RENAISSANCE ART IN EUROPE

01:082:214
Prof. Sarah Blake McHam
Monday & Wednesday, 4th period, Zimmerli Multipurpose Room

Michelangelo. Adam Created from the Earth and Infused with the Spark of Life. Sistine Ceiling, Rome. 1508-12

Renaissance Art in Europe

In our era many European countries have united to form a single state in terms of their monetary systems and many of their regulations. That alliance is showing signs of fraying, because in part they are running counter to more than 1500 years of independence and cultural and linguistic differences. Nowhere is that diversity more apparent than during the Renaissance, defined for our purposes here as the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, which represents a universally recognized high point in artistic achievement all over Europe. This class will examine a series of masterpieces from the European tradition that reveal artistic forms that were intrinsic to culture north and south of the Alps, with the goal of pointing out their different features as well as their commonalities. Most of them were not considered works of art in their day, but instead visual aids to religious practice, a means of commemorating an individual, or objects to decorate or to promote pleasure. The broader objective is to create a background that leads to a better understanding of European culture in the epoch of the development of early modern culture.
Learning goals and Assessment

This course aims to fulfill the following core requirements:

• To learn the appropriate vocabulary and critical tools for discussing and writing about works of art.
• To gain awareness of the major stylistic developments in the world of European art and architecture between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries and how they reflect trends and concerns in the societies in which they were made.
• To be able to communicate easily and logically what the student has learned in both written and oral form.
• To evaluate different ways of studying an object as presented in the readings and to synthesize the information from multiple sources in order to generate new insights.

This course aims to meet the following Core Curriculum learning goals:

Arts and Humanities
(p) Analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies.

Cognitive Skills and Processes
(t) Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry.
(v) Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

These learning goals will be assessed through a twenty-minute class discussion period focused on the day’s reading assignment. This discussion will occur at the end of each class. At times I shall assign a short (one paragraph) in class writing assignment, asking students to summarize the reading and to formulate an important question it generates. We’ll then work with these commentaries to understand some of the art under discussion.

Students will also demonstrate their synthetic understanding of the relationship between Renaissance art and its cultural, religious, and political context in two three- to four-page essays on assigned paintings, sculptures or prints.

There will also be a midterm and a final focused on knowledge of the different artists and artistic movements covered in the class.

Lectures and readings will be available for download on Sakai.

Class Policies
**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all classes; if you anticipate missing one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website [https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/](https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/) to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me and repeated absences will seriously affect your final grade.

All assigned readings are required and should be completed before class to enable your full participation.

**Plagiarism and Academic Honesty**
Please familiarize yourself with the definition of plagiarism in Rutgers’s official policy statement on academy integrity: [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml). As a student in this course, you are responsible for understanding and thus avoiding the varieties of plagiarism in college writing outlined in this statement. Any student who plagiarizes will receive a zero for the given assignment and, in some cases, a failing grade for the course.

**Office Hours:** I hold three office hours/week in my office in 103 on the first floor in the Art History Annex. 60 College Ave. To make sure you don’t wait, please email me so that we can set up a specific time for an appointment. My email is mcham@rci.rutgers.edu.

**Special Needs**
Please notify me if you have any documented disabilities or special circumstances that require attention and I will be happy to accommodate you. Students with disabilities may also contact the Kreeger Learning Center directly: Kreeger Learning Center. 151 College Avenue. Suite 123. New Brunswick. NJ 08901. email: dsoffice@rci.rutgers.edu. Hours: Monday - Friday. 8:30am - 5:00pm.

**Expectations for lectures**

- Arrive before the start of lecture and recitation.
- Know the material and artists that we will study in the lecture section of the course
- Be prepared by reading the assigned articles and participate in the discussion section of the class

The Department of Art History expects all its students to attend every class except in cases of illness, religious necessity, serious family concerns, or other major problems. We expect that students will arrive on time prepared to listen and participate as appropriate and to stay for the duration of a meeting rather than drift in or out casually.

**Study Tips**
You will be able to understand and process the information better if you keep up with the schedule laid out in the syllabus. Do not hesitate to ask any questions that may help your study process.

Read the sections of the books and articles listed in advance of the pertinent class.
You can find the required and optional readings on Sakai under the course number and the heading, Resources. You will not be able to make sense of the lectures without reading this material.

**Grading**

Grade distribution:
- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and paper on a work of art you saw there 20%
- Class Participation in Discussion: 15%
- 2nd paper 25%
- Final exam: 25%

Grading Scale:
A = 90 - 100
B+ = 87-89
B = 80-86
C+ = 77-79
C = 70 - 76
D = 65 - 69
F= 64 and Below

**Description of Paper Assignments:**

- **Analysis Papers**: Two 3-4 page papers analyzing the cultural, political and religious context of the assigned work of art. You will be challenged to relate these conditions to the assigned reading that discusses or relates to the object in question. You will also be asked to make a coherent argument about the relationship between the image and the assigned reading.

- **2nd Analysis paper**: 3-4 page paper analyzing the cultural, political and religious context of a work of art discussed in the second half of the class. The paper will present the same types of challenges presented in paper #1 but now you will have the experience of that paper behind you. The assignment is designed to enable each student to demonstrate the progress they have made over the semester in the effective written communication of an argument. Each student will also be able to show their increased ability to place a work of art in the historical, economic and political context of contemporary Africa and to make a cogent argument.

**Exams:**
The powerpoints used in the course will be available for download on Sakai. Each student should download every powerpoint and be prepared to discuss the cultural framework and visual impact of every work of art listed in the powerpoint. The reviews before the exam will include a powerpoint of objects that will be included on the exams.
Required and Optional Readings

Each lecture will have specific readings, either sections of books or articles assigned to accompany it. It is your responsibility to read these materials so that you can participate in the class discussion. You will be able to find the assigned materials on Sakai. Readings on Sakai are often posted under an abbreviation of the title or under the author’s name. Please be aware of this when looking for a reading.

Course Learning Outcomes:

This course has been designed to result in the following course-learning outcomes for students:

1) Identify key artists and examples of art that fall in the categories of European Renaissance art.
2) Consider how the terms ‘Renaissance,’ ‘Medieval,’ ‘Northern European,’ and ‘Italan’ are applied to art and identify other possible approaches for categorizing such works.
3) Expand knowledge of European Renaissance art as a means to gain greater understanding of and appreciation for diverse visual practices.
4) Develop critical reading and thinking skills necessary to summarize information and arguments presented in class readings and discussions.
5) Refine skills necessary to be an active and engaged learner.

Bibliography

Schedule of Classes

The following syllabus is laid out by weeks:

1.1 and 2. Introduction to the various political entities north and south of the Alps and their histories and cultural traditions (2 classes)
   Both north and south of Alps together; maps; different histories and languages; issues like patronage; religious devotion or personal commemoration, not art; social Position of the Artist
   Martens, M. P. J., “The Position of the Artist in the Fifteenth Century, Salaries and Social Mobility,” W. Blockmans and A. Janse, eds., Showing Status; Representations of Social Positions in the Late Middle Ages, Turnhout, 1999, 387-414

2.1 and 2. Various commission formats: Fifteenth-Century Altarpieces north of the Alps (2 classes)
   a. Patronage
   b. Role in stimulating religious devotion
   c. Technical examination
d. Iconographic and stylistic overview
   Tom Nichols, *Renaissance Art*, 1-4; 19-28; 110-16
   Robert Campin, *Merode Altarpiece*
   Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*
   Hugo van der Goes, Portinari Altarpiece
   Bosch, *Hay Wain*

3-1. Various commission formats: Fifteenth-Century Altarpieces south of the Alps (1 class)
   Giovanni Bellini, San Giobbe Altarpiece
   Botticelli, *Adoration of the Magi*
   Leonardo, *Adoration of the Magi*
   Michelangelo, St. Peter’s Pietà

3-2 and 4-1. Storytelling in Italian Renaissance Art (2 classes)
   Giotto, Arena Chapel
   Donatello, *David*
   Leonardo *Last Supper*
   Ghiberti, Gates of Paradise
   Michelangelo, Sistine Ceiling
   Nichols, *Renaissance Art*, 42-7

4.2 Outline Workshop
5-1 and 5.2. Challenge of Nature – Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries (2 classes)
   Leonardo’s anatomies
   Leonardo’s studies of landscapes, storms, flowing water
   Dürer, bird, animal and plant studies
   Brueghel *Return of the Herd*
   Nichols, *Renaissance Art*, 130-6

6.1. Mid-term
6-2. Challenge of the Antique (1 class)
Botticelli, *Birth of Venus*
Antico, *Apollo Belvedere*
Michelangelo, *David*
Nichols, *Renaissance Art*, 48-51

7.1 and 2. Portraiture and the Rise of Renaissance Man and Woman (2 classes)
Jan van Eyck, *Self-Portrait*
Jan van Eyck, *Arnolfini Portrait*
Nichols, *Renaissance Art*, 1-11
Leonardo, *Mona Lisa*
Holbein, *Ambassadors*
Parmigianino, *Self-Portrait in a Mirror*
Dürer, *Self-Portrait*

8-1 and 2. Mythology (2 classes)
Pollaiuolo, *Hercules and Antaeus*, 1470s, bronze statuette
Correggio, *Jupiter and Io*
Nichols, *Renaissance Art*, 141-8
Titian, *Diana and Actaeon*
Nichols, *Renaissance Art*, 152-7
Titian *Venus of Urbino*, 1538
Brueghel, *Fall of Icarus*

9-1. Women Artists (1 class)
Illuminations from manuscripts of Boccaccio, *Famous Women*
Properzia de’ Rossi, Carved Peach pit
Sophonisba Anguissola, *Self-Portrait with Master Bernardino Campi*
Mary Garrard, “Here’s Looking at Me…: Sophonisba Anguissola and the Problem of the Female Artist,” *Reclaiming Female Agency; Feminist Art History after Post-Modernism*, Berkeley, 2005, 26-47

9-2 and 10.1. New technologies (2 classes)

Woodcuts
Jacopo de’ Barbari, Woodcut of Venice
Howard, Deborah, Venice as a Dolphin: Further Investigations into Jacopo de’ Barbari’s View, Artibus et historiae, 18.1997, 35, 101-111

Engraving
Dürer, Hercules at the Cross Roads
Nichols, Renaissance Art, 94-100
Mantegna, Battle of the Sea-Gods
Mantegna, Christ Entering Limbo

Production of books
Gutenberg Bible
Pliny, Natural History
Francesco Colonna, Hypnerotomachia Poliphili

10.2. Sixteenth-Century Altarpieces North and South of the Alps (1 class)
Raphael, Sistine Madonna
Pontormo, Deposition
Cranach, Christ Blessing the Children
Nichols, Renaissance Art, 122-4; 157-9
Council of Trent
Nichols, Renaissance Art, 139-40; 168-9
Iconoclasm
Nichols, Renaissance Art, 119-22

11.1. Architecture in the Urban and Rural Contexts: urban design (1 class)
Florence
Pienza
Adams, Nicholas, “The Construction of Pienza (1459-64) and the Consequences of Renovatio,” Urban Life in the Renaissance, ed. Susan Zimmeran and Ronald F. E. Weissman(Newark, 1989). 50-80

11.2. Churches and Public Buildings (1 class)
Florence Duomo
Palazzo Ducale, Venice
Palladio, Redentore
12.1. Private Residences (1 class)
Alberti, Palazzo Rucellai
Palladio, Villa Suburbana

12.2. Domestic Objects (1 class)
Birth-tray of Lorenzo de’ Medici
Pair of Cassoni, Nerli Family, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1470s
Memling, Diptych of Maartin van Nieuwenhove, 1487

13.1 and 2. Michelangelo: The Birth of the Artist and of Art History (2 classes)
Coonin, A. Victor, From Marble to Flesh, 135-78

14.1. Review (1 class)