

Undergraduate Art History
Course Descriptions
Fall 2008

FA AAH 1101-001 Hist of Western Art: Ancient-Medieval
CRN 21872 MW 3:00-4:15 pm Dr. McCall

This class is both an introduction to the history of Western art and visual production from Prehistory to the Middle Ages and an introduction to the discipline of Art History. We will survey major monuments of art from the prehistoric birth of representational art (magical cave paintings) through the thirteenth century (French Cathedrals), with emphasis on ancient and medieval civilizations of Europe and the Mediterranean basin (notably Egypt, various Near Eastern Empires, Greece, Rome, and the early Islamic, Byzantine and western Medieval worlds). Students will not only develop knowledge of these visual and artistic traditions, but will acquire a vocabulary for their description, analysis and interpretation, together with a critical understanding of the methods and aims of art historical study. This class seeks to establish specific historical contexts in which visual culture was produced and the particular religious, political, and social functions it served. We will address a number of controversial and perennially relevant issues, relating ancient and medieval art to important contemporary debates, including collecting and looting, repatriation, iconoclasm, the power of images, and the reuse of ancient imagery and architecture by Fascist and Democratic governments. By learning how to assess and read images and artistic production through analysis and interpretation, students will become sophisticated viewers of visual culture of the past and present.

FA AAH 1102-001
CRN 21877

History of Western Art:
Renaissance-Contemporary World
TR 1:00-2:15 pm Dr. Nastick

We live, today, in a visual culture, a world increasingly populated with images. Movies, magazines, television, the Internet (even the text on a computer screen is an image of that text), and advertising depends, more and more, on visual effects to tell a story, expose fashion, report the news, dispense information, and sell us “the good.” But how do images do all that? How do images work?

In this course, we will learn that the principles used to form, arrange, and distribute images at the end of the second millennium were developed in the Renaissance, shaped by 17th century Dutch painting, recovered and advanced by 18th and 19th century French and British art, and transformed by the late 19th century invention of photography. The importance of classical form, color and line, symmetry, balance, and perspective, elements crucial for the composition of the variety of images that make our culture visual, will be shown to have their basis in the history of art from Giotto to Picasso and beyond. This is a discussion oriented course which will include trips to area museums and art galleries.

FA AAH 1103-001
CRN 21878

Visual Arts in U.S. I, 1607-1876
MWF 10:30-11:20 am Dr. Sullivan

A survey of painting, sculpture, and architecture done in the present-day United States between the founding of Jamestown and the great Centennial Exhibition of 1876 in Philadelphia.

Artists featured in this survey will include John Singleton Copley, Charles Willson Peale, Jonathan Trumbull, Thomas Cole, Albert Bierstadt, Frederic Church, Thomas Sully, Thomas Eakins, Mary Cassatt, William Rush, Edmonia Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, Charles Bulfinch, William Strickland, James Renwick, A. J. Davis, A. J. Downing, Richard Morris Hunt, and H. H. Richardson (to name only a few).

FA AAH 2000-100 Ancient Art W 6:10 - 8:50 pm
CRN 21881 Sr. Kathleen Szpila

The civilizations of ancient Egypt, the Aegean, Greece, and Rome all made important contributions to the history of art. This course will examine the architecture, sculpture, painting and occasional examples of the minor arts within their historical contexts from c. 3000 B.C. in Egypt and will conclude with the reign of the Roman emperor, Constantine the Great, and the early years of Christian art. Style, iconography, function, and the techniques used to create works as diverse as Egyptian pyramids and Roman aqueducts will be considered.

There will be slide illustrated lectures and ample opportunity for questions and discussions.

A field trip to the University Museum in Philadelphia is required for this course.

FA AAH 2003-001 Age of Rembrandt & Bernini
CRN 21882 TR 4:00-5:15 pm Dr. Nastick

This course examines the art of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe. This is the art of the exuberance of life as well as its most tender sentiments. Its subject matter runs the gamut from classicizing examples of French history painting to the bosky glens of Dutch landscapes.

But it is not painting alone that supplies fresh and interesting subject matter. For example, the architecture of the period is noted for its coloristic flair and its conceptual dynamism. Sculpture, too, forged new roads in areas such as portraiture and large scale monumental works. It was truly an exciting time.

FA AAH 2005-X17 Modern Architecture
CRN 21883 MW 1:30-2:45 pm Dr. Grubiak
***Cross-listed with HUM 2900-X17**

A survey of great architects and buildings of the modern era (from about 1800 to the present). From Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright to Robert Venturi, Frank Gehry, and Arata Isozaki; from the Eiffel Tower to the World Trade Center and beyond. With coverage of movements as diverse as the Prairie Style. Post-Modernism, Deconstructionism, 'Slick Tech,' and the International Style.

political climate that nurtured these tendencies. By examining some of the masterpieces of the period, including Manet's Luncheon on the Grass and Van Gogh's Starry Night, as well as equally provocative examples of sculpture and architecture, we will explore this fascinating and increasingly popular period of art history.

FA AAH 4010-001 Interpreting Art TR 10:00-11:15 am
CRN 21887 Dr. Sullivan

A survey of the various types of art history which have been practiced in Western culture, including connoisseurship, formalism, iconography, the social history of art, Marxist art history, feminist art history, Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, Deconstruction, and the psycho-analytical approach.

AAH 5515-001 CRN 21888 Arranged
AAH 5515-100 CRN 21889 Independent Research
Written Permission of Chairperson Required.

An intensive research project under individual direction.
Prerequisite: Art History major with junior standing;
permission of the chairperson required.