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

Summer Session

Professor: Laure-Caroline Semmer, PhD
Period: Monday-Wednesday-Thursday 14h-16h / Tuesday 14h – 15h30
Email: lcs10@nyu.edu / 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 Requirement:

**Oral Presentation** 15%
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, preferably on a flash drive.
In the content, you must organize your ideas and put the work of art in context. You could compare with work of art from the same artists or some others if it’s relevant to illustrate your issue. Depending on the work art you need to enlighten the political context, or the esthetical approach or the social purpose of the painting. In case of comparison, you will show the interest to compare those two artworks.

**Midterm 25% and Final 25%:**

**Paper in class in two parts:**

1. Identify 7 artworks (need to specify artist’s name, title, date and media) 30% of the grade

2. Short essay to answer to a general question (between 300 and 500 words, mostly one page) 70% of the grade

In this essay, you’ll have to show that you understand how to use artworks and put it back in context. You must organize your ideas, make a short introduction and a short conclusion. Your development will be organized around themes. You’ll need to use examples of work of art seen in class to illustrate your ideas. Only example with artist’s name, title, and date will be considered.

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:** 25%

**Interpretation of an after 1970 work of art related to a 19th century one.**

Inducing an interesting comparison, your choice must show a relevant interaction between two artists, two interpretations, two cultural readings or two art movements. You must weave the research information with your own ideas and thoughts about the subject to produce an interesting report.
The length of the report should be a minimum of 700-1000 words of the text only – not the title page and the resource page.

Grading criteria: 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, Exciting visuals will not redeem a poorly written paper.

**Daily Performance Grade 10%**

The daily performance will be awarded on regular attendance, participation in discussions, meeting deadlines, and effort spent on class projects will minimize or increase the final grade of 10%.

**Letter Grades**

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
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Course Schedule:

Modernity in 19th century French art.

1. Introduction, Organisation, Timetable,
The academic quarrel: Neo-classicism and romanticism, contributions to modernity?

* Tuesday 06/04 14h00; Classroom

Session I : Art as a social weapon : Barbizon School and Gustave Courbet

- Nature and peasantry

* Wednesday 06/05 14h Musée d’Orsay, Ligne 12. Station Solférino / RER B ligne C Station Musée d’Orsay. Meeting Point : Entrance B

Text:


- The strategy of scandal : Gustave Courbet

* Thursday 06/06 Classroom

Oral Presentation:


Text:


Session 3 : Modern painter, painter of modern life : Manet’s painting

- The Revolution of the symbolic
Monday 06/10  Classroom

Oral presentation:

- Edouard Manet, *The execution of Maximilien Emperor*, 1867, Mannheim, Stadtciclhe Kunsthalle and other versions

Text


- Painter of modern life

Tuesday 06/11, Classroom

Text:


- Plein air painting

Wednesday 06/12, Musée d’Orsay, Ligne 12. Station Solférino / RER B ligne C Station Musée d’Orsay. Meeting Point : Entrance B

Oral presentation:

- Renoir, *Le bal du moulin de la galette*, 1876, Musée d’Orsay

Text


- Nature and Leisure in the Age of Industry

Oral Presentation

- Gustave Caillebotte, *les raboteurs de parquet*, (the floorscrapers), 1875, Musée d’Orsay
Thursday 06/13, classroom

- Monet and Renoir: opposites contribution to modernity

Monday 06/17 Musée de l’Orangerie, Jardin des Tuileries,

Ligne 1 / 8, station Concorde

Meeting point: Main Entrance

Oral Presentation:

- Monet, The waterlilies panels

Text


- Modernization of Paris under Hausmann:

Tuesday 06/18, Walking tour Meeting point: Piazza of Cathédrale Notre Dame,

Rer C, St Michel, Cluny la Sorbonne / Ligne 4, station Cité

Oral Presentation:

- The history of Vendôme Place and its links to La Commune

Text

C. Baudelaire, tr. J. Mayne, «the Crowd», Phaidon Press, pp. 1-35*

Session 4: Art as myth?

- Post-Impressionism: Cézanne, Van Gogh, Signac, Seurat

Wednesday 06/19 Musée d’Orsay

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 Eugène Delacroix to Neo-Impressionism (1899)

Oral presentation

- Seurat, *The Circus*, Musée d'Orsay

Mid-term exam

*Thursday 06/20, classroom*

- Modernity and Alterity: Japonism and Primitivism

*Monday 06/24, classroom*

*Text studies:*


https://archive.org/details/letterspaulgaug00gaugggoog


*Oral Presentation:*

- Gauguin, *La belle angèle*, Orsay

- Black model: from Gericault to Matisse,

*Tuesday 06/25, Musée d’Orsay, special exhibition*

- Sculpture: Carpeaux, Rodin

*Wednesday 06/26 Musée Rodin Hotel Biron, 77, avenue de Varenne, Ligne 13 station Varenne, Meeting point: main entrance*

*Oral Presentation:*

- Rodin – Jean Turcan, *Le baiser*, Musée Rodin, 1889

*Text*

Session 5: The autonomy of the language of art

- The influence of science and machine Cubism and Italian Futurism

_Thursday 06/27, Classroom_

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 »

- Picasso and Calder

_Monday 07/01_ Musée national Picasso, 5, rue de Thorigny, 75003 Paris, , Ligne 1 station Saint Paul , Meeting point: courtyard

Text


- From Delacroix to Signac: Matisse and les fauves

_Tuesday 07/02 Classroom_

Text


P. Signac, excerpts from _From Eugène Delacroix to Neo-Impressionism_ (1899)
Avant-garde: From “Modernity” to abstract art. Orphism (Delaunay-Kupka)

Wednesday 07/03 Musée national d’art moderne Centre Georges Pompidou Place Georges Pompidou, 75004 Paris Ligne 11, station Rambuteau, Ligne 1, station Hotel de ville or Chatelet Meeting point: Piazza, in front of group entrance

Text studies:


2. Call to order : art faces to war : (Dada, Surrealism.)

Thursday 07/04, Classroom

Text studies:

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

Oral Presentation:

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

14. Duchamp and his heirs : Duchamp, Pop art, Nouveau realism

Monday 07/08, classroom

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

- How New York stole the idea of modern art ? American expressionism vs French abstract art

Tuesday 07/09, Classroom

Text studies:


Oral presentation:

Pierre Soulages, Outrenoir,

15. Final Exam.

Wednesday 07/10, Classroom

16. Contemporary art

Palais de Tokyo

Primary Source Reading

Apollinaire G. “: The Cubists”, L’Intransigeant, 10 octobre 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 La Forge, 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 Eugène Delacroix to Neo-Impressionism*, 1899


**Additional Reading**


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


