

*Prof. Victor Coonin*  
*412 Clough, x3824*

*Office hours TTH, 2:30-3:30*  
*and by appointment*

## **Art 231: History of Western Art**

Fall 2000

### **Course Objectives and Description**

- The objectives of the course are as follows: (1) to provide students with a comprehensive overview of major images, artists, and movements in Western art from Prehistory through the Middle Ages; (2) to integrate these images with the broader cultural history of the period; and (3) to develop visual and analytical skills appropriate to further study in Art History. This course is the first half of a year-long survey of Western Art and students are encouraged to continue with Art 232. Students are not expected to have completed any previous courses in Art History.

### **Textbook and Other Resources:**

- Gardner's Art Through the Ages, 10th edition, New York, 1996.
- Supplemental readings to be assigned.
- Class Web Page. A web page devoted to important images will be available for class use. The address will be provided in class and students should obey all copyright restrictions.

### **Grading:**

- 3 exams (each counts 25% towards the final grade)
- 1 Paper (25% of final grade)
- Note: Attendance is mandatory and more than two unexcused absences may result in a lower grade. Class participation is highly encouraged though lack thereof will not affect your grade.

Further instructions are provided below.

**\*All exams and assignments are to be completed and pledged in accordance with the Rhodes College Honor Code.\***

## **Exam Instructions, Art 231**

Each exam will consist of three parts:

- Identification and Discussion of Known Works (3)

A slide will be shown of a work studied in class. Students must fully identify the work by title, culture, and date. Students must then write a brief essay in which the relevance of the work is discussed. Students should address the following questions: Why was the work created? Why is the work important? What do we learn from the work?

- Identification and Discussion of Unknown Work (1)

A slide will be shown of a work hitherto unknown to the students. Based upon the context of works studied in class, all students should be able to identify the type of work, the producing culture, and the approximate date. Students should then be able to justify their response by comparing the work to others studied in class. This is not intended to be tricky or even difficult. It simply asks for good critical analysis of works of art and all students who have properly studied should be well prepared. Even incorrect identifications may contain sound reasoning and receive partial credit. For the rest of your lives you will perform this exercise while visiting the world's museums.

- Comparison of Two Works and Their Respective Cultures (1)

Two slides will be shown concurrently. Students should compare and contrast the images focusing on the same issues as in the first three essays. Most importantly, students must come to some conclusion about what is learned from the juxtaposition. In other words, the two works are shown together to prompt certain insights. Do not discuss one and then the other without forming some overall conclusions.

## Paper Assignment Art 231

### I. Choosing a Work of Art

A vital component of the course is encouraging students to visit museums and art galleries. The history of art should not be studied merely from slides and pictures in books! Therefore your paper assignment involves analysis of an actual object produced during the period we are studying. Due to its proximity and breadth of its collection, the Memphis Brooks Museum provides easy access to such works. For your paper you may choose any object within the museum produced before 1300. Students who wish to choose a work from another collection may do so with the PRIOR approval of the instructor.

### 3 Important Items!

- Make sure to identify the object you have chosen by writing the gallery in which you found it and the display number of the piece on the cover sheet of your paper.
- The Brooks Museum is located in Overton Park. Though it is close enough to walk, it is safer to travel by car. Students who chose to walk should do so only in groups.
- Admission to the museum is free to Rhodes students, so bring your ID.

### II. Writing the Paper

#### A) Drawing

You must include a drawing or brief sketch of the object you choose. I know, I know--you can't draw worth beans. Neither can I. But I assure you the exercise will help your visual analysis (and will help me identify the object you have chosen). Your drawing will not influence your grade in any way. Photographs, photocopies, and postcards do NOT satisfy this component but may be included if you wish.

#### B) Visual Analysis (2-3 pages)

Discuss the salient visual characteristics of your piece. Write as if you are describing the piece to someone who is completely unfamiliar with the object. Concentrate on the things you can actually see. Begin with the basics: describe the materials used, the geometric and organic forms, the decoration, etc. Then respond to your observations. For example: How do the various visual features coordinate with each other? Does the piece seem utilitarian? Ceremonial? Decorative? How does its form and decoration complement its function? This should lead naturally to part two of the paper...

#### C) Historical Analysis (3-4 pages)

...now think about WHY the object appears the way it does. What was the artist attempting to express and why so? What are the cultural imperatives which influenced the depiction? How is the piece representative of larger cultural and aesthetic issues? How was it used, displayed, or received? In this section it is essential to compare and/or contrast the work with others you have studied. You may simply refer to pieces illustrated in Gardner or you may photocopy illustrations from other books or sources. Discuss where would your piece fall relative to others and what we learn from your piece! Give your discussion a context in which to integrate your piece within the larger framework of Art History.

#### **D) Bibliography and Sources (1 page)**

You must use and properly note at least 2 art historical sources aside from your textbook. The purpose of this component is to begin to familiarize yourself with art historical research and the various texts available to you. This does NOT mean you should go looking for a fancy quote. In fact, quoting is not necessary. Rather, you should find a source that helps establish a context through which to evaluate your work or art. The source may discuss art from the culture, it may be a source with similar objects, illustrations for comparison, or even a general survey of the period. Just make sure your sources are relevant. Dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other art history survey books (especially those by Hartt, Janson, Stokstad, Adams, etc.) do not count towards satisfying this requirement.

**Electronic Resources:** Students are encouraged to use electronic resources, especially the Internet. Burrow library has access to several excellent electronic databases as well as book catalogues. However, only ONE citation for this paper may be from an electronic source (CD-ROM, Internet, etc.). Also be forewarned that the information on the web is mixed, ranging from the highly informative to the seriously misleading so use good critical judgement on those sites you use.

**Library Resources:** Burrow library has a good selection of books but be warned that your classmates will all be searching for them at the same time. Start early to avoid trouble. The University of Memphis also has a nice collection of art books. The Brooks Museum has a useful library though their hours are irregular so call beforehand to be sure it is open. For general research you should consult the Dictionary of Art, kept on reserve in Burrow library, though it does not count as one of your required citations.

#### **III. Format**

The entire paper should be about 5-7 double-spaced typed pages. Pay attention to presentation! There should be a minimum of typographical and grammatical errors, and the clarity and thoroughness of your discussion will count. You must cite any sources you have consulted (including guide cards or textbooks) and give full credit to those whose ideas you have presented. Place direct quotes in quotation marks and note instances in which you are paraphrasing. If anything is unclear please ask me or consult a manual of style.

If you need general help take a look at Sylvan Barnet, A Short Guide to Writing About Art, 5th ed., Boston, 1996 (on reserve in Burrows Library). Don't be shy about coming to me with any problems, but start early and give it your best shot before panicking. This assignment is intended to be as enjoyable as it is educational.

**Due Date:** You may turn in your paper to me at any time during the week of **November 13-November 17**. Think of it as having an automatic extension of four days should you need it. No other extensions will be granted nor excuses accepted!

## Schedule of Classes (C Hour), MWF, 10:20-11:20

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Lecture Topics</u>
<b>Ancient Art</b>	
Aug 23	Introduction
25 (convocation)	The Birth of Art (Prehistoric Art)
28	The Ancient Near East
30	The Ancient Near East
Sep 1	The Ancient Near East
4	Labor Day Recess
6	Old Kingdom Egypt
8	Old Kingdom Egypt
11	New Kingdom Egypt
13	New Kingdom Egypt
15	Minoan Art
18	Mycenaean Art
<b>20</b>	<b>Exam 1: Ancient Art</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Moss lecture by Prof. Harold Cohen</b>
<b>The Classical Period</b>	
22	Greek Art
25	Archaic and Classical Architecture
27	Early Classical Sculpture
29	High Classical Art in Athens
Oct 2	Athens and High Classical Painting
4	Late Classical Architecture
6	Late Classical Sculpture
9	Class Rescheduled
11	Hellenistic Architecture
<b>Fall Recess</b>	
18	Hellenistic Sculpture
20	Etruscan Art
23	Roman Republican Architecture
25	Roman Imperial Architecture
<b>26</b>	<b>Moss lecture by Prof. Caroline Jones</b>
27	Roman Imperial Sculpture
<b>30</b>	<b>Exam 2: Classical Art</b>
Nov 1	Late Antique and Early Christian Art
3	Byzantine Art
6	Byzantine Art (cont.)

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Lecture Topics</u>
	<b>The Middle Ages</b>
8	Early Christian Art and Iconography
10	Class Rescheduled
	<b>Papers Due This Week</b>
13	Islamic Art
15	Migration Art
17	Carolingian and Ottonian Art
20	Romanesque Architecture
	<b>Thanksgiving Recess</b>
27	Romanesque Art
29	Gothic Art in France
Dec 1	Gothic Art in Europe
4	
6	<b>Exam 3: The Middle Ages</b>

\*There is no final exam scheduled for this class.\*

- Students should prepare for each class by reading the appropriate chapters in Gardner and any supplemental readings assigned.
- Note that there are several classes on the year's syllabus that have been rescheduled. We will make up some of these classes by together attending lectures in the Moss Lecture series and meeting the speakers. Your attendance at these lectures is mandatory since you have been credited with class time in compensation.
- Note that papers are due the week of November 13-17 and there will be no further extensions.

## Schedule of Classes (O Hour), T Th, 1:00-2:30

<u>Dates</u>		<u>Lecture Topics</u>
		<b>Ancient Art</b>
Aug	24	Introduction
	29	The Birth of Art (Prehistoric)
	31	The Ancient Near East
Sep	5	The Ancient Near East
	7	Old Kingdom Egypt
	12	Old Kingdom Egypt
	14	New Kingdom Egypt
	19	The Aegean and Review
	<b>21</b>	<b>Exam 1: Ancient Art</b>
	<b>21</b>	<b>Moss lecture by Prof. Harold Cohen</b>
		<b>The Classical Period</b>
	26	Early Greek Art
	28	Archaic and Early Classical Greece
Oct	3	High Classical Greece
	5	Late Classical Greece
	10	Hellenistic Art
	12	Etruscan Art
		<b>Fall Recess</b>
	19	Roman Republican Architecture
	24	Roman Imperial Architecture
	26	Roman Imperial Sculpture
	<b>26</b>	<b>Moss lecture by Prof. Caroline Jones</b>
	<b>31</b>	<b>Exam 2: Classical Art</b>

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Lecture Topics</u>
	<b>The Middle Ages</b>
Nov 2	Late Antique and Early Christian Art
7	Byzantine Art
9	Class Rescheduled
	<b>Papers Due This Week</b>
14	Islamic Art
16	Early Medieval Art
21	Romanesque Art and Architecture
	<b>Thanksgiving Recess</b>
28	Gothic Architecture
30	Gothic Art
Dec 5	<b>Exam 3: The Middle Ages</b>

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