[Working Draft / Sample Syllabus]

ARTH 113: Survey of Modern Art
Art Dept., Queens College CUNY

Fall 2015
Mon., 1:40 - 4:30PM
Klapper Hall, 403

Dr. Edward Powers
powers_edward@yahoo.com

Learning Goals

The primary learning goal for this course is for students to acquire familiarity with major artworks by preeminent artists from the late 18th through the mid-20th Century. (The first part of this course will focus on the late 18th through the 19th Century; the second part will focus, equally, on the first and second halves of the 20th Century.) Students will develop an understanding of the kinds of subject matter that artworks incorporate; their range of symbolic and contextual meanings; the difference between figurative, abstract and nonobjective art, which becomes increasingly important in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries; the criteria according to which we judge an artwork, and whether it succeeds according to its given criteria; and the vocabulary art historians use to analyze color and form, systems of spatial organization, and composition and design.

Students will also develop an understanding of the larger contexts in which these artists and their artworks developed. In particular, emphasis will be placed on specific, period movements and styles including Neo-Classicism and Romanticism, Realism, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, Fauvism and Cubism, Abstract Expressionism, Pop art and Minimalism, among others, as well as on the aesthetic and philosophical bases that define each of these movements and styles as coherent and distinct from the others.

Finally, because it is vital for students to understand the historical, political and social contexts in which these artworks were created, special attention will be paid to the intellectual, philosophical and technological changes that characterize the modern period, as it developed out of the American and French Revolutions in the late 18th Century; the rise of industrialization and urbanism in the 19th Century; and the dramatic changes in mass production that shaped the course of the visual arts in the first half of the 20th Century, and in the mass media, along with questions of institutional critique and identity politics, that continue to shape the evolution of the visual arts.

Grading Plan

60% of your final grade will be based on two in-class exams, which will be noncumulative, and will count equally.

1. For in-class exams, you are only responsible for images we have seen in class, which are reproduced on the image website: http://www.flickr.com/photos/powers_edward/sets/
   a. Identification questions will require you to give the last name of the artist, the full title of the artwork and its date (+/-3 years).
   b. Short-answer and essay-format questions will test your familiarity with important ideas and themes as well as significant questions of style and subject matter, artistic and historical context and influence.

2. The only acceptable excuse for missing an exam is a doctor’s note specifically certifying that you were medically unable to attend class on the date of the exam.

30% of your final grade will be based on a research paper, which is due in class on ___.

1. All late papers will be downgraded one full grade for each week (or part thereof) they are late. Only if you will be absent from class on the date the paper is due, you may email it to me before class, so long as you
also submit a hardcopy of it at the next class. (If I do not email you to confirm my receipt of your paper, I did not receive it.) Otherwise, **all late papers must be handed to me in person.** Late papers that are emailed to me, or that are left in the Art Dept. for me, will not be accepted.

2. No late papers will be accepted once the final exam has begun.

10% of your final grade will be based on class participation, including attending class lectures, keeping up with assigned readings, and actively and effectively participating in class discussions.

**Course Materials**

Required textbooks for this course are:

2. TBD: one or more of the following 20th Century anthologies:

All other required readings in the syllabus may be downloaded from the document website, where they are listed alphabetically by author’s last name: [http://www.mediafire.com/qcarth](http://www.mediafire.com/qcarth)

Copies of all required textbooks are for sale at the QC bookstore, and on reserve at the QC library. (A file that lists their call numbers, labeled “Course Reserves,” may be downloaded from the document website.)

**Office Hours**

My office hours, in Klapper 164, are: Mon., 11:00 - 1:00PM.

**Class Meetings, Reading Assignments, Important Dates**

Class 01: Neoclassicism.

Class 02: Romanticism.

Class 03: Realism.

Class 04: Impressionism.

Class 05: Post-Impressionism.
Website: read Solomon-Godeau, “Going Native,” *Art in America*, vol. 77, no. 7 (July 1989).
Class 06: [Museum and / or Gallery Visit: TBD.]

Class 07: Midterm Exam.
[Following the exam, there will be a discussion of research methods and scholarly apparatus.]

Class 08: Expressionism(s) and Fauvism.
Textbooks [TBD]: read Kandinsky, “Concerning the Spiritual in Art” (1911), pp. 152-55 [Chipp], pp. 82-89 [Harrison and Wood].
Website: read [selection (TBD) from] McBreen, Matisse’s Sculpture: The Pinup and the Primitive (Yale Univ. Press, 2014).

Class 09: Cubism, Futurism and International Style(s).

Class 10: Dada and Surrealism.
Textbooks [TBD]: read Duchamp, “Richard Mutt Case” (1917); Duchamp, “Painting at the Service of the Mind” (1946); Duchamp, “Creative Act” (1957); Duchamp, “Apropos of Readymades” (1961).

Class 11: Abstract Expressionism.

Class 12: Research Papers Due Today In Class.
Neo-Dada and Pop art.

Class 13: Minimalism and Post-Minimalism.

Class 14: [Museum and / or Gallery Visit: TBD.]

Class 15: Final Exam.
Research Paper

1. Select one of the following pairs of artworks. All artworks are presently on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which is located at 82nd St. and 5th Ave. in Manhattan. (Except for group visits, MMA admission is free with a valid CUNY ID for the current semester.) You should visit the MMA and select your pair of artworks as soon as possible, as the galleries are frequently reinstalled, and artworks that are on view now might not still be on view later.
   b. Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres and Workshop, Odalisque in Grisaille (ca. 1824-34) [Gallery 801] with Edgar Degas, Woman Bathing in a Shallow Tub (1885) [Gallery 817] OR with Edgar Degas, Dancers, Pink and Green (ca. 1890) [Gallery 816].
   c. Gustave Courbet, Young Ladies of the Village (1851-52) [Gallery 812] with Georges Seurat, Study for “A Sunday on La Grande Jatte” (1884) [Gallery 826].
   e. Édouard Manet, Dead Christ with Angels (1864) [Gallery 810] with Jules Bastien-Lepage, Joan of Arc (1879) [Gallery 800].
   f. Gustave Courbet, Woman with Parrot (1866) [Gallery 811] with Alexandra Cabanel, Birth of Venus (1875) [Gallery 827].
   g. Claude Monet, Garden at Sainte-Adresse (1867) [Gallery 818] with Paul Cézanne, Gulf of Marseilles Seen from L’Estaque (ca. 1885) [Gallery 825].
   h. Claude Monet, La Grenouillère (1869) [Gallery 818] with Paul Cézanne, Mont Sainte-Victoire (ca. 1902-6) [Gallery 822].
   i. Édouard Manet, The Monet Family in Their Garden at Argenteuil (1874) [Gallery 818] with Auguste Renoir, Madame Georges Charpentier and Her Children (1878) [Gallery 824].
   j. Édouard Manet, Boating (1874) [Gallery 818] with Paul Gauguin, Siesta (ca. 1892-94) [Gallery 823].
   k. Georges Seurat, Circus Sideshow (1887-88) [Gallery 826] with Caspar David Friedrich, Two Men Contemplating the Moon (ca. 1825-30) [Gallery 807] OR with Edgar Degas, Rehearsal of the Ballet Onstage (1874) [Gallery 816].

2. Once you have selected your pair of artworks, you will need to research them and the artists who made them. If there is no specific research on the exact artwork(s) that you chose, then research similar works by the artist(s): for example, from the same period, or on the same theme, or using the same media, style and techniques, etc.
   a. By “research,” this assignment does not include:
      i. Items that are only published online: for example, museum websites, Wikipedia, etc.
      ii. Items that are not published at all: for example, museum wall labels, audio-guide tours, etc.
      iii. Items that do not contain endnotes or footnotes: for example, New York Times, Time or Taschen’s popular series of artists’ biographies, etc.
      iv. Items that you have been assigned to read in the syllabus: you may use them, of course; however, they do not count as research that you did for this assignment.
   b. By “research,” this assignment only includes articles and essays, books and exhibition catalogs, which contain endnotes or footnotes.
      i. For info on research services available through the QC Art Library:
      ii. For finding articles and essays:
         1. http://library.qc.cuny.edu [Then select “Find Databases” from the “Quick Links” menu on the left side of the screen. The three leading databases for art-history research, which this website lists alphabetically, are: Academic Search Complete; JSTOR; ProQuest Databases.]
      iii. For finding books and exhibition catalogs:
1.  http://library.qc.cuny.edu [Then select “Find Books and Media” from the “Quick Links” menu on the left side of the screen.]

   a. If a third or more of your research is thirty to fifty years old, or even older, then you’re probably focusing on the first items that appear, regardless of their relevance or quality. Finding any research – a fifty-year-old book on Matisse, an article in the Journal of Endocrinology on Picasso, a passing reference to Matisse in an essay that’s basically about Picasso – is not the same as finding the best and most relevant research for your comparison.

   b. Once you have completed your research, you will need to write a typed, double-spaced paper, of about 1,500 words (about 5 pages, although length can vary considerably depending on font, margins, etc.), which uses the analyses and arguments, factual and interpretative information that you uncovered in your research to compare and contrast your pair of artworks with respect to important ideas and themes they share; significant questions of style and subject matter that they share, or that differentiate them; similarities and / or differences with respect to their artistic and historical context and influence, etc.

   i. It is essential that you write about the pair of artworks in relation to one other, and that you do not simply discuss the first artwork, full stop; then discuss the second artwork, full stop. The point is to compare and contrast them issue-by-issue and point-by-point, using researched information, personal observations that are supported by researched information, and careful – close and specific – visual analysis.

   b. A good way to structure your paper is to begin with a thesis statement (a summary of your argument); then proceed to a detailed discussion of researched information and visual analysis that support your thesis; then end with a conclusion. Be sure to avoid the following:

      i. Thesis statements / conclusions that merely state the obvious: “Despite their similarities, there are many differences in the pair of artworks I selected…”

      ii. Unhelpful historical, political or sociological generalizations: “The 20th Century was a time of great political uncertainty and social upheaval…”

      iii. Extraneous personal observations: “I have always loved this artist, and was happy to see a painting by her that I had never seen before…” “The colors in this painting are sad…” or happy or so forth.

      iv. Encyclopedia-style papers that merely repeat generalities of when and where the artist was born and died, where she lived and studied, general descriptions of the artistic movement or style to which she belonged, etc.

   c. Overall, be very selective about what researched information you discuss, and only discuss ideas and issues that are directly relevant to your pair of artworks.

4. You must carefully edit and proofread your paper for grammar and style before turning it in. Awkward phraseology, careless grammar, spelling errors, etc. will adversely affect your grade.

   a. For info on tutoring services available through the Writing Center:

      i.  http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Academics/SupportPrograms/SupportCenter/Pages/default.aspx

5. Your paper must include not only citations to, but also a bibliography of, sources; failure to do so will adversely affect your grade.

   a. The two standard styles for citing sources are: (1) Chicago, which uses footnotes or endnotes (you may use either) that follow the text; and (2) MLA, which uses in-text parenthetical citations. You may use either style.

   b. Only if you are unfamiliar with either style:

      i. Here are examples of proper footnotes / endnotes for:

         1. An article or essay from a scholarly journal;

         2. An exhibition catalog;

         3. A single-author book;

         4. An individual essay from a multi-author anthology or collection of essays.

      ii. And here is a proper bibliography:

         1. Generally speaking, bibliographies must include an alphabetical list by author’s last name of all sources that you consulted (even ones that you do not cite in your paper). Unlike footnotes / endnotes, never number the individual, alphabetical entries in your
bibliography; and always include the full page-ranges for articles and essays from scholarly journals.

c. If they’re not your own ideas or words, you must clearly cite in a note whose ideas or words they are. If your paper in any way relies on any source that is not clearly and explicitly documented in your citations and bibliography, it will be failed.

6. Finally, a few technical requirements:
   a. Your name, the title of your paper, and my name must all appear on your cover page.
   b. Your pages must be consecutively numbered and stapled.
   c. The total word count of your paper must appear at the end of the last page.
   d. Keep a copy of your paper for your records.

1 Only the first time you cite an article or essay, you should fully cite it: for example, James Sweeney, “Eleven Europeans in America,” Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art, vol. 13, nos. 4-5 (Winter 1946), p. 175. Then, the second and each subsequent time you cite it, you should abbreviate it: for example, Sweeney, “Eleven Europeans,” p. 200.


5 Sample Bibliography (based on the foregoing):