

ARTH 101-002: INTRODUCTION TO THE VISUAL ARTS

Professor Lisa Passaglia Bauman

Class times: MW 12:00-1:15

Office hours: Monday 3:00-4:15 or by appt

Fall 2017

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Classroom: AB 2003

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THE PROMISES OF THIS COURSE: It is my opinion that this is one of the most important classes you will take in college. Yes, **it fulfills the Mason Core Arts requirement**, but, assuming we both do our jobs correctly, it is also the class that you will take with you every time you walk into an art museum, or travel around the world, or take your children down on the Mall. It is not a studio class although we will study different media and techniques; nor is it a survey class although works of art will be presented in their historical context. Rather this class will focus on how art communicates, how to analyze and interpret it, and how we can see it as a cultural product that reveals something about the society that produced it.

By the end of the semester, you will have been exposed to many works of art, various media, and a great deal of new vocabulary. You will also have learned some of the fundamentals of looking at works of art. You will know that interpretation of a work depends on the interpreter, and that you, too, are necessarily an interpreter. That is not to say that all interpretations are equally valid; interpretations can be well- or ill-formed, responsible or irresponsible, useful or useless, etc.; opinion is not interpretation. Naturally, I hope that you conclude this course intrigued by the possibility of art historical study and with the confidence and impetus to continue your engagement with art—and indeed with all aspects of our emphatically visual culture.

I spend a great deal of time thinking about the larger questions of this course, questions like “what should you be able to do intellectually in this discipline at this time? How can I encourage you to develop those abilities?” At any time, however, you too can ask me a big question. Any time in this course, with any image, you can ask me “why”? Why does this issue matter? I will stop and try to explain why this material is important and how it relates to larger issues. It may take a few weeks, but I think I can get you to a payoff. This course is my responsibility; don’t hesitate to come to me if you have a problem or complaint. I can’t promise I’ll fix things, but I will do my best.

TECH REQUIREMENTS AND POLICY

I can only communicate with you via Mason e-mail account or Blackboard, so please activate and check your GMU e-mail account and the Blackboard site regularly for any communication regarding the class.

A successful course is made by the collaborative efforts of the group. That means being engaged—doing the reading before class, taking notes in class. To that end, there are no cell phones in our classroom (unless you are awaiting an organ transplant, are a volunteer fire fighter and may be called into action, or need to be accessible to young children or elderly parents). Also no laptops, not even for note-taking, unless you have a note from Disability Services allowing that accommodation.

Email Etiquette: Until we get to know each other better, please remember that when you send an email to any professor, you are addressing a teacher, not your best friend. Thus, try to remember the following when sending an email: (1) Include a subject. When I receive an email without a subject and do not recognize the address, it is immediately deleted. (2) Let me know which class you are in—my MW 10:30 section or my TTh 12:00 section. (3) Be specific.

TEXT AND READINGS: Debra J. DeWitte, et al, *Gateways to Art. Understanding the Visual Arts*.

Second edition (Thames & Hudson, 2015). It’s a good book, well-written and interesting—rare for a college text. But its newness also makes it expensive (retail \$134; rent \$38). The textbook for this class is not required. If you are a vigilant note taker, it is possible to do quite well in this class without it. Coming to class and looking at work which is completely new and foreign to you, however, is an intimidating proposition. Reading before class introduces you to the story so that you are primed for class. So if you are not doing well, the very first question I’m going to ask you is: “Have you been reading along in the text book?” Copies of the text are on reserve in the library. It is possible to use the earlier edition of this book; you will have to adjust the page numbers for the readings on the class schedule to accommodate your edition.

The other readings for this class will be made available on Blackboard which is free. Thus, there is no reason not to do them.

WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO TO REALIZE THOSE PROMISES, also known as Course Requirements:

1. Commit to the class

CLASS: It's my job to care about your education and I take that charge seriously. I am quite sure it is even more important to you. Our mutual expectation then is that you are in class. This class is a lecture format during which I will address ideas, present key works, and define terms. I will be using power point presentations, so all terms, ideas and key works for which you are responsible will be clearly labeled, spelled, defined, and emphasized in class. With the exception of a few study slides, I will not, however, be putting those powerpoints on Blackboard. I will answer questions about the material **in class**, go over the readings **in class**, and discuss issues **in class**. If you do not understand something that I covered in class, there is no way I can explain that material better in an email. If you missed class, you will need to get notes from a classmate. I will not teach a missed lecture in my office during office hours. I'll answer any specific questions you have about missed material, but you'll need to bring specific questions to a meeting in my office. Meeting in person rather than via email allows us to get to know each other better and fosters a more collegial learning atmosphere.

QUIZZES (60% of your course grade): Since one of the primary ideas behind this class is a commitment to it—a consistent steady commitment to it—I will provide the same steady commitment in assessment. Every week, at the start of the week, there will be a quiz on the material covered in the previous week. **So on Monday, at the start of class, you will take a short quiz based on the material covered the previous Monday and Wednesday.** There are TWO EXCEPTIONS to this schedule:

- Next week there is no school on Monday, September 4. Quiz 1 will be Wednesday, September 6.
- The last week of classes Quiz 13 will be on the last day of class, December 6.
- There are 13 quizzes total, and I will drop your two lowest grades.
- I will hand out the quiz at the start of class for a stipulated amount of time, around 10 minutes. When the time limit is reached, the quiz is finished. I will not give a quiz later in class to accommodate late arrivals. I will not repeat slides in the quiz.
- You cannot retake a missed quiz for any excuse—sickness, family emergency, traffic accident, broken heart. That's why you get to drop two.
- The first quiz is scheduled for next week. (Since we have Monday off, the quiz will be on Wednesday.)
- Quiz grades will be posted on the same day as the quiz. I will be available to discuss your quiz in my office hours or at a mutually convenient time.

The implications of this:

1. You need to be in class on Mondays.
2. You need to keep up with the material and master it as you go along.
3. I will not reschedule a quiz for any reason. Yes, this includes Thanksgiving break, end of the semester, and weekend plans. If we have a snow day, the quiz on Monday moves to Wednesday. The following week, the quiz reverts to its normal Monday schedule.
4. There will be no cramming for a midterm and a final, and our class will be finished on the last day of class.

ATTENDANCE (10% of your course grade): Since we all agree that the purpose of the quizzes is to encourage you to master the material as we go along, then attendance in class is necessary. The University Course Catalog is quite clear on the attendance/participation policy:

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they are registered. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation.

From time to time I will take attendance and use that attendance to gauge a participation grade which will count for 10% of your course grade.

ABSENCES FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES OR UNIVERSITY ACTIVITIES: If you will be missing class for a religious holiday or a university-sponsored activity, you need to provide me, within the first two weeks of the semester, with the dates of the major religious holidays on which you will be absent, or the dates for which you are requesting an excused absence for participation in any university-sponsored activity.

2. Do some authentic tasks that embody the kind of thinking and acting expected for life, tasks that challenge you to grapple with ideas, address your existing assumptions, and perhaps rethink them, also known as WRITTEN WORK (30% of your course grade):

- PROJECT #1—15% of your course grade. Due Wednesday, October 11
- PROJECT #2—15% of your course grade. Due Wednesday, November 15

These two project assignments will be posted on Blackboard.

- The first is based on the exhibition in Fenwick Gallery called “Our Comics, Ourselves: Identity, Expression, and Representation in Comic Art.” The exhibition curators will be hosting two Do-It-Yourself workshops on ‘zine making (September 20 and September 28). You’ll be making a ‘zine on the subject of your identity and its representation and turning it in for a grade. I will not be grading your “artistic ability” as that is immeasurable; rather I will look to see that you have followed the assignment and produced a thoughtful and considered visual essay. I’ll have a grading rubric so that you can see exactly what the grading criteria are. You will also be able to do this assignment without attending the DIY workshop, but there are **extra credit points available for attending the workshop. There will not be extra credit opportunities later in the semester, so a wise person will not forfeit this chance.**
- The second project will also consider identity and representation, only this time you’ll be looking at works of art within a museum. Again, you will not be writing a paper, but will instead have the option of turning in a ‘zine or constructing a poster (I will provide a poster template in Blackboard).

Regarding the projects, I have set up some specific requirements. I will take this work late but it will be penalized 5 points for every day it is late. Yes, the weekend counts. After one week, I will not take any late work. Remember that we are in the computer age where Murphy’s Law applies with a vengeance. Assume that your computer will break down, that every other student in the school will be trying to print a paper on the same night, and so forth. Plan accordingly! There are no excuses for turning in late work. You simply take the point deduction. Also, **I will NOT accept work via e-mail or in my office mail box.** Why? Too many problems with viruses, with formatting, with accidental deletions, with deadlines. In the end, it shifts the responsibility from you to me and in this course these assignments are your responsibility. My job will be to return your work in a timely fashion –within two weeks.

HOW WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE NATURE, QUALITY, AND PROGRESS OF YOUR LEARNING:

I believe a professor has two jobs: to help students learn and to tell society how much learning has been done. I expect ambitious and creative learning and I will work hard to use some strategies that I believe are effective in helping students learn. For the record though, here is my grading policy.

In order to receive a grade in this course, students must complete all assigned work. Grades will not be calculated on the basis of a percentage of work completed. **Except for the extra points given for attending the DIY ‘zine workshop, there are no extra credit projects.** There are often questions about grading and evaluation policies, especially for those who have never taken an art history class before and are concerned about how their work will be evaluated. Grade ranges and a description of the sort of work expected are as follows—please read them carefully.

- **A** (90-92 is an A-; 93-96 is an A; 97-100 is an A+) startlingly good, exceeding my expectations, and well-written. Must be imaginative; NOT given for simply following directions
- **B** (80-82 is a B-; 83-86 is a B; 87-89 is a B+) Good effort with a good result.
- **C** (70-72 is a C-; 73-76 is a C; 77-79 is a C+) Perfunctory; or tried but missed the point; or did something well but it wasn’t the assignment; or a good idea but careless or sloppy.
- **D** (60-69) Warning: accepted under protest
- **F** (Below 60) Unacceptable as college-level work; see me immediately if you find yourself in this

situation.

Please remember something though. The function of this course is not to enable you to get a good grade easily, although it is not difficult to get a good grade. As part of a general education curriculum, its function is to not to ready you for one particular job but for many jobs over a lifetime that require a depth and breadth of understanding that exposure to the range of human knowledge is uniquely intended to impart.

It is not just the professor though who should be vested in the nature of learning. A student also has a tremendous responsibility here; **you should be able to judge the quality of your own work.** If you cannot assess the quality of what you have produced, then you haven't really learned anything. Here are the **Student Learning Objectives.**

- Analyze the formal elements of a particular art form using vocabulary appropriate to that form
- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic technique and the expression of a work's underlying concept
- Analyze cultural productions using standards appropriate to the form and cultural context
- Analyze and interpret material culture in its social, historical, and/or personal contexts
- Engage in critical analysis in writing using reasoned, well-organized arguments with introduction, thesis statement, supporting evidence, and conclusion

At various points in this course, you might want to sit down and ask yourself about your progress and the strategies you are using to understand those learning objectives. Talk to me if you are struggling here.

CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE: Courtesy and common sense please. We're all adults; sometimes emergencies come up. However, talking to friends during lectures, wandering in and out, and cell phones/web surfing are all badly distracting to everyone else. Chronic chatters and latecomers are disruptive and will be asked to leave the classroom. If you know you will have to leave a few minutes early, please on the aisle and let me know. I am going to teach this class as if we were in a business meeting twice a week. For those of you who have never been in a business meeting, here's what's acceptable: http://www.today.com/id/18079593/ns/today-money/t/oh-behave-tips-proper-business-manners/#.U9gJaxrD_IU

Here's another one: <http://work.chron.com/behave-professionally-meeting-6212.html>

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING: These are not fooling-around offences with me. Your written work is to be the product of your own thinking. Ditto with tests. Be warned: **if you cheat, I will give your work a grade of "0" and send you and your work on to the Dean of Students.** No excuses, no tears, no "I didn't understand about citing other people's work/talking during an exam" stories.

If you are not sure how the University defines plagiarism, please see the Plagiarism Statement in the George Mason University Honor System and Code at <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>.

DISABILITIES: If you have a learning disability, it must be properly documented by the Office for Disability Services and I am happy to make the necessary accommodations for those students. I need to see and sign the documentation from the Office for Disability Services well before tests and assignments are given in order to accommodate you. Please contact them for more information. <http://ods.gmu.edu/> (703.993.2474)

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: If English is not your first language, please discuss any concerns you might have about the writing assignment with me. And don't forget about the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>)

IMPORTANT DATES:

Monday, September 4. No school. Labor Day.

Friday, September 29. Last day to drop a class

Monday, October 9. No class. Columbus Day. BUT Monday classes/labs meet Tuesday, October 10.
Tuesday classes do not meet this week

Wednesday, November 22. No school. Thanksgiving break.

Saturday, December 9. Last day of classes.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS:

I reserve the right to alter the schedule due to snow days. If we have a snow day, I will post an updated schedule on Blackboard once the university has recalibrated the academic calendar.

Monday, August 28. Syllabus review and introduction to the course.

Wednesday, August 30. *What is art? Style, Form and Content; Context*

Text: Introduction, pp. 26-45

Blackboard Reading: Hunter Rawlings, "College is Not a Commodity," *Washington Post*, June 9, 2015. https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/06/09/college-is-not-a-commodity-stop-treating-it-like-one/?utm_term=.a9f5d275386a

Monday, September 4. No school.

Wednesday, September 6. *What is art? Style, Form and Content; Context*, continued

Text: Introduction, pp. 26-45

Quiz #1 on last week's material at the start of class

Monday, September 11. *Fundamentals of Art. The Visual Elements: Line, Shape vs. Form*

Text, pages 48-72

Quiz #2 on last week's material at the start of class

Wednesday, September 13. *Fundamentals: Volume, Mass, Texture*

Text, pages 73-81

Monday, September 18. *Fundamentals: Value, Space and Perspective*

Text, pages 82-100

Quiz #3 on last week's material at the start of class

Wednesday, September 20. *Fundamentals: Color and Time and Motion*

Text, pages 101-129

Monday, September 25. *Fundamentals of Art. Principles of Design: Unity and Variety (and the Contrast between them); Balance*

Text, pages 130-145

Quiz #4 on last week's material at the start of class

Wednesday, September 27. *Fundamentals. Principles of Design: Scale and Proportion*

Text, pages 146-155

Monday, October 2. *Fundamentals. Principles of Design: Emphasis and Focal Point; Rhythm*

Text, pages 156-166, and 171-177

Quiz #5 on last week's material at the start of class

Wednesday, October 4. *Media and Process: Painting—tempera, fresco*

Text, pages 215-231

Monday, October 9. No class

Tuesday, October 10. **OUR CLASS MEETS.** *Media and Process: Painting—oil, acrylic*

Text, pages 215-231

Quiz #6 on last week's material at the start of class

Wednesday, October 11. *Media and Process: Printmaking—woodcut, engraving, etching*

Text, pages 232-246

PROJECT #1 DUE TODAY

Monday, October 16. Media and Process: Printmaking-- lithography, silkscreen, monoprint

Text, pages 232-246

Quiz #7 on last week's material at the start of class

Wednesday, October 18. Media and Process: Photography

Text, pages 319-337

Monday, October 23. Media and Process: Photography

Text, pages 319-337

Quiz #8 on material from last week at the start of class

Wednesday, October 25. Media and Process: Sculpture

Text, pages 248-265

Monday, October 30. History and Context: Greece and Rome

Text, pages 379-389

Blackboard Reading: Nicholas Gage, "Introduction to *The Greek Miracle: Classical Sculpture from the Dawn of Democracy*," in McEnroe and Pokinski, *Critical Perspectives in Art History* (Pearson, 2002), 2-6.

Quiz #9 on material from last week at the start of class

Wednesday, November 1. History and Context: Greece and Rome, continued

Text, pages 379-389

Monday, November 6. History and Context: The Middle Ages

Text, pages 390-411

Quiz #10 on material from last week at the start of class

Wednesday, November 8. History and Context: The Italian Renaissance

Text, pages 464-473

Blackboard Reading: Richard Leppert, "The Male Nude: Identity and Denial," in McEnroe and Pokinski, *Critical Perspectives in Art History* (Pearson, 2002), 134-138.

Monday, November 13. History and Context: The Renaissance in the North

Text, pages 474-479

Blackboard Reading: Erwin Panofsky, "Jan Van Eyck," in McEnroe and Pokinski, *Critical Perspectives in Art History* (Pearson, 2002), 81-83.

AND Lisa Jardine, "Prologue to Worldly Goods," in McEnroe and Pokinski, *Critical Perspectives in Art History* (Pearson, 2002), 90-91.

Quiz #11 on material from last week at the start of class

Wednesday, November 15. History and Context: The Baroque/the 17th-century

Text, pages 479-497

PROJECT #2 DUE TODAY

Monday, November 20. No class. Comp time for 'zine workshop and museum visit

Wednesday, November 22. No class. Thanksgiving Break

Monday, November 27. History and Context: The 19th century

Text, pages 497-525

Blackboard Reading: Camille Paglia, "City in Motion: Edouard Manet, *At the Café*," in *Glittering Images* (Vintage, 2012). 90-95.

Quiz #12 on material from the week before Thanksgiving (Renaissance in the North and Baroque/17th century) at the start of class

Wednesday, November 29. History and Context: *The 20th century*

Text, pages 525-559

Blackboard Reading: Camille Paglia, "Heaven and Hell: Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger*," in *Glittering Images* (Vintage, 2012), 102-106.

Monday, December 4. History and Context: *The 20th century*

Text, pages 352-363

Blackboard Reading: Mary Anne Staniszewski, "Art and Culture Today," in McEnroe and Pokinski, *Critical Perspectives in Art History* (Pearson, 2002), 204-206.

Quiz this week is on Wednesday

Wednesday, December 6. *The Last Lecture*

Quiz #13 on material from last week + this Monday