The French Art World in the 19th and 20th Centuries: Realism to Surrealism

Class code

Instructor Details
Barbara SHAPIRO COMTE
bsc7@nyu.edu

Class Details
Summer 2016: Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursday, 13h00-15h30 (unless otherwise indicated)
NYUParis classroom: 4.11. Weekly museum visits/locations indicated w/i syllabus (below).
Well before each session, kindly consult this syllabus to confirm our meeting place and time so as to ensure smooth running of this class and punctuality at all museum venues.

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
Through case studies of artists working in Paris and environs, this course explores the socio-political and cultural influences that shape and inform art practices from the 1840s to 1940s. Animated by radical politics, international exchanges, and waves of foreign artists fleeing totalitarian regimes, Paris stood as the foremost cosmopolitan art capital, operating as a fervent laboratory of the artistic avant-garde until German Occupation. Illustrated lectures, seminars and museum visits cover the major movements: Realism, Modernism, Impressionism, Pointillism, Symbolism, Fauvism, Cubism, Dada and Surrealism.
Backed by firsthand observations of artworks in Paris and outlying museums, our study is enriched by multiple art history approaches, including social art history theory, feminist and gender readings, psychoanalytic and biographical methods, and formal analysis.
Format: Illustrated, interactive class lectures, thematic seminars, and participatory museum visits.

Desired Outcomes
Appreciation of French Modern art as a complex reflection, celebration, and/or critique of the urban context of Paris and environs, and the socio-political conditions of France and Western Europe.
Familiarity with current art history methods and theories as aids to apprehend artworks in their role as formal and expressive modes of communication.
Knowledge about a wide range of innovative art techniques and inventions developed in France during the 1840s-1940s, including chemical-based oil paints in transportable tubes, single-frame and serial photography, darkroom experiments with photo-sensitive papers, and collages (glued papers).
An enduring passion for French art through dynamic classes and unique personal confrontations with original works of art and sites of artistic production.

Assessment Components
1 quarter-term take-home paper (3pp) due May 30, covering weeks 1, 2 & 3) (3pp) 25%
1 midterm take-home quiz based on museum visits & readings (weeks) 25%
1 oral presentation within a collaborative seminar presentation (in-class) 20%
1 final in-house quiz based on museum visits & readings (weeks??) 20%
Active participation in class, seminars, museums, & discussions on assigned readings 10%

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.
Assessment Expectations

Grade A: (A to A-) Exceptional to excellent work

Grade B: (B+ to B-) Very good to encouraging or quite good work

Grade C: (C+ to C-) Above average to passable work

Grade D: Disappointing or poor work

Grade F: Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

Grade Conversion

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Félicitations
Très bien
Bien
Encourageant/Assez bien
Moyen plus
Moyen
Passable

Grade Criteria

Grade A: Superior (A-) or Outstanding (A) applies to work that is very well argued and structured; that gives evidence of both thorough knowledge of relevant artworks, extensive comprehension and assimilation of assigned readings as well as art history terminology; that shows personal engagement and particular insight.

Grade B: Very good (B+), Good (B), Adequate or decent (B-): Applies to work which demonstrates an ability to conceptualize the key issues and debates and to formulate relevant points or questions, but which may need to be more thorough, better structured, and/or show more independent thinking, and insight.

Grade C: Signs of reaching above average (C+), Average (C), Just below Average (C-): Applies to work which, though it may raise a couple of interesting points or questions, remains too superficial, undeveloped, or poorly structured, and/or shows insufficient grasp of the subject and assigned reading material.

Grade D: Work which is weak (D+), Very Poor Work (D), Unsatisfactory Work (D-): Presents incorrect or confused information, misunderstandings of the subject (artwork and/or texts), lack of coherence, lack of editing and structure or absence of development, an inability to make proper use of references and quotations, serious inadequacies of expression (syntax, grammar, and art history vocabulary).

Grade F: For non- or late submission of work without a valid medical excuse, or for work which is unintelligible, illegible, or wholly shallow and/or irrelevant; for plagiarism or work which uses unattributed material, or reliance on web sources, other than those explicitly approved on written course assignments.

Grading Policy

NYU Paris aims to have grading standards and results in all its courses similar to those that prevail at Washington Square.

Attendance Policy

Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will affect students' semester grades. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.
As per the Global Academic standard, unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade.1

Other guidelines specific to NYUParis include:

- **Attendance to class and all course-related events, even outside of regularly scheduled course times, is expected and mandatory. Some class outings/make-up classes take place on Fridays.**
- **Under no circumstances will non-University-related travel constitute an excused absence from class.** DO NOT book travel until you have received and carefully studied the syllabus of each of your classes.
- **If you are not sick enough to go to the doctor, you are well enough to go to class.**
- **No tests, quizzes, or exams will be made up.** A missed test, quiz, or exam will result in a zero. Questions about this policy should be directed to the Academic Affairs team, not your professor.

**Unless for medical reasons (confirmed by a doctor’s certificate), late submissions are not accepted.**

**New York University in Paris, as an academic community, is committed to free and open inquiry, to creating an intellectual and social environment that promotes this, and to upholding the highest standards of personal and academic integrity.**

All NYUP students have the responsibility to uphold these stated objectives. As a member of this community, you accept the responsibility for upholding and maintaining these standards, which include refraining from all forms of plagiarism and cheating as detailed below.

Cases of plagiarism at NYUParis will be brought to the attention of NYUParis academic administration as well as the implicated student's home school Dean.

**PLAGIARISM:** a form of fraud, presenting someone else’s work as though it were your own.2

- A sequence of words from another writer who you have not quoted and referenced in footnotes.3
- A paraphrased passage from another writer’s work that you have not cited.
- Facts or ideas gathered and reported by someone else.4
- Another student’s work that you claim as your own
- A paper that is purchased or “researched” for money
- A paper that is downloaded free of charge from the Internet

**CHEATING**

- Copying from another student’s exam or quiz
- Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance (crib sheets, internet, etc.) during an exam or quiz
- Having someone take your exam
- Accessing an exam or quiz in an unauthorized fashion prior to its administration
- Collaborating with other students or unauthorized persons on a take home exam
- Using the same written material for two courses without the express permission of both instructors
- Fabricating or falsifying data

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1 NYU’s “Policies and procedures for students studying away at a Global Academic Center”
2 NYU’s Expository Writing Department’s Statement on Plagiarism
3 NYU Statement on Plagiarism
4 NYU Statement on Plagiarism
Class Reader, volumes I & II and Midterm Supplement
Students are responsible for purchasing and reading assigned weekly texts before each scheduled class. They must bring the appropriate volume to class, and/or PDF reading and are expected to respond actively to discussions in class and museum.

Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase as copies are in NYU-L Library)
None

Recognized academic internet sources (eg. JSTOR, on-line Oxford Dictionary of World Mythology, and Saint James Version of the Bible [Old and New Testaments], Sigmund Freud, Interpretation of Dreams) are permitted for course assignments when correctly acknowledged in parenthetical notes and bibliography. More explicit guidelines will be distributed with quarter-term, midterm, and final paper assignments.

If in doubt, kindly consult your professor before submitting personal work for grading.

Additional Required Equipment
Sketchbook/notebook, pen/pencil, camera and/or telephone with camera capacity (but no flash) are essential for all museum visits.
**Session 1**  
**Tuesday, 24 May 2016**

Introduction to course scope, theories, methodologies, requirements and assessment. Examination of Paris as the context of artistic production from the Workers Revolution of 1848 to World War II, 1938-45, with concentration on the socio-political background of the Second Empire to early Third Republic, notably Napoleon III and Baron Haussmann’s urbanization of Paris (1860-1870) and its impact on art practices up to World War I (1870-1914).

Introduction to Realist art as a backdrop to focus on “painters of Modern life,” Intransigents, and Impressionists (1860s-80s), including style innovation, socio-political critique, and new subjects: Paris scenes, citizens, and denizens depicted through irony and guile.

Case studies: Realists Daumier, Courbet, Millet; Modernists/Intransigents: Manet, Caillebotte, Degas; Impressionists: Monet, Renoir, Cassatt, Morisot.

**Session 2**  
**Wednesday, 25 May 2016**

**Museum visit:** Musée d’Orsay: Realism into Modernism (Corot, Millet, Daumier, Courbet)  
**Meet at the Musée d’Orsay, Entrée C, to the right when facing the Musée d’Orsay central entry from Rue de la Légion d’Honneur, 7”; Metro Solféario or by foot from NYUP.**

**Required Reading**  
- Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, “The Revolution of 1848 and the Emergence of Realism in France” and “Progress, Modernity, and Modernism — French Visual Culture during the Second Empire,” 254-265 and 267-299.

**Session 3**  
**Thursday, 26 May 2016**

**Museum visit:** Musée d’Orsay: The Myth of Modernity & its Subversion (Manet, Degas, Caillebotte, Morisot, Renoir, Monet)  
**Meet at the Musée d’Orsay, Entrée C, to the right when facing the Musée d’Orsay central entry from Rue de la Légion d’Honneur, 7”; Metro Solféario or by fast walk from NYUP in 20 minutes.**

**Required Reading**  

**Take-home quarter-term assignment (see hand-out) based on two paintings studied independently at the Musée d’Orsay and the Musée des Impressionnismes, Giverny.**

Topics will be distributed in relation to assigned readings.

1. Edgar Degas, permanent collection, Musée d’Orsay, 5th-floor level
2. Gustave Caillebotte, Musée des Impressionnismes, Giverny


**Session 4**  
**Monday, 30 May 2016**

**Quarter-term paper due**

Impressionism and new techniques: sensation and surface over illusion and depth: probing into painting techniques: the meaning of approximations, proto-abstraction, thematic series, and time frames. Temporality through brush strokes, simultaneously capturing the frozen moment and the visible passage of time (hours, seasons, narrative history).

Perceptual flux, from depth into flatness and abstraction (Greenberg’s theory).

Blurring and corrective techniques: intentional effects and new meanings or medical impairments?

Case studies: Manet, Monet and Degas’ late years, in light of Andy Warhol’s serial Pop paintings.

**Required Reading**  
**Session 5**

**Wednesday, 1 June 2016**

**Meet in lobby, Musée Marmottan 13h40 sharp**

**Museum visit:** Musée Marmottan (Monet and Morisot)

**Meet at the Musée Marmottan, entry hall, 2 rue Louis Boilly, 16°; M° La Muette.**

Group debate on Monet’s “self-criticism” and “flatness” based on the Greenberg reading. Discussion on Morisot’s “feminine touch” based on the Garb reading.

Monet’s and Morisot’s Impressionist paintings explored as exercises in narrative and technical experimentations, subjected to formal and feminist readings involving concepts of “self-criticism” and “flatness” as well as gender theory and the gaze based on readings by Greenberg and Garb, respectively.

**Required Reading:** Bring copies of assigned readings for consultation in the museum.

- Clement Greenberg colour PDF printout: cas.uchicago.edu/workshops/wittgenstein/files/2007/10/Greenberg.

**Session 6**

**Thursday, 2 June 2016**

**Musée d’Orsay:**

Ensemble de la Deuxième Empire: The Belle Époque or Fin-de-Siècle Paris, 1880s-1890s:

Consequences and new directions, formal and thematic; subjectifying the objective. The final phase of naturalism: Degas, Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec. Manet’s *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*: on ambiguity, isolation and detachment.

Late & Post-Impressionism, Neo-Impressionism, and Pointillism (Divisionism), an awkward primitivism. Case studies on Seurat and Pissarro: scientific laws of optics over spontaneous impressionistic instincts. Obsessional uniform dots as an entry to psychological and political meaning embedded in technique.

**Required Reading**


**Saturday, June 4**

**Excursion to the village of Giverny by train,**

- Musée des Impressionismes and Fondation Claude Monet, Monet’s house and gardens, both sites located in the village of Giverny. www.claude-monet-giverny.fr

**Session 7**

**Monday, 6 June 2016**

**Musée d’Orsay:** Late Naturalism and Neo-Impressionism or Pointillism (Divisionism)

Case studies on Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Pissarro and Seurat.

**Required Reading**


**Session 8**

**Thursday, 9 June 2016**

**Musée d’Orsay, 14h45**

**Museum visit:** Musée d’Orsay: Symbolism, Primitivism (Gauguin)

**Musée d’Orsay:** Symbolism, Primitivism (Gauguin)

**Meet at the Musée d’Orsay, Entrée C.**

**Required Reading:**

**Session 9**
*Monday, 13 June*
*Musée de l'Orangerie*

**13h45**

**Museum visit:** Musée de l'Orangerie (Monet, Matisse, and Picasso):

Monet's *Nympheas*, Matisse’s decorative figuration, and Picasso’s “primitivism”

**Meet at the front entry, Musée de l'Orangerie, main entry, Jardin des Tuileries et Carrousel, quai des Tuileries et Carrousel or rue de Rivoli, 1°; M° Concorde.**

**Required Reading**


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**Session 10**
*Wednesday, 15 June 2016*

**Cézanne: From nervous modernism & figuration to geometric reduction. An endless quest for structured emotions through reduction of colour, brushwork, detail, and planer shifts. The discovery of “passages”: moving into the 4th dimension and proto-Cubism. Causes and meaning in structural shifts from early to late works: possible interpretations based on biographical sources, personal letters, and Freudian analysis.**

**Required Reading**


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**Session 11**
*Thursday, 16 June 2016*

**14h15 sharp**

**Musée d'Orsay**

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**Museum visit:** Musée d'Orsay: Cézanne: Five Phases from Nervous Figuration to Proto-Cubism

**Meet at the Musée d’Orsay, Entrée C**

**Required Reading**


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**FINAL PAPER ASSIGNMENT,**

**DUE 30 JULY 2016**

**Final take-home assignment to be emailed to all students, due July 30. Topics will cover Sessions 11-18 inclusive and associated readings from (16 June - 30 July). Students are encouraged to submit a short outline or schedule an individual meeting to discuss their chosen topics & readings.**

**REMINDER: FINAL PAPER (HARD COPY) DUE ON LAST CLASS, WEDNESDAY, 29 JULY 2016.**

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**Session 12**
*Monday, 20 June 2016*

**Cubism: Montmartre, scene of experimentations in destruction and atavism, Primitivism & the Modern. Cubist forays into time and space: Cézanne’s legacy to Picasso and Braque in 3 phases: Cézannian (1906-1909); Analytic (1910-1912); Synthetic (1913-1914). Destruction of Western perspective and primitive sources. Fragmentation, dismemberment, and indeterminacy in painting, collage, and 3-D assemblage.**

**Required Reading**


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**Session 13**
*Wednesday, 22 June 2016*

**Seminar Group 3:** interpreting collages through Poggi, “In Defiance of Painting.” Seminar on collage or papiers collés [glued papers] & its decoding (Picasso and Braque).

**Required Reading (PDF)**

**Session 14**  
**Saturday, 25 June 2016**  
**Musée Picasso**  
Permanent & Special Exhibition  
10h30 sharp - 13h00

*Museum visit: Musée Picasso*  
“Picasso through Sculpture”: from found, readymade, and recycled objects, using eclectic raw, artisanal, and manufactured materials (stone, plaster, wood, pebbles, wicker baskets, plastic, scrap metal, ceramic, bicycle seats and handles, child’s shoes, etc.). Picasso employs both additive and subtractive sculptural techniques to invent his boundless, buoyant, three-dimensional worlds, from assemblages to plaster casts, and painted bronzes to cardboard violins.  
**Meet in the courtyard of the Musée national Picasso, 5, rue Thorigny, 3°; M° Saint Paul, M° Chemin Vert or Sebastien Frossart.**

**Required Readings**  
TBC

**Session 15**  
**Monday, 27 June 2016**

Dada & World War I, 1914-1918: Dada—The end of art? Figuration and Abstraction; Dada and the crisis of values, an international response. Experiments in art (Kandinsky) and literature—Negation or the demise of narrative form? Early concrete poetry, automatic writing, and collage: total liberty, pure chance (Tzara, Ball) Photo collages, improbable and ironic mechanisms, ready-mades, rectified found objects, rayograms Case studies: Apollinaire, Picabia, Hoch, Hausmann, Ernst, Arp, Duchamp, Man Ray.

**Required Reading**  

**REMINDER:**  
**FINAL PAPER (HARD COPY) DUE ON LAST CLASS, THURSDAY, 30 JUNE 2016**

**Session 16**  
**Tuesday, 28 June 2016**

The Surrealist Revolution to World War II: illustrated lecture & seminar on Surreal Sex Art between World Wars I and II: The Russian and Surrealist Revolutions Breton’s Nadja and Manifestes du surréalisme, the language of rupture, revolt, and release. Pure psychic automatism, art as reflection of thought processes (painting, photography, collage, cinema). Case studies: Ernst, Tanguy, Dalí, Masson, Giacometti, and Picasso (the outsider).

**Part I: Seminar Group 2:** Surrealism: Sex, Sadomasochism, and Misogyny Impact of Freud’s and Jung’s psychoanalytical theories on art: dreams, desires, and free associations.

**Part III: Seminar Group 3:** Magritte’s Surrealist subconscious (dreams, fantasies, fears, phobias & release) experiments with Word & Image against linguistic and pictorial logic.

**Required Reading**  

**Session 17**  
**Wednesday, 29 June 2016**  
**Musée d’Orsay, 14h15**

*Museum visit: Musée d’Orsay, Special monographic show* on Henri Rousseau, naïf painter: "Le Douanier Rousseau—L’Innocence archaïque"/"The Customs’ Official Rousseau—Archaïc Innocence"

**Musée d’Orsay:**  
**Meet at the Musée d’Orsay, Entrée C**

**Required Reading**  
Classroom Etiquette

- No eating in class.
- No cell phones in class.
- No laptop computers in class unless permission is expressly given by your professors.
- A 10-minute break is scheduled during summer semester sessions.

Leaving class mid-session to go to the bathroom or yawning in class is considered rude in France.

Required Co-curricular Activities

None.

Suggested Co-curricular Activities

**INDEPENDENT MUSEUM VISITS in central Paris:**
Regular independent visits to museums located in central Paris (Musée Delacroix, Musée Gustave Moreau, Musée Rodin), as well as walks through Montmartre where Seurat, Degas, Cassatt, Van Gogh, Picasso, and Braque lived and established their studios.

**AN INDEPENDENT MUSEUM VISIT in the Paris environs**

Your Instructor

Barbara Shapiro Comte, Canadian and French citizen, resident in Paris since 1989
B.A. University of British Columbia, double major in English & North American Literature/Studio & History of Art
B.A.RCH. School of Architecture, University of British Columbia
Ph.D., M.A. Harvard University, Department of History of Art and Architecture

Interests:
French art & architecture, 1630s-1830s (Power and Representation); Paris architecture and urban planning, 1750s-1950s; Paris Metropolis, Present & Future.
Research: The evolution of architectural and mechanical drawings in architecture and art, 18th-20th centuries, including Dada and Surrealist works by Raoul Hausmann, Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia, and Max Ernst.

Le Corbusier: Architecture & Painting of the 1950s in France and India.

Academic Conferences & Scholarly Publications include:

Translations include: