

Art Humanities: Masterpieces of Western Art

Humanities W1121, Section 008
SPRING TERM 2009
Monday/Wednesday 1:10-2:25pm, Schermerhorn 608

Instructor: **Risham Majeed** (HYPERLINK "mailto:Rm917@columbia.edu"
rm917@columbia.edu)
Office: Schermerhorn 925
Office Hours: email for appointment

Course Description:

This course is about looking at, thinking about, and critically discussing the visual arts. Its chief aim will be to provide you with a language to engage works of art. It is NOT a historical survey but an analytical study of a few monuments and artists. We will be looking at these monuments and artists across time and media paying close attention to their formal structure as well as to their shifting significance in historical context.

Course Websites:

Please familiarize yourself with the ArtHum website which is an invaluable part of the course. It has images, readings, and information which you should consult before each class.
HYPERLINK "http://www.mcah.columbia.edu/arthumanities/index.html" <http://www.mcah.columbia.edu/arthumanities/index.html>
Login: ahar
Password: 826sch

Courseworks will have assignments and additional readings:
<http://courseworks.columbia.edu>
(login with your UNI and password)

Required Readings:

No textbooks are required for this class. Most texts are from the *Primary Source Reader* which can be purchased at the University Bookstore or accessed through the Art Humanities website. Two helpful books that you may want for your own reference throughout the term are listed below and can be easily purchased at Book Culture or Amazon.

Joshua C. Taylor, *Learning to Look: A Handbook for the Visual Arts* (Chicago, 1981)
Sylvan Barnet, *A Short Guide to Writing About Art* (Longman, 2005).

Note: readings are tentatively listed below under class schedule but they are subject to modification throughout the term. **I will post changes and assignments on courseworks so please consult the site as you prepare for each class.**

Course Requirements:

ATTENDANCE

You must attend all classes. All absences (illness, emergency, religious observances etc.) must be reported to me. More than two unexcused absences will significantly reduce your grade.

CLASS PARTICIPATION/PREPARATION

Ours is a discussion based course designed to help you articulate visual experience so your participation in class is essential. Readings for this class are short and focused so please be sure to do them. NOTE: since we are going to be focusing on discussion rather than lecture, computers will not be allowed in class.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (Due March 4 and April 20)

In addition to the mid-term and final, there will be two writing assignments which will ask you to describe paintings/sculptures/buildings in New York City. The first assignment will be a critical analysis based on your in-person experience of works of art and will be 3-5 pages. The second paper will be an exhibition proposal requiring research around a theme that must be approved by me in advance and will be 8-10 pages. Specific assignment instructions will be posted on courseworks.

FIELD TRIPS (Feb 9, Mar 25, Apr 22)

There will be 3 trips so please consult the syllabus and plan to attend.

MIDTERM/FINAL (March 11 and T.B.A.)

THERE WILL NOT BE ANY MAKE-UP EXAMS.

Grading:

Attendance/Participation: 30%
2 Papers: 35% (short 15%, longer 20%)
Midterm: 15%
Final: 20%

Academic Integrity:

This course is about exchanging ideas in an open forum. I am interested in what YOU have to say. Plagiarism will result in appropriate action taken with the office of the dean. If you have questions, come ask me or consult university guidelines.

Class Schedule:

WEEK 1

January 21

Introduction: Course aims/questions

Reading: *Joshua C. Taylor, "An analysis of the work of art," in *Learning to Look*, p. 51-68 (courseworks)

WEEK 2

January 26

Parthenon I: Architecture and Experience

Reading: Arnold van Gennep, "The Territorial Passage," from *The Rites of Passage* (courseworks)

Thucydides, "Funeral Oration of Pericles"

January 28

Parthenon II: Sculpture and Rhetoric

Reading: Pliny

Winckelmann, "Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture" (courseworks)

RESPONSE PAPER DUE (Ungraded)

WEEK 3

February 2

Amiens I: The Cathedral as Heavenly Jerusalem

Reading: Excerpts from *The Holy Bible*

Excerpts from Abbot Suger, *On the Art Treasures of St Denis*

February 4

Amiens II: Portal Sculpture

Reading: Jacobus de Voragine, "The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary"

Stephen Murray, excerpts from *A Gothic Sermon* (courseworks)

WEEK 4

February 9

Trip to St John the Divine

February 11

Special Topic: Medieval Art as Argument

Reading: Pope Gregory the Great, "On the Proper use of Images"

Michael Camille, "Mouths and Meanings: Towards an Anti-Iconography of Medieval Art" (courseworks)

WEEK 5

February 16

Guest Speaker: Linda Seidel

February 18

Raphael I: Painting and Formal Analysis

Reading: excerpts from *Alberti, *On Painting*

Giorgio Vasari, "Life of Raphael"

WEEK 6

February 23

Raphael II

Reading: Sydney Freedberg, "Raphael's Frescoes in the Stanza della Segnatura" (courseworks)

February 25

Michelangelo I

Reading: Michelangelo, "Selected Poems" and contracts for the David and Pietà

Giorgio Vasari, "Life of Michelangelo"

WEEK 7

March 2

Michelangelo II

Reading: Anthony Blunt, "Michelangelo's Views on Art" (courseworks)

March 4

Gianlorenzo Bernini

Reading: St Teresa of Avila, excerpt from "The Life of St Theresa by Herself"

Ovid, "Daphne and Apollo"

*Heinrich Wölflin, "Distinctions between Renaissance and Baroque" (courseworks)

FIRST PAPER DUE

WEEK 8

March 9

Pieter Bruegel

Reading: Karel van Mander, "Pieter Bruegel of Bruegel"

Erasmus, from "The Praise of Folly"

March 11

MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK 9

March 23

Rembrandt van Rijn I

Reading: Constantijn Huygens, excerpts from *The Autobiography*
Samuel van Hoogstraten on the *Nightwatch*

March 25

TRIP TO METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

WEEK 10

March 30

Rembrandt van Rijn II:

Reading: watch Simon Schama's "The Power of Art: Rembrandt"
Available on the ArtHum website

April 1

Francisco Goya y Lucientes I

Reading: Goya, "Address to the Royal Academy"
Advertisement for *Los Caprichos*)

WEEK 11

April 6

Francisco Goya y Lucientes II

Reading: *Meyer Schapiro, "Style" (courseworks)

April 8

Claude Monet I:

Reading: Diego Martelli, "The Impressionists"
Edmund Duranty, from *The New Painting*

WEEK 12

April 13

Claude Monet II

Reading: Charles Baudelaire, "Crowds"
and excerpts from "The Painter of Modern Life"
(courseworks)

April 15

Pablo Picasso I: 'Primitivism Revisited'

Reading: Carl Einstein, excerpts from "Negro Sculpture"
Pablo Picasso, "Statement to Marius de Zayas"

SECOND PAPER DUE

WEEK 13

April 20

Pablo Picasso II: Collage and Cubism

Reading: Daniel Henry Kahnweiler, excerpt from *The Way of Cubism*
Rosalind Krauss, "Re-Presenting Picasso" (courseworks)

April 22

TRIP TO MoMA

WEEK 14

April 27

Frank Lloyd Wright

Reading: Frank Lloyd Wright, "In the Cause of Architecture"

April 29

Jackson Pollock

Clement Greenberg, "Jackson Pollock: Inspiration, Vision, Intuitive
Decision"

WEEK 15

May 4

May 11-15

LAST DAY OF CLASS: review and chat

FINAL EXAM, date T.B.A.

PAGE

