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ART 151-01, History of Western Art, Fall 2012

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Art 151: History of Western Art
Fall 2012
MWF 1:00-1:50; Frazier-Jelke C

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 mid-20th century; (2) to integrate the art 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 a semester-long survey of Western Art and students are not expected to have completed any previous courses in Art History. Students with previous study in art history should consult the department Chairperson. All students are encouraged to continue their studies by taking Art 232: Contemporary Art and/or any intermediate-level course in Art History.

Textbooks and Other Resources:

- *Gardner's Art through the Ages: The Western Perspective*, latest edition (or a recent previous edition if buying used). Note that *Gardner's Art through the Ages* exists in many different versions and formats, some of which include non-western art. The basic material on western art in all recent editions will be the same. [Required]
- Sylvan Barnet, *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*, any recent edition. [Recommended but not required]
- *Moodle*. A Moodle site is set up for this class and it is very important to check it regularly. Students will find the syllabus, study images and other materials on this site. All tests and assignments will be submitted through Moodle. Please become familiar with it quickly.

Grading:

- 4 exams (each counts 20% towards the final grade)
- 1 analysis paper (20% of final grade)
- Attendance at 3 Fine Arts events (graded pass/fail)

Further instructions on the exams and paper are provided below.

Important Notes

- All students are expected to abide by the *Rhodes College Honor Code* for all assignments.
- Class attendance has proven to bear a direct correlation to exam performance. Therefore class attendance is considered mandatory and more than three absences may result in a lower grade.
- Changes in content, scheduling, or other aspects of the course may be made at the discretion of the instructor. A rationale will normally be provided in class.
- Students with disabilities will be offered appropriate academic accommodation. Requests should be made during the first two weeks of the semester through the office of Student Disability Services.
- Possible Objectionable Material: This class includes images and content that involve issues of nudity, sexuality, violence, race and other themes that may be emotionally or politically challenging or even offensive to some viewers. If you are unwilling or unable to examine and discuss such works in an academic context then you should reconsider enrollment in this course.
- Certain class assignments (such as the museum paper) may require off-campus activities and therefore a waiver must be signed by each student. Students unable to leave campus may request accommodation before the end of the second week of class.

Schedule of Classes MWF

| | <u>Dates</u> | <u>Lecture Topics</u> |
|------|--------------|--|
| | | Part I: Ancient Civilizations |
| Aug | 22 | Introduction to Art History |
| | 24 | Art Before History |
| | 27 | Mesopotamia: Sumer and Akkad |
| | 29 | Mesopotamia: Babylon and Assyria |
| | 31 | Old Kingdom Egypt |
| Sept | 3 | Labor Day Holiday—No Class |
| | 5 | New Kingdom Egypt |
| | 7 | The Prehistoric Aegean |
| | 10 | Exam 1 |
| | | Part II: The Classical Tradition |
| | 12 | Archaic Greece |
| | 14 | Classical Greece |
| | 17 | Late Classical Period |
| | 19 | Hellenistic Period |
| | 21 | The Etruscans |
| | 24 | Republican Rome |
| | 26 | Guest Lecture on Roman Art |
| | 28 | Late Roman Empire |
| Oct | 1 | Late Antiquity |
| | 3 | Byzantium |
| | 5 | Exam 2 |
| | | Part III: The Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Baroque |
| | 8 | The Islamic World |
| | 10 | Early Medieval Europe |
| | 12 | Romanesque Europe |
| | | Fall Recess |
| | 17 | Gothic Europe |
| | 19 | Late Medieval Italy |
| | 22 | Northern Europe, 15 th century |
| | 24 | Early Renaissance Italy—Sculpture and Architecture |
| | 26 | Early Renaissance Italy—Painting |
| | 29 | Michelangelo, Leonardo, and Raphael |
| | 31 | Renaissance Venice and Mannerism |
| Nov | 2 | Northern Renaissance |
| | 5 | Baroque Italy and Spain |
| | 7 | Northern Baroque |
| | 9 | Exam 3 |
| | | [note I will be at a conference this day] |

Part IV: The Modern Age

| | |
|----|-------------------------|
| 12 | Rococo to Neoclassicism |
| 14 | Romanticism and Realism |
| 16 | Impressionism |
| 19 | Post-Impressionism |

Thanksgiving Break

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| 26 | Fauvism and Expressionism |
| 28 | Cubism, Dada and Surrealism |
| 30 | Modernism and Postmodernism |
| Dec. 3 | Abstraction and Representation |
| 5 | Final Theme: Is it Art? |

Wednesday December 12 @ 1:00 pm

Final (Fourth) Exam

Notes:

Students should prepare for each class by reading the appropriate chapter in Gardner. Specific chapter numbers are not provided since students will be using different versions of the text. I encourage you to save money by purchasing used books, electronic books, previous editions, or one of the many versions of the most recent print edition (Global History/ Western Perspective/ 2-volume paperback edition, etc.). The appropriate chapter should be obvious by the subject matter listed.

I will post the images from each relevant chapter on the Moodle site in pdf format. You will only be responsible for the specific works cited in class, however, I am providing the complete databank of images for your general benefit. These files also contain key questions and topics for discussion that should help you immensely as you study.

Instructions for Fine Arts Events

Students must attend 3 Fine Arts events and write a brief analysis for each. Only one page is expected. This is graded pass/fail/plus. One event analysis is due before each of the three later exams, respectively, and is your responsibility to turn them in whether or not there are reminders. Eligible events include (but are not exclusive to) art openings, art history or studio artist lectures, gallery openings, and special exhibits at museums. Individual works of art are NOT normally counted as events; neither is a tour of a museum's permanent collection. If you are traveling outside of Memphis this is a great opportunity to visit another museum but seek permission to write on a special exhibition beforehand. Please ask if there are any questions.

All write-ups for art events must be submitted using Moodle. You may NOT send them to me via email.

Paper Assignment Art 151

Unfortunately, it is not possible to visit each work of art we cover in class and digital images are an imperfect but necessary substitute. It is therefore especially important to have at least one experience with an actual work of art in which one may engage in intellectual, aesthetic and historical analysis of the object. The Memphis Brooks Museum provides such an opportunity.

I. The Assignment

The concept of the paper is demonstrate to me and yourself that through this course you are able to analyze a work of western art from almost any museum and understand it within an art historical context. The work of art will come from the Brooks Museum and the analysis will come from you. In essence I want you to think of this assignment as the following: You have the opportunity to choose a work of art from the Memphis Brooks Museum to be included in the next edition of *Garner's Art Through the Ages*. Your paper is the argument why they should include your work.

II. Choosing a Work of Art

Your paper assignment involves analysis of an actual object of Western Art produced during the period we are studying. Due to its proximity and breadth of its collection, the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art provides easy access to such works. For your paper you may choose any object within the museum that falls within the scope of our course. Students who wish to choose a work from another collection may do so only with the prior approval of the instructor. Choose any work that would fall within one of the chapters covered in our textbook. Hint: do not choose a work of Asian, African, or pre-Columbian art. Those fields are the topics of separate courses.

Important Notes

- Make sure to fully and clearly identify the object you have chosen. If there is a display number for the piece you can include that as well.
- 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 either free or discounted to Rhodes students (depending on the day), so bring your student ID.
- In writing the paper it will help to consult Sylvan Barnet, *A Short Guide to Writing about Art* (any recent edition). The book should be available for purchase at the college bookstore.

III. The 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, though its omission will result in a failure. Photographs, photocopies, postcards, and stick-figure drawings do NOT satisfy this component but may be included if you wish.

IV. Writing the Paper

A) Visual Analysis (about 1 page)

Discuss the salient visual characteristics of your piece. Write as if you are describing the piece over the phone 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, colors, shapes, 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? Is the work abstract or representational? How does its form and decoration complement its function? This should lead naturally to part two of the paper...

B) Historical Analysis (about 1-2 pages)

...now think about WHY the object appears the way it does. What was the artist attempting to express and why so? What makes the piece typically (or atypically) Near Eastern, Egyptian, Gothic, Renaissance, Romantic, etc.? How is the piece representative of larger cultural and aesthetic issues? In this section it is essential to compare and/or contrast the work with others you have studied and demonstrate in which chapter it belongs in Gardner's and why.

C) Conclusion (about 1 page)

Finally, conclude the paper by analyzing the importance and the significance of the work to the contemporary viewer and making the case for its inclusion in the next edition of your textbook. Explain why it deserves our attention and what we ultimately gain from the conservation, display, and study of such a work. Do not be patronizing or superficial. Take this exercise seriously.

V) FAQ

How long should the paper be?

About 4 pages (750-1000 words). I am not a page counter so don't fiddle with extra large type and small margins to try and fool me. If you are serious about the assignment 4 pages should be a breeze.

Do I need footnotes, endnotes or bibliography?

You must cite any sources that you have used. Anything consulted more generally may be listed in a bibliography. Specific quotes or ideas must be noted either with footnotes or endnotes but not both. I do expect you to use at least one additional source other than your textbook and museum guidecard. This must be a legitimate academic source and not a webpage of unknown authorship.

What stylistic format should I use for notes and/or bibliography?

You may use any of the generally accepted styles such as MLA, Chicago, or Art Bulletin. You may not simply make up your own style. The most important thing is to be consistent and correct within one of the officially recognized styles.

What about comparative Images?

In most cases you will want to find images of other objects that can be usefully compared to your chosen piece. Sometimes the comparisons will be almost exactly alike and other times they will show other properties. Nobody in this world has a visual recall of every art object so you must cut and paste the image into your paper for me. This can either be integrated within the text or appended to the end. Since this is for academic purposes there is no copyright issue. Identify the image source with a caption or note so I can click on the link.

Where do I find images?

Everywhere. I like Google Images, the Web Gallery of Art, and Wikimedia Commons. If you seek images you shall find them all over the web. You can also scan them from books.

Where do I find electronic resources?

Students are encouraged to use electronic resources, especially the Internet. The library has access to several excellent electronic databases as well as book catalogues. Know your source! Be forewarned that the information on the web is mixed, ranging from the highly informative to the seriously misleading so use good critical judgment on those sites you use.

Please visit the art department web page on using electronic sources for research at:

http://www.rhodes.edu/images/content/Art_Docs/Electronic_Resources_Guide_%283%29.pdf

Does the Honor Code Apply?

Yes! Give 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.

When is the paper due?

Papers are due during final ½ week of the semester: December 3-5. Late papers will not be accepted.

Can I have an extension?

No!

Please, can I have an extension? I have an extenuating circumstance...

No!

What if I miss the deadline?

You will receive a fail for your paper.

How do I submit my paper?

Please submit your paper electronically using Moodle. This way we can save trees and I can click on links. That means you must also scan your drawing or take a picture of it. **DO NOT SEND YOUR PAPER AS AN EMAIL ATTACHMENT.** Put your last name in the file name.

May I send the paper as an email attachment?

No!

Can I name my file “paper.docx”?

No! You must put your last name somewhere in the file name.

How is the paper graded?

Please see the sample rubric provided on Moodle. The paper will receive a letter grade. When calculating final grades a standard conversion will reconcile this with number grades earned on exams.

GENERAL WAIVER AND RELEASE

There are many opportunities for on-campus and off-campus study and other activities at Rhodes College in which we encourage students to participate. The College makes every effort to assure that due care and prudence are exercised in these programs. However, the College cannot assume liability for all risks associated with these programs. Accordingly, we request that each student and a parent or guardian sign this General Waiver and Release.

This General Waiver and Release applies to all on-campus and off-campus study and activities sponsored by Rhodes College, and is effective during the student’s official enrollment at Rhodes College. However, it applies only to on-campus activities or to domestic travel or absence from campus for a short duration. If the student is in an off-campus study abroad program, there is a separate Off-Campus Study Abroad Release.

I, _____, a student enrolled at Rhodes College, in consideration
(please print)

of participation in on-campus and off-campus study and activities sponsored by Rhodes College, do, for myself, my heirs and personal representatives, hereby forever exempt and release the College, its trustees, officers, faculty, staff, agents and employees, from any and all liability, claims, demands or causes of action whatsoever arising out of any damage, loss or injury to me or to my property while engaged in such on-campus or off-campus study or activities, including but not limited to transportation, housing and field trips, whether such loss, damage or injury results from the negligence of the College, its trustees, officers, faculty, staff, agents or employees, or from some other cause.

In the event that I drive my automobile to supply transportation for myself or other students, I warrant that I have a valid operator’s license and am covered by liability insurance currently in force. I understand that Rhodes College assumes no responsibility or liability for car repairs and damage to my automobile.

Trip leaders, program directors and faculty assume no responsibility for the personal conduct of group members. In the area of personal behavior, students are required to make personal decisions for which Rhodes College does not assume responsibility or liability.

Date _____
Student’s signature

Date _____
Parent’s or guardian’s signature (required of all students under 18 years of age)