ARTHS 1350 A: Introduction to Visual Arts

ARTHS 1350 A – Class Number 1304
University of St. Thomas
Department of Fine Arts and Drama
Fall 2016, Tuesday and Thursday: 11am-12:15 pm
Cullen 204

Professor: Dr. Kelley Magill
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:15 p.m. – 1p.m., or by appointment.
Office: Art History Bldg, 1204 Colquitt
E-mail: magillk@stthom.edu

Course description:

At its best, art has the ability to break down the barriers of time and geography. The aim of this course is to help students develop the skills to look at, describe, question, interpret, and ENJOY art and architecture.

As an introduction to visual arts, this course has a broad focus that will expose students to a variety of ways that we can LEARN from and EXPERIENCE works of art, drawing on methods from the fields of art history, art education, and museum education.

While this course will cover a range of topics, it is not a comprehensive survey. Rather, this course will focus on the in-depth study of individual works of art. We will study “masterpieces” from around the world as well as visit local Houston museums to study and discuss original works of art. My hope is that this course will encourage you to develop habits of lifelong learning by visiting cultural sites, supporting the arts, and looking at the visual world more carefully and critically.

Learning Goals and Objectives

• **Observation**: By learning a variety of methods for looking at and systematically analyzing works of art, students will develop the ability to make close observations and improve visual analysis skills.

• **Communication**: Students will learn the fundamental terms to communicate about art and will be able to describe their observations. Students will practice written and spoken communication about art through writing assignments, class discussion, and presentations.

• **Critical thinking and interpretation**: Students will practice critical thinking skills and will develop strategies for dealing with ambiguity by forming and evaluating interpretations for works of art using visual evidence and contextual resources.

• **Methods and foundations of Art History**: Students will be introduced to the methods and central topics of art history.

• **Experience**: Students will have the opportunity to engage with work of art on an aesthetic, intellectual, historical, and personal level, developing an understanding and appreciation for the many ways that art can be experienced in our daily lives.
Our Agreement

- You, the student, will attend and be an active participant in course lectures, reading discussions, and museum dialogues and activities, and you will do your own work on the course quizzes, exams, papers, presentations, and projects. Class lectures, dialogues, and assignments are designed to support the goals and objectives noted above.
- I will be prepared, clear in expectations, and will strive to foster a collaborative learning environment, in which you as students are encouraged to bring your knowledge and experiences to enrich our study and interpretations of art.

Class structure

- The class format will include interactive lectures, in-class exercises, and group discussions. While lectures will follow the structure of the textbook and supplemental readings, they expand upon it and some works of art discussed in class may not appear in the textbook. Therefore, class attendance is essential to keep up with the material covered.
- Field trips: Several field trips are scheduled during class time to the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH) and the Menil Collection. Museum visits will be centered around close examination of select works of art; readings and readings responses will be assigned prior to museum visits as preparation for participation in museum dialogues and exercises.

Blackboard and Online Resources

The Blackboard website (https://blackboard.stthom.edu/) will be an essential resource for this course. Course material, such as readings, lecture handouts, PowerPoints, assignments, quiz and exam study guides, and other course materials will be posted on Blackboard. If you have difficulty accessing any of these resources on the site, please let me know. I will also be using your UST email address to contact you with course information. Therefore, please check it regularly.

Grades

There are 100 course points, earned according to this breakdown:
- 2 Quizzes (10 points – 5 each)
- Reading Responses (10 points – 2 each)
- Museum Assignments - Object Based Thinking and Writing (20 points total)
  - Visual Analysis (10 points)
  - Interpretive resource (10 points)
- Midterm Exam (15 points)
- Group Exhibition Project (15 points)
- Class Attendance and Participation (10 points)
- Final Exam (20 points)

Grade scale:
- A = 92 and above
- A- = 90-91 %
- B+ = 88-89 %
- B = 82-87 %
- B- = 80-81 %
- C+ = 78-79 %
- C = 72-77 %
- C- = 70-71 %
- D+ = 68-69 %
- D = 62-67 %
- D- = 60-61 %
- F = Below 60 %
Course Requirements

- **Plagiarism Tutorial:** Completion of UST’s plagiarism tutorial with a passing grade (70% or more) is a course requirement. Please provide a printout of your certificate of completion, dated this semester by Tuesday, September 6. Use the following link to access the tutorial: [http://www.stthom.edu/libtraining/ustplagiarism/ustplagiarism.htm](http://www.stthom.edu/libtraining/ustplagiarism/ustplagiarism.htm)

- **Reading assignments:** The readings assigned for each class are designed to stimulate discussion and provide a common foundation for engaging with works of art through exposure to the vocabulary and methods of art history. All readings are to be completed prior to the day that it is assigned. Discussion questions and reading notes will given to students to help guide and focus their reading.
  - Supplemental articles that expand on the course themes will be assigned and are noted in the course schedule. These articles will be available in digital form on blackboard.

- **Quizzes:** Two short quizzes provide opportunities to track learning prior to the midterm and final exams. Quizzes will consist of short-answer questions and a vocabulary section. Students will receive a study guide prior to the quizzes, and they will be **permitted one 3x5 note card (handwritten – ONE side)** during the quiz. These cards will be collected with your quizzes, so be sure to put your name on your index card.

- **Reading Responses (1 page):** For each response, students will be given specific questions to guide their reading and written responses. Please have responses typed (12 point, standard font - Times New Roman or Calabri), double spaced, and printed. As the objective of the response is to prepare for museum dialogues, they must be completed on time.

- **Museum Assignments:** Students will be given two museum based written assignments that will require you to visit museum galleries and examine an original work of art in depth through visual analysis and interpretive strategies discussed in class. Please have responses typed (12 point, standard font - Times New Roman or Calabri), double spaced, and printed.

- **Group Exhibition Project:** This will be a collaborative project asking students to work in groups of 3-4 people to create a museum exhibition proposal and give a PowerPoint presentation in class reviewing the exhibition concept and checklist with each group member providing visual and interpretative analysis of key works in the exhibition.

- **Exams:** The midterm and final exams will consist of slide identifications with short answer questions, analysis of unknown works of art connected to topics and themes addressed in class, comparative long-answer questions, and a comprehensive essay. Students will receive a study guide prior to the exams, and they will be **permitted one 3x5 note card (handwritten – BOTH sides)** during the exam. These cards will be collected with your exams, so be sure to put your name on your index card.

Art History Course Policies

- **Attendance:** Students are expected to attend every class meeting. The only acceptable reasons for missing class are: religious observance, illness, family emergency, and co-curricular activities such as intercollegiate athletics. In the case of absence for religious reasons, please let me know in advance. In the case of a medical or family emergency, provide a note from a doctor or counselor. In the case of co-curricular activities, a coach or
other leader must submit an excused absence form. Students who miss more than two classes without permission will have their participation grade lowered by one point (out of ten) for each absence. Students who arrive late or leave early will likewise have their participation grade lowered.

- **Food**: Please do not eat in class.
- **Laptops and Cell phones**: Please turn off and put away your laptops and phones during class.
- **Late Work**: Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the specified date.
  - Reading responses and written assignments will not be accepted late. If you fail to submit a reading response on time, your grade for the work will be zero.
  - Museum writing assignments submitted later on the day they are due will be considered one day late. A student will lose a grade step for each day the assignment is late. (An example of a grade step is the difference between a B and a B-.)
  - Except for the final exam, no work will be accepted after the last day of class.
- **Academic Integrity**: The UST Student Handbook states that “every offense against academic honesty seriously undermines the teaching-learning process for which the University exists”. In keeping with this view, students are expected to be honest when taking their exams, to cite sources in their essays, and to submit their own work. Students may not submit work for one course that has already been used for another course. Cheating, plagiarizing, or any other form of academic dishonesty will lead either to a mark of zero for the work in question or to the grade of ‘F’ for the course, and to a formal University procedure. You must cite all sources used, whether printed or online. If you are unsure about what to cite or how to cite it, please see me during my office hours. You can also find links to citation style guides on the Doherty Library Research Guide webpage: [http://campusguides.stthom.edu/cat.php?cid=866](http://campusguides.stthom.edu/cat.php?cid=866).
- **Disability Services**: Students with a suspected or documented disability may be eligible to receive academic accommodations. Faculty must be notified that exam accommodations have been approved well before the exam. For more information, see the Disability Services FAQ on the UST website or contact the Coordinator, Tiffany Devereux. She may be reached by e-mail at deveret@stthom.edu or by phone at 713-525-2169 or 6953.

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Schedule

Note one Readings and Assignments: All readings are to be completed prior to the day it is assigned. The readings are an important foundation for class discussion and exercises. Deadlines for written assignments and the dates for quizzes and exams are noted in the course schedule below.

Week 1: Introduction – Experiencing Art
• Tue. Aug. 23 – Introduction and Everyday Encounters with Art
• Thur. Aug 25 – Artists and Viewers: From Creation to Experience
  o Reading: Getlein, Chapter 1, 3-18; AND John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (TarcherPerigee, 2005), 36-59. (Chapter 3: “Having an Experience”)

Week 2: Art, Image, and Thing: What’s the difference?
• Tue. Aug. 30 – Art, Images, and Things: Beauty and/or Function?
• Thur. Sept. 1 – Making Meaning: Methods of Interpretation

Week 3: Responding to Art
• Tue. Sept. 6 – Power of Art
  o QUIZ 1
  o PLAGARISM TUTORIAL CERTIFICATE DUE
• Thur. Sept. 8 – *Field Trip to the Museum of Fine Arts Houston* - Museum Dialogue: Interpretation and Experience
  o Reading: Rika Burnham and Elliott Kai-Kee, *Teaching in the Art Museum: Interpretation as Experience* (Los Angelos: J. Paul Getty Museum), 67-93 (Chapter 4: “Intense Looks: Solitude, Scholarship, and a Teacher’s Transformative Experience” (67-78) and Chapter 5: “Conversation, Discussion, and Dialogue”)
  o READING RESPONSE 1 DUE

Week 4: Looking at Art
• Tue. Sept. 13 – *Field Trip to the Museum of Fine Arts Houston* – Museum Activity – Techniques for Close Observation
  o Getlein, Chapter 4, 77-114.
  o Reading: Joseph Leo Koerner, *Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 5-14. (Chapter 1 “From the Dresden Heath”)
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- **READING RESPONSE 2 DUE**

**Week 5: Art + Science: Materials, Techniques, and Conservation Issues**
- **Tue. Sept. 20** – Medium as Power, Message, and Problem
  - **DUE IN CLASS: MUSEUM ASSIGNMENT VISUAL ANALYSIS**
- **Thur. Sept. 22** – Drawing and Artistic Process
  - Reading: Getlein, Chapter 6, 141-154.

**Week 6: Painting: Questions of Value, Skill, and Idea**
- **Tue. Sept 27** – Painting: Materials, Technique, and Illusion
  - Reading: Getlein, Chapter 7, 158-177.
  - **READING RESPONSE 3 DUE**

**Week 7: Midterm Week**
- **Tue. Oct. 4** – Midterm Exam Review
- **Thur. Oct. 6** – **MIDTERM EXAM**

**Week 8: Art + Technology 1**
- **TUE. OCT. 11 – FALL BREAK – NO CLASS**
- **Thur. Oct. 13** – Innovation and Printmaking
  - Reading, Getlein, Chapter 8, 178-198.

**Week 9 – Art + Technology 2**
- **Tue. Oct. 18** – **Field Trip to the Museum of Fine Arts Houston** – Museum Dialogue The History of Photography
  - **READING RESPONSE 4 DUE**
- **Thur. Oct. 20** – Art and New Media
  - Reading: Getlein, Chapter 9, 213-225.

**Week 10 – Art in the Public Sphere: Sculpture and Architecture**
- **Tue. Oct. 25** – Sculpture and Installation
  - Reading: Getlein, Chapter 11, 241-264.
- **Thur. Oct. 27** – Architecture
  - Reading: Getlein, Chapter 13, 284-297; 313-319.
  - **QUIZ 2**
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**Week 11 – Art in your Everyday**
- **Tue. Nov. 1** – *Field Trip to the Museum of Fine Arts Houston* – Museum Dialogue: Artifacts, Ritual Objects, and Decorative Arts
  - Reading, Getlein, Chapter 12, 265-283.
- **Thur. Nov. 3** – Graphic Design
  - Reading: Getlein, Chapter 10, 226-239
  - **DUE IN CLASS: MUSEUM ASSIGNMENT INTERPRETIVE RESOURCE**

**Week 12 – Museums: Collection, Display, and Meaning Making**
- **Tue. Nov. 8** – The Encyclopedic Museum, Art History, and the role of the Curator
- **Thur. Nov. 10** – *Field Trip to Menil Collection* - Museum Activity - Exhibition as Interpretation
  - **READING RESPONSE 5 DUE**

**Week 13 – Exhibition Project Presentations**
- **Tue. Nov. 15** – Groups 1 & 2
- **Thur. Nov. 17** – Groups 3 & 4

**Week 14 – Exhibition Project Presentations**
- **Tue. Nov. 22** – Group 5 and Museum Practice Reflection
- **THUR. NOV. 24 – THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Week 15 – Experience Art outside the Museum**
- **Tue. Nov. 29** – *Campus and Rothko Chapel Field Trip* - Dialogue - St. Basil Chapel and Rothko Chapel
- **Thur. Dec. 1** – Wrap-up/Course Reflections and Review for Final

**WEEK 16: FINAL EXAM – TUE. DEC. 13 – 11AM-1:30PM**

Kenneth Noland, *Tropical Zone*, 1964, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston