.
Thomas Crawford, Charles Sumner, 1839.
Orpheus and Cerberus, 1843.
Erastus Dow Palmer, the White Captive, 1859.
John Rogers, the Checker Players, 1859.
Thomas Cole, Sunny Morning on the Hudson, c. 1827, Hudson River School.
Course of Empire: Savage State; Pastoral State: Consummation; Destruction; Desolation, 1833-36, Hudson River School.
The Oxbow, 1836, Hudson River School.
Asher B. Durand, Kindred Spirits, 1849, Hudson River School.
Frederic Edwin Church, West Rock, New Haven, 1849, Hudson River School.
Cotopaxi, 1862, Hudson River School.
Albert Bierstadt, The Rocky Mountains, Landers Peak, 1863, Hudson River School.
Emanuel Leutze, Washington Crossing the Delaware, 1849-50.
Frederick Remington, Fight for the Water Hole, 1903.
John Frederick Kensett, Lake George, 1869.
Fitz Hugh Lane, Owl’s Head, Penobscot Bay, Maine, 1862.
Martin Johnson Heade, The Coming Storm, 1859.
William Sidney Mount, Eel Spearing at Setauket, 1845.
George Caleb Bingham, Fur Traders Descending the Missouri, c. 1845.
Thomas Eakins, Max Schmitt in a Single Scull, 1871.
_____, The Gross Clinic, 1875.
_____, William Rush Carving his Allegorical Figure of the Schuylkill River, 1877.
Winslow Homer, A Game of Croquet, 1866.
_____, Snap the Whip, 1872.
_____, Northeaster, 1895.
_____, Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket, c. 1875.
Mary Cassatt, Lady at Tea Table, 1885, Impressionism.
John Singer Sargent, Madame X: Mme. Pierre Gautreau, 1884.
George Innes, Early Autumn, Montclair, 1891.
John Twachtman, Winter Harmony, c. 1900, Tonalism.
Albert Pinkham Ryder, Toilers of the Sea, before 1884.
McKim, Mead and White, Public Library, Boston, 1887-98, American Renaissance.
Augustus St. Gaudens, Shaw Memorial, 1884-97, Boston, American Renaissance.
Daniel Burnham, Reliance Building, Chicago, 1894-95, Chicago School.
Louis Sullivan, Wainwright Building, St. Louis, 1890-91, Chicago School (facade and plan).
_____, Carson, Pirie, Scott, Chicago, 1899-1906, Chicago School.
Frank Lloyd Wright, Plan for a Prairie House, 1901, Prairie Style.
_____, Robie House, Chicago, 1909, Prairie Style (facade, plan, interior).
_____, Kaufmann House (Falling Water), Bear Run, PA, 1936.
George Luks, Hester Street, 1905, Ashcan.
John Sloan, Hairdresser’s Window, 1907, Ashcan.
George Bellows, Cliff Dwellers, 1913, Ashcan.
Alfred Stieglitz, The Steerage, 1907.
_____, Equivalent, 1922.
Edward Hopper, House by the Railroad, 1925.
Thomas Hart Benton, City Activities, 1931, Regionalism.
Grant Wood, American Gothic, 1930, Regionalism.
Ben Shahn, The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti, 1931-32.

WEEK 1
January 11 Introduction: Problems in American art history.

WEEK 2
January 16 No class.
January 18 Visual Analysis.
January 20 Researching American Art.

WEEK 3
Reading: Bjelajac, 13-113; Hughes, 3-67.
January 23 Colonial architecture.
January 25 Colonial architecture.
January 27 Federal architecture.

VISUAL ANALYSIS TOPIC DUE.

WEEK 4
Reading: Bjelajac, 115-61; Hughes, 69-135
January 30 Colonial painting.
February 1 Colonial painting.
February 3 Grand Manner.

WEEK 5
February 6 Grand Manner.

ESSAY QUIZ.
February 8  Grand Manner.

February 10  Field Trip. Memphis Brooks Museum of Art.

VISUAL ANALYSIS DUE.

WEEK 6

February 13  Grand Manner.

February 15  19th-Century architecture.

February 17  19th-Century architecture.
Class to be rescheduled.

WEEK 7

February 20  19th-century architecture.

PROPOSAL DUE.

February 22  19th-century architecture.
Class to be rescheduled.

February 24  19th-century architecture.
Class to be rescheduled.

WEEK 8

February 27  Review.

March 1  EXAMINATION.

March 3  Portraiture in the early republic.

WEEK 9

March 6  Portraiture in the early republic.

March 8  Sculpture.

March 10  Sculpture.
WEEK 10
Reading: Bjelajac, 163-229; Hughes, 137-205.

March 20  Landscape.

ROLLING DEADLINE FOR RESEARCH PAPERS BEGINS.

March 22  Landscape.
March 24  Landscape.

WEEK 11
Reading: Bjelajac, 231-295.

March 27  End of the Century.
March 29  End of the Century.
March 31  End of the Century.

WEEK 12
Reading: Hughes, 207-269.

April 3  American Renaissance.
April 5  American Renaissance.
April 7  Early 20th century.

WEEK 13
Reading: Hughes, 271-335.

April 10  Early 20th century.
April 12  Early American Modernism.
April 14  Easter Recess.

WEEK 14
Reading: Bjelajac, 297-361; Hughes, 337-463

April 17  Early American Modernism.
April 19  Regionalism.
April 21  American Scene.

RESEARCH PAPERS DUE.

WEEK 15

April 24  Art and Politics in the 1930s.

April 26  Review.

April 28  URCAS

May 3  Second Examination. Wednesday, 5:30 pm, 417 Clough.