

ARTX 224: 20th Century Art

Spring Quarter 2009
Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 1:15-2:30pm

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Office Hours: MW 9:45-10:45am and 2:30 – 3:30pm

Description of the Course

Jean-Paul Sartre writes, “History is made without knowing of its making.” All of us here are children of the 20th century. We instinctively feel we know it because we have lived within its timeframe. And yet, “to know” something through lived experience is an entirely different thing from studying it from the vantage point of history. This course examines the 20th century, with its radical moments of upheaval and change, as it was experienced and expressed by its artists.

Goals for the Course

1. To apply the skills of visual analysis to both written and oral argument. Discussion and writing are at the heart of both this class and all critical inquiry in general – be prepared to speak up!
2. To develop a databank of images, artists, and movements such that you can identify key components and characteristics of each through visual evidence.
3. To have some fun! Hurray for Spring!

Course Materials

Required:

- o Foster, Krauss, Bois, and Buchloh, *Art Since 1900*, Vols. 1&2
- o A blank notebook or journal for your weekly reflections
- o *New York Times* online edition

Recommended:

- o Sylvan Barnet, *A Short Guide to Writing about Art*, Longman, any edition.
- o Harrison and Wood, eds. *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*

The additional assigned readings will be placed on both closed reserve (always) and electronic reserve (when possible) at the library.

Electronic Resource: www.artstor.org

The images I show in class will be available on ArtStor. To access ArtStor, go to the link above and create an account using your Kalamazoo College email address. Please note that you must use an on-campus computer when you first register. Once you have registered, you can access your account off-campus. Once you are registered, you will have access to all of the public files housed on ArtStor for Kalamazoo College. Click on “My Files and Folders.” The files for this class are titled ARTX224 and labeled by week (e.g., “ARTX224: Week 1”; “ARTX224: Week 2”; etc.)

Assignments and Grading

Reading Assignments: I reserve the right to add, change, or delete readings from the syllabus. Throughout the quarter, you will be responsible for recording your **weekly reflections** in a bound journal that will be randomly collected and graded throughout the quarter.

Weekly Reflections: During weeks 2–9, you are expected to record a weekly reflection on the readings and/or class discussions from the previous week. By Monday of 2nd week, you should have recorded a weekly reflection regarding Week 1, etc. These weekly reflections can be creative in nature and there is no set format. Nevertheless, they should address in some fashion the reading assignments of the previous week. For example, you could ruminate about objects you saw in class and how they related to the readings, ask a question, or draw a picture. The reflections are meant to be freeform, but should display an engagement with the text and content of discussion from the previous week.

Weekly reflections are graded pass/fail and constitute a portion of your participation grade. Failure to turn in a reflection will negatively impact your overall participation percentage.

Individual Paper and Group Poster Presentation:

Early in the quarter, you will be assigned to a group that you will work with throughout the quarter. As a group, you will decide on a movement of art during the 20th century you would like to present in a final poster presentation. As a component of the final poster presentation, each member of the group will write a 7–10 page essay on one of the artists who took part in this movement.

Extra Credit: Kalamazoo College is within 2–3 hours of several terrific art museums such as the Art Institute of Chicago, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and the Milwaukee Art Museum, to name but a few. During the quarter, paste your museum visit pass into your weekly reflections journal for 5 points of extra credit. This extra credit is applied to your final grade total. Any art museum, including the KIA, qualifies, and you may apply this extra credit multiple times.

Grading breakdown:*

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| Weekly Reflections and Participation in Class: | 20% |
| Individual Paper | 30% |
| Group Poster Presentation | 20% |
| Three Quizzes (10% each) | 30% |

*Percentages are approximate and will be influenced by other factors such as patterns of improvement, consistency of application, or demonstrated involvement with the course materials. Please note you must pass each component to pass the class.

Weekly Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Week 1: 1900–1909

Foster et al., pages 14–99
Barnet, Chapter 4: Formal Analysis and Style

Week 2: 1910–1919

Foster et al., pages 100–167
Barnet, Chapter 5: Writing a Comparison
Marcel Duchamp, “The Richard Mutt Case” and Tristan Tzara, “Dada Manifesto 1918” in AiT, pages 248–253.

Week 3: 1920–1929

Foster et al., pages 168–239
Kasimir Malevich, “The Question of Imitative Art” (1920) in AiT, pages 292–297.
Quiz #1 administered on Friday, April 17th

Week 4: 1930–1939

Foster et al., pages 240–291
Alfred H. Barr Jr., (Excerpt) “Cubism and Abstract Art” (1936) in AiT, pages 361–363
Hans Hofmann, “On the Aims of Art” (1932) in AiT, pages 354–357

Week 5: 1940–1949

Foster et al., pages 292–361

Harold Rosenberg, “The American Action Painters,” in AiT pages 354–357

Week 6: 1950–1959

Foster et al., pages 362–433

Clement Greenberg, “After Abstract Expressionism” (1962) in AiT pages 766–769

Leo Steinberg, “The Flatbed Picture Plane,” in AiT, pages 949–953

John Cage, “On Robert Rauschenberg,” in AiT, pages 717–721

Quiz #2 administered on Friday, May 8th

Week 7: 1960–1969

Foster et al., pages 434–539

Michael Fried, “Art and Objecthood” (1967) in AiT pages 822–834

Week 8: 1970–1979

Foster et al., pages 540–585

Allan Kaprow, “Assemblages, Environments and Happenings” in AiT pages 703–709

Joseph Beuys, “I am Searching for Field Character” in AiT pages 902–904

Individual Papers due on Friday, May 22nd

Week 9: 1980–1989

Reminder: No Class on Monday, May 25th for Memorial Day

Foster et al., pages 586–623

Quiz #3 administered on Friday, May 29th

Week 10: 1990–2003

Foster et al., pages 624–669

Final Poster Presentations take place on June 8th (Monday) from 8–11 am.