The French Art World in the 19th and 20th centuries:

Summer Session

Professor: Laure-Caroline Semmer

Period: Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday 13h-15h30 (unless otherwise indicated)
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Course Abstract

This course traces the artistic contribution to modernity in 19th century and the first decades of 20th century French art, its utopian dimension, its different achievements and its decline. Since the French Revolution, some major works of art, art critics and theories, and artists themselves contributed to change drastically the artist’s role and the role of the arts. In the newly established bourgeois, industrialized and modernized society in France, the co-existence of opposite art practices and ideologies as well as the quickly following changes and innovations in successive art-movements, such as realism, impressionism, postimpressionism, cubism, fauvism will be analysed with regard to their respective claim for modernity.

Through an examination of form and content distinguishable in works of various artistic disciplines (painting, sculpture, architecture, design), students will critically evaluate artistic language and expression that is representative of modern ideologies. This course will examine the visual arts and will utilize theoretical texts for supportive analysis.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the course the student will be able to:

- Distinguish major art movements from Neo-Classicism to Modern Art.
- Analyze and contextualize key works of 19th and 20th century French Art.
- Demonstrate awareness and understanding of their historical, social and esthetical background.
- Have a basic reading of essential art critics and art theories dealing with modernity.
- Acquire basic knowledge about the foundations of Modern Art.
Course Outline: Topics covered

Modernity in 19th century French art.

1. Introduction, Organisation, Timetable,
   The academic quarrel: Neo-classicism and romanticism; opposite contributions to modernity.
   Wednesday 31/05, 13 a.m.; Classroom


2. The decadency of historical painting and utopia of nature, art and society: School of Fontainebleau and Gustave Courbet

   Oral presentation:
   Jean-François Millet, « The Angélus », Orsay
   Thomas Couture, « Les romains de la décadence », orsay

   Text Studies: Gustave Courbet, Realisme manifesto
   Thursday 01/06 13 a.m., Orsay Museum, meeting point the group entrance at the corner facing the Seine, Metro Assemblée Nationale/Solférino,

3. The Revolution of the symbolic in Manet’s painting: “Modernity.”

   Oral presentation:
   Edouard Manet, « La musique aux tuileries », 1862, National Gallery, London

   Text Studies:
   Baudelaire’s “Painter of modern life”. Gustave Courbet, Realisme manifesto
   Monday 05/06 Classroom


   Oral presentation:
Gustave Caillebotte, “les raboteurs de parquet” (the floorgrappers)

Renoir, « Le bal du moulin de la galette »

Wednesday 07/06. Musée d’Orsay

Text Studies:
Duranty’s “Nouvelle Peinture” – Impressionism

5. Modernization of Paris under Hausmann :
Text Studies:
Walter Benjamin: Passages

Thursday 08/06: Walking tour, meeting point, in front of Notre Dame and Petit Palais.

6. Monet and Renoir: two opposites contributions to the XXth century
Oral Presentation:
Monet, the great waterlilies

Monday 12/06: Musée de l’Orangerie and exhibition The Bridgestone Collection

7. Post-Impressionism, Signac, Seurat … Cézanne, Van Gogh,
Oral presentation
Seurat, « dimanche après-midi à la grande jatte », national gallery,
Van Gogh, series of Selfportrait

Text studies: Van Gogh, Correspondence, letter to his brother 25/05/1889 Cézanne, Correspondence, letter to Emile Bernard 12/05/1904; 26/05/1904; 25/07/1904, 23/10/1904.

Wednesday 14/06 Musée d’Orsay

8. Mid-term exam
Thursday 15/06, classroom

Gauguin. Henri Rousseau, Picasso, Matisse

Gauguin, « La belle angèle », Orsay

Additional reading: Gauguin, letter to Emile Shuffenecker, 14/08/1888; 08/10/1888

Monday 19/06, classroom

The autonomy of the language of art

10. Picasso and the primitiv

Wednesday 21/06, Musée du Quai Branly

11. The influence of science and machine (Barr Diagram) Cubism/ Italian Futurism

Text to study: Guillaume Apollinaire “: The Cubists”, 1911 (n° 1) /- “The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism”/- “technical manifesto”. (N°5-6)

Oral presentation: Carlo Carrà, Funeral of the anarchist Galli, 1911, Moma (futurism and politics)

Thursday 22/06, Centre pompidou

12. Avant-garde: Color as a power: From “Modernity” to abstract art. Fauvism in France / Orphism (Delaunay-Kupka)

Text to study: W. Kandinsky, from “Concerning the spiritual in Art”, 1911, p. 82-89 / “The cologne lecture”, 1914, p. 89-93. (N°3 and N°4)

Oral presentation: Delaunay, Rythm, musée national d’art moderne de la ville de Paris –

Monday 26/06, classroom

13. Call to order: art faces to war: on side (Dada, Surrealism,) to another (Bauhaus)
Wednesday 28/06, Centre Pompidou

14. Duchamp and inheritants

Duchamp, Pop art, Nouveau realism

Thursday 29/06, Classroom

15. How New York stole the idea of modern art?

American expressionism vs French abstract art

Monday 03/07, Classroom

16. Final Exam.

Wednesday 05/07, Classroom

17. Contemporary art

Fondation Louis Vuitton, « Art/Afrique » or walking tour La villette

Assignements and Gradings

Oral Presentation 25%
These will be a 15mn oral presentation upon list given in class. You must organize your ideas and put the work of art in context. In classroom you must come with a power point file with images. The daily performance will be awarded on regular attendance, participation in discussions, meeting deadlines, and effort spent on class projects.

Midterm 25% and Final 25%: Material in class lectures, work viewed in museums, slides, video shorts, and assigned readings in text will be the basis for the mid-term and final exam. It is imperative that students attend and participate in class discussions and museum sessions in order to pass the exams. These will be a short essay to answer to a general question. You’ll have to show that you understand how to use artworks and put it back in context. You must organize your ideas, make an introduction and a conclusion and in your development, use examples of work of art seen in class. Not to exceed 2 pages.
**Research Paper Presentation 25%:** Double space the text and use 12-point type. Use a title page and list your sources/references in the back. Your reference elements must cite text (title), author, volume, publisher, and any other appropriate material. The length of the report should be a minimum of 5 pages of the text only – not the title page and the resource page.

**Grading Criteria of Research Paper:** You must show your documentation of the presented information. You must not copy or lift information from Internet sites without citing those references. You must use prescribed rules of grammar and correct spelling. Finally, you must weave the research information with your own ideas and thoughts about the subject to produce an interesting report. Exciting visuals will not redeem a poorly written paper.