

ARTH 102-002: Symbols and Stories in Western Art Spring 2017

Tuesday/Thursday 10:30-11:45am
Robinson B113
Professor Kerry Roeder
kroeder@gmu.edu
Office Hours: by appointment & Tuesdays, 12-1pm
Office: Robinson B 373A

Course Description

This course focuses on recurring visual signs and symbols in western art and visual culture, from ancient times through the present. Students will read narratives from Greek and Roman mythology and the Bible, and trace how the visual representation of these stories has changed over the centuries. Through close looking at objects, we will discuss how art and society actively inform and shape one another. This course fulfills a University Fine Arts/Mason Core requirement.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, Westview Press; 2nd edition, 2007

Course Requirements

Attendance and active participation in class discussion is expected. Assigned readings must be completed before coming to class; they are central to successful participation in this course.

There will be three exams in the course of the semester. Exams will place an emphasis on essay questions, along with a selection of slide identifications and terms. Review sheets will be provided for all exams. The final is not cumulative. No make-up exams. Exceptions may be made in the event of a documented medical or family emergency, at the professor's discretion. In the event of such an emergency, please contact me within 24 hours of the exam.

Participation grades (10%) will be determined by your contributions to class discussions. Students should have assigned readings completed before class meetings so they will be able to ask questions about the readings and participate in class discussions. In order to receive an A, you must contribute regularly and thoughtfully to in class discussion. If you attend regularly and participate fairly often you will receive B. Sporadic contributions to the class will result in a C; if you spend the entire class lost in your cellphone you will receive a D. Poor attendance and/or a serial lack of engagement in class discussion will result in a failing class participation grade.

As part of the participation requirement for this class, I ask that you locate at least one modern day reinterpretation of the stories or symbols described in one of our weekly sessions, and post the image to me with a brief description of its relevance to the class. You should submit these images via the Discussion Board on Blackboard labeled Class Participation. I will periodically share these submissions with the class.

Mason uses only Mason e-mail accounts to communicate with enrolled students. Students must activate their Mason e-mail account, use it to communicate with their department and other administrative units, and check it regularly for important university information including messages related to this class.

No cellphones or electronic devices whatsoever. This includes laptops, unless you have need of academic accommodations that require the use of a laptop. Unexcused absences will adversely affect your class participation grade.

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the [Office of Disability Services](http://ods.gmu.edu) at 703.993.2474 or ods.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Academic honesty is expected in all tests and assignments. Plagiarism is a serious offense and violation of the George Mason University Honor Code and will be reported to the Honor Committee. Always, always cite your sources.

Syllabus is subject to change. Contact me if you have any questions.

Grading

Participation	10%
Exam #1	25%
Exam #2	30%
Exam #3	35%

Grade Scale

A = 100-93	A- = 92-90	B+ = 89-87	B = 86-83	B- = 82-80	C+ = 79-77
C = 76-73	C- = 72-70	D+ = 69-67	D = 66-63	D- = 62-60	F = 59 & below

Important Dates

First day of class	January 24
Last day of add/drop with no penalty	January 30
Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty	February 13
Exam #1	February 23
Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)	February 24
NO CLASS, Professor out-of-town	March 7
Spring Break, NO CLASS	March 14 & 16

Exam #2
Last Day of Classes
Final Exam

April 6
May 4
May 16

Schedule

Week 1	Introduction
Tues. 1/24	Course Introduction, syllabus review
Thurs. 1/26	READ: "Elements of Art," J. Paul Getty Museum: http://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/building_lessons/formal_analysis.html
Week 2	Symbolism and Iconography
Tues. 1/31	READ: Sylvan Barnet, "Iconography and Iconographical Interpretation," [PDF on Blackboard]
Thurs. 2/2	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Introduction, Prefaces, & Notes, vii-xxi; Prometheus: 262-63
Week 3	Creation Stories and the Old Testament
Tues. 2/7	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Adam and Eve: 4-5; Geoff Dyer on Adam and Eve by Lucas Cranach the Elder: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2011/sep/30/picture-this-geoff-dyer-cranach
Thurs. 2/9	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Abraham and Isaac: 2-3; Daniel: 93-4; Moses: 220-23
Week 4	Birth and Life of Jesus
Tues. 2/14	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Annunciation: 19-21; Nativity: 226-227; Adoration: 6-7
Thurs. 2/16	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Tribute Money: 318-319, Miraculous draught of fishes: 217, Raising of Lazarus: 266; "Painting the Life of Christ in Medieval and Renaissance Italy," Metropolitan Museum of Art: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/chri/hd_chri.htm

Week 5	Death of Jesus
Tues. 2/21	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Last Supper: 194-6; Agony in the Garden: 11-12; Crucifixion: 83-89 BROWSE: Suddenly Last Supper, more than 50 Last Supper parodies: http://culturepopped.blogspot.com/2007/04/suddenly-last-supper.html
Thurs. 2/23	Exam #1
Week 6	Goddesses
Tues. 2/28	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Venus: 329-31; Juno: 187-8; "Greek Gods and Religious Practices," Metropolitan Museum of Art: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/grlg/hd_grlg.htm
Thurs. 3/2	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Diana: 105-6; Minerva: 216-7
Week 7	Love and Lust
Tues. 3/7	Professor out-of-town, NO CLASS
Thurs. 3/9	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Pyramus and Thisbe: 265; Orpheus & Eurydice: 238; The Story of Bacchus and Ariadne: http://colourlex.com/bacchus-ariadne-story/
Week 8	
Tues. 3/14	No Class, SPRING BREAK
Thurs. 3/16	
Week 9	Gods
Tues. 3/21	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Apollo: 26-30, Bacchus: 38-40; Grant Morrison, "The Son God and the Dark Knight," in <i>Supergods</i> (2012), 3-26, [PDF on Blackboard]
Thurs. 3/23	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Jupiter: 188-9; Neptune: 228-9; Mars: 207
Week 10	Warfare & Epic Quests
Tues. 3/28	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : The Trojan War, 321-22;

Thurs. 3/30	<p>"A Lasting War: Representing Troy in Ancient Greece and Medieval Europe" http://blogs.getty.edu/iris/representing-troy-in-ancient-greece-and-medieval-europe/</p> <p>READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i>: Ulysses: 325-6; Circe: 71;</p>
Week 11	Monsters and Hybrids
Tues. 4/4	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Centaurs: 63, Medusa: 212-3, Theseus and the Minotaur: 309-10
Thurs. 4/6	Exam #2
Week 12	Nationalism and Political symbols
Tues. 4/11	READ: Christopher M. S. Johns, "Portrait Mythology: Antonio Canova's Portraits of the Bonapartes," <i>Eighteenth-Century Studies</i> Vol. 28, No. 1 (Autumn, 1994), pp. 115-129 [PDF on Blackboard]
Thurs. 4/13	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Eagle: 113; Horse: 162; Alexandria Sivak, "Ancient Myth, Contemporary Politics," http://blogs.getty.edu/iris/ancient-myth-contemporary-politics/
Week 13	Heroes and Heroines
Tues. 4/18	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : David: 95-97; Hercules: 152-55; Horatii, (Oath of) 161; Jeff Jensen, "Heroes and Villains: Batman vs. Joker, Harry Potter vs. Voldemort -- the kings of pop culture mirror our times," <i>Entertainment Weekly</i> , http://www.ew.com/article/2009/03/27/heroes-and-villains
Thurs. 4/20	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Judith: 187; Rape of Lucretia: 268
Week 14	Martyrs and Saints
Tues. 4/25	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : George: 141 http://colourlex.com/project/tintoretto-st-george-and-the-dragon/
Thurs. 4/27	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Teresa: 308; Sebastian: 285-6; Bernard Welt, "St. Dorothy of Oz" in <i>Mythomania. Fantasies, Fables, and Sheer Lies in Contemporary American Popular Art</i> (Los Angeles: Art Issues Press, 1996), pp. 41-45. [PDF on Blackboard]

Week 15	Death and the Afterlife
Tues. 5/2	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Last Judgment: 192-94
Thurs. 5/4	READ: <i>Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols</i> : Pluto: 257; Rape of Prosperine: 268
Thurs. 5/16	Final Exam