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

Summer Session

Professor: Laure-Caroline Semmer
Period: Monday-Wednesday-Thursday 14h-16h30 (unless otherwise indicated)
Email: / 06 11 16 87 58

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, major works of art, art critics and theorists, and artists themselves contributed to change drastically the artist's role and the role of the arts. Against the backdrop of 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, contributions to modernity?

*Monday 28/05, 14h00; Classroom*

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

Text Studies:


*Wednesday 30/05 14h, Orsay Museum, meeting point the group entrance at the corner rue de lille, Metro Assemblée Nationale/Solférino,*

Oral presentation:

Jean-François Millet, *The Angélus*, Musée Orsay

3. The Revolution of the symbolic in Manet’s painting

Text Studies:


Thursday 31st/05, 13h00  Classroom

Oral presentation:

Edouard Manet, *La musique aux tuileries*, 1862, National Gallery, London

4. Modernization of Paris under Hausmann:

Text Studies:


Monday 04/06, 14h00: Walking tour, meeting point, in front of Notre Dame on the piazza

Oral Presentation:

Charles Garnier, The Opera House


Text Studies:

T. Duret, *The impressionists painter*, 1878, reprinted in Art Humanities Primary Source Reading, «Impressionism»


L Leroy, «Exhibition of the impressionists, in Art Humanities Primary Source Reading, «Impressionism», reprinted from The History of Impressionism by John Rewald.

Jules Laforgue, "Impressionism: The Eye and the Poet" by Jules La Forgue, William Jay Smith, trans., is reprinted from Art News, May 1956, in Art Humanities Primary Source Reading, «Impressionism»

P. A. Renoir, “The society of the irregularists”, etc., in Art Humanities Primary Source Reading, «Impressionism»


Wednesday 06/06, 14h, Orsay Museum, meeting point the group entrance at the corner rue de lille, Metro Assemblée Nationale/Solférino,

Oral presentation:
Gustave Caillebotte, les raboteurs de parquet (the floorscrappers), Musée d’Orsay
Renoir, Le bal du moulin de la galette, Musée d’Orsay

6. Post-Impressionism: Cezanne, Van Gogh, Signac, Seurat

Text studies: Van Gogh, Correspondence, letter to his brother 25/05/1889, http://www.vangoghletters.org/vg/letters/let783/letter.html#translation
Cézanne, Correspondence, letter to Emile Bernard 12/05/1904; 26/05/1904; 25/07/1904, 23/10/1904. In Texts to study, pp. 7-9
Paul Signac, excerpts from From Eugéne Delacroix to Neo-Impressionism (1899)

Thursday, 07/06, 14h Orsay Museum, meeting point the group entrance at the corner rue de lille, Metro Assemblée Nationale/Solférino,

Oral presentation
Seurat, The Circus, Musée d’Orsay

7. Mid-term exam
Monday 11/06, classroom

8. Monet and Renoir: two opposites contributions to the XXth century

Text Studies:
Marx R., « On water lilies », in in Art Humanities Primary Source Reading, « Impressionism »

Wednesday 13/06, 14h: Musée de l’Orangerie and exhibition American Abstract art

Oral Presentation:
Gauguin. Henri Rousseau, Picasso, Matisse

Text studies:


https://archive.org/details/letterspaulgaug00gauggoo

Facos M., Symbolist art in context, University of California Press, 2009, p. 9-37

Thursday 14/06, 14h00, classroom

Oral Presentation:

Gauguin, La belle angèle, Orsay

The autonomy of the language of art

10. Picasso and the primitiv

Text Studies

Carl Einstein, excerpts from Negro Sculpture, November Edition in Art Humanities Primary Source Reading.
Pierre Daix, excerpts from Picasso: Life and Art, Westview Press, 1993 in Art Humanities Primary Source Reading. «Picasso»

Monday 18/06, 14 Musée du Quai Branly, meeting point at the Pont de l’Alma, RER station,
11. The influence of science and machine Cubism and Italian Futurism

Text studies:

Guillaume Apollinaire “: The Cubists”, L’intransigeant, 10 october 1911, in Texts to study, p. 9

Gleizes A. Mezinger J., excerpt From Cubism, 1912 in Art Humanities Primary Source Reading, « Picasso »

Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, from The Way of Cubism in Art Humanities Primary Source Reading, « Picasso »

Wednesday 20/06, 14h, Centre pompidou, meeting point in the group outdoor line

Oral presentation: Pablo Picasso, The guitarist, Centre Pompidou

12. Avant-garde : Color as a power : Fauvism in France / Orphism (Delaunay-Kupka)

Text studies:


Thursday 21/06, Musée d’art moderne de la ville de Paris

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

13. From “Modernity” to abstract art

Text studies:


Monday 25/06, Centre Pompidou
14. Call to order: art faces to war: (Dada, Surrealism,)

Text studies:


B. Doherty, « The work of art and the problem of politics in Berlin Dada », October, vol. 105, summer 2003, pp. 73-92

Wednesday 27/06, 14h, Centre pompidou, meeting point in the group outdoor line

Oral Presentation:
Francis Picabia, Tabac-Rat, Musée national d’art moderne

15. Duchamp and inheritants: Duchamp, Pop art, Nouveau realism

Text Studies:
T. De Duve, R. Krauss, « Marcel Duchamp or the « Phynancier » or Modern Life », October, vol. 52, spring 1999, pp. 60-75

Marcel Duchamp, « The richard Mutt case », The Blind Man, New York, 1917, in Texts to study, p. 29

Thursday 28/06 13h00, Classroom

Oral Presentation:
Daniel Spoerri, Tableau-Piege


Text studies:


Monday 02/07, 13h00, classroom

Oral presentation:
Pierre Soulages, Outrenoir,
17. Final Exam.

Wednesday 04/07, 13h00, Classroom

18. Contemporary art

Thursday, 05/07, 13h15, Fondation Louis Vuitton, « In tune with the word” at Les Sablons station, line 1

Assignements and Gradings

Oral Presentation 25%
These will be a 15mn oral presentation upon list given by the professor and noted in the syllabus. It will take place in museums or in class, in this case you must come with a power point file with images. You must organize your ideas and put the work of art in context.

Daily Performance Grade 10%
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%: 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. 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.

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.
Primary Source Reading

Apollinaire G. “: The Cubists”, L’intransigeant, 10 october 1911,p. 8


Daix P., Picasso: Life and Art , Westview Press,1993


De Duve T., Krauss R., « Marcel Duchamp or the « Phynancier » or Modern Life », October, vol. 52, spring 1999, pp. 60-75

Doherty B., « The work of art and the problem of politics in Berlin Dada », October, vol. 105, summer 2003, pp. 73-92


Facos M., Symbolist art in context, University of California Press, 2009


Laforgue J., "Impressionism: The Eye and the Poet" by Jules LaForgue, William Jay Smith, trans., is reprinted from Art News, May 1956

Leroy L. , « Exhibition of the impressionists, reprinted from John Rewald, The History of
Impressionism


Signac P, *From Eugéne Delacroix to Neo-Impressionism*, 1899


Additional Reading


Löwy M., *Morning star : surrealism, marxism, anarchism, situationism, utopia*, University of Texas Press, 2009


Tompkins Lewis M. (ed. by), Critical readings in Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, an Anthology University of California Press, 2007


White M., Generation Dada. The first World War and the First World War, Yale University Press, 2013