

Prof. Victor Coonin
412 Clough, x3824

Office Hours: MWF, 12:30-1:30
TTH, 2:30-3:30 and by appointment

Art 231: History of Western Art Fall 1998

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:

- Gardner's Art Through the Ages, 10th edition, New York, 1996. (Note that used copies of the 9th edition is also acceptable.)
- The Art Historian, CD Rom (Optional)
- Supplemental readings may also be assigned.

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.

Each exam will consist of three parts:

- Identification and Discussion of Known Works (3)
- Identification and Discussion of Unknown Work (1)
- Comparison of Two Works and Their Respective Cultures (1)

The paper assignment will consist of two parts:

- Visual Analysis
- Historical Analysis

Students will write the paper based on a work of art selected from the Memphis Brooks Museum. Further instructions are provided below.

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

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. Below is a guide to help you find appropriate pieces:

In the new building, upper level:

- Genette Gallery: Art of the Ancient Mediterranean and Near East (The Clarence Day Foundation Collection)

Old building, lower level:

- Foyer, Moss Gallery, and Moss Loggia (Greek Vases and assorted sculpture)

Old building, upper level:

- Sousoulas Gallery (Greek vases from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Students who wish to choose a work from another collection may do so with the PRIOR approval of the instructor.

3 Important Items!

- 1) 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.

- 2) 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.

- 3) The museum is free!

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. Make use of your textbook or other sources. Where would your piece fall relative to others? What do 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. It might be a source about other 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.

Electronic Resources: Students are encouraged to use electronic resources, especially the Internet. However, only ONE citation for this paper may be from an electronic source (CD-ROM, Internet, etc.). Also beware 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.

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](#), 2nd. Ed., Boston, 1985 (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 17-November 21**. 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 (E Hour), MWF, 12:40-1:40

<u>Dates</u>		<u>Lecture Topics</u>
		Ancient Art
Aug	26	Introduction
	28	The Birth of Art (Prehistoric Art)
	31	The Ancient Near East
Sept	2	The Ancient Near East
	4	The Ancient Near East
	9	Old Kingdom Egypt
	11 (Founder's Day)	Old Kingdom Egypt
	14	New Kingdom Egypt
	16	New Kingdom Egypt
	18	Minoan Art
	21	Mycenaean Art
	23	Catch-up and Review
	25	Exam 1: Ancient Art
		The Classical Period
	28	Archaic Greek Architecture
	30	No Class-- Yom Kippur
Oct	2	Archaic Greek Painting and Sculpture
	5	Early Classical Sculpture
	7	Architecture of the Athenian Acropolis
	9	High Classical Painting and Sculpture
	12	Late Classical Art and Architecture
	13	Moss Lecture Prof. Malcolm Warner (time and place TBA)
	14	Hellenistic Sculpture
	16	Hellenistic Architecture
		Fall Recess
	21	Class Rescheduled
	23	Class Rescheduled
	26	Etruscan Art
	27	Moss/BSAO Lecture Prof. Paul Crossley (time and place TBA)
	28	Pompeii and Roman Republican Art
	29	Moss/BSAO Lecture Prof. Joan Crossley (time and place TBA)
	30	Class Rescheduled
Nov	2	Roman Imperial Sculpture
	4	Roman Imperial Architecture
	6	Exam 2: Classical Art

<u>Dates</u>		<u>Lecture Topics</u>
	The Middle Ages	
	9	Art of Late Antiquity
	10	BSAO Lecture David Bostwick (time and place TBA)
	11	Early Christian Art and Iconography
	13	Early Byzantine Art
	Papers Due This Week	
	16	Late Byzantine Art
	18	Islamic Art
	20	Migration Art
	23	Carolingian and Ottonian Art
	Thanksgiving Recess	
	30	Romanesque Architecture
Dec	2	Romanesque Art
	4	Gothic Art in France
	7	Gothic Art outside France
	9	Exam 3: The Middle Ages

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. As part of the Rhodes sesquicentennial celebration we have prepared a wonderful lecture series in conjunction with British Studies at Oxford. Your attendance at these lectures is mandatory and you have been credited with class time in compensation.

Note that papers are due the week of November 16-20 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>
		Early Ancient Art
Aug	27	Introduction
Sept	1	The Birth of Art (Stone Ages)
	3	The Ancient Near East
	8	The Ancient Near East
	10	Old Kingdom Egypt
	15	Old Kingdom Egypt
	17	New Kingdom Egypt
	22	The Aegean and Review
	24	Exam 1: Ancient Art
		The Classical Period
	29	Archaic Greece
Oct	1	Classical Greece
	6	Classical Greece
	8	Late Classical Greece
	13	Hellenistic Empire
	13	Moss Lecture Prof. Malcolm Warner (time and place TBA)
	15	Etruscan Art and Early Rome
		Fall Recess
	22	Class Rescheduled
	27	Pompeii and Roman Republican Art
	27	Moss/BSAO Lecture Prof. Paul Crossley (time and place TBA)
	29	Roman Imperial Sculpture
	29	Moss/BSAO Lecture Prof. Joan Crossley (time and place TBA)
Nov	3	Roman Imperial Architecture
	5	Exam 2: Classical Art

<u>Dates</u>		<u>Lecture Topics</u>
	The Middle Ages	
Nov	10	Late Antique and Early Christian Art
	10	BSAO Lecture David Bostwick (time and place TBA)
	12	Byzantine Art
	Papers Due This Week	
	17	Islamic Art
	19	Early Medieval Art
	24	Romanesque Art and Architecture
	Thanksgiving Recess	
Dec	1	Gothic Architecture
	3	Gothic Art
	8	Exam 3: The Middle Ages

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