

ARTH 373-001
Professor Ellen Todd
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Innovation Hall 134
Spring Semester 2012 1:30-2:45
Office Hours: Wed. 1:00-3:00
Th. 3:00-4:00 and by appt.

U.S. ART FROM RAGTIME TO SWINGTIME

This course may fulfill the General Education Core Requirement in Fine Arts

COURSE INTRODUCTION/OBJECTIVES. This course looks at American Art from the Ashcan School of Painters through the Great Depression of the 1930s. The basic theme will be art and the modern world whether seen through the lens of modernist abstraction or American realism, in painting, or through other modes of expression like photography. As we examine these works, we will also be charting the course of American history and culture to see how the values of the Progressive era, the postwar world of prosperity and technological growth, and the Great Depression are manifested in art. Taking as our assumptions that works of art are part of history and always in some way ideological, we will ask how these images embody either the ideals or the tensions in America at a given cultural moment.

Because this course fulfills a general education requirement, I begin with a mini-course that introduces art history and visual culture—how we look and what questions we ask about works of art. Three lectures on material before the Armory show will also help to set the stage for our discussion. In general we will have two kinds of activities in the course. First, slide lectures provide overviews and case studies of visual movements, trends, and individual artists, suggesting interpretive possibilities for their work. Second, these lectures prepare you for our more structured in-class discussions of book chapters and articles. Here you will work actively in electronic discussion and in-class groups, presenting and discussing material from the reading. This will happen especially with the Corn book.

There are several goals for this course. First, you will acquire an overview knowledge of this period's main artistic movements and figures along with competing ideas about art. Second, you will gain a sense of art history's preoccupations and how to read critically in the field. Finally, you will become acquainted with some art from area collections through your museum assignment.

These are discussed in greater detail below and in separate handouts.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS. Available for purchase in the Bookstore, Johnson Center:

Wanda Corn. *The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity: 1915-1935* (California: 1999).

Patricia Hills, ed. *Modern Art in the USA: Images and Controversies of the 20th-Century* (Prentice Hall: 2001).

There will be additional readings in the Blackboard Course Content folder for the course which you will be able to download. Noted as BB on the schedule below. Several articles may be accessed in JSTOR. There are also excerpts on BB from three different Textbooks.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

E-mail: Everyone has a gmU e-mail account and I will use only these addresses. If you have another account you use regularly, like YAHOO or GMAIL, you must arrange to forward your gmU email to that account. E-mail will be an important means of communication, particularly for questions I might ask you to think about for the coming week or for assignment attachments. We should be as paperless as possible. You should make a habit of checking email regularly. I will also communicate any important changes via email, so make sure you have arranged any forwarding the first week of class. Keep your inboxes clear so I don't get returned messages with "over quota."

Quiz #1: Thur. Feb 16. (10%): This will be a substantially objective exam featuring definitions and short answers from slides and identification/discussion of quotes or key texts. It covers the material from the first six classes—the mini-course material and the pre-Armory show lectures.

Quiz #2: Thur. March. 29: (15%) Two parts. Take home questions and then a similar format to above covering material on the second part of the course—Material from "The Great American Thing" (this may also be a full take-home exam)

Take-home Final Exam: Thur. May 10 1:30 PM (25%). This will consist of some short definition questions, some short essays on readings and will cover the last third of the course. One essay will definitely ask that you compare two readings, and it may include a small exhibition that lists your works and offers an introductory essay.

Paper #1: 4-5 pages (due Tues Mar.6, 15%) and Paper #2: 5-6 pages (due Thur Apr. 19, 20%) are related. The first paper will be a structured and detailed visual analysis of a single work found at an area museum (Topics will be announced.) and you will conclude with a plausible research question. That question will form the topic for paper #2, in which you will develop a minimum of 12 varied sources to address the question you posed in paper #1. More detailed instructions to follow.

All papers should be typed and well-written. (see evaluation standards below). You will be evaluated on the completeness/comprehensiveness of your work, and on your written presentation. Note: you may use the first person singular in writing; however a claim stated must be supported by evidence whether in the form of visual analysis in paper #1 or proper researched evidence in paper #2.

In-class work/Participation (15%): While I will provide overview lectures for the week, especially to cover the introductory material of the course, some of each class period thereafter will be devoted to in-class discussion—whether of readings, individual artists, a slide comparison, an exhibition, or a particular issue raised by the reading. I have put a double asterisk (**) in front of classes on the schedule for which a small group of students will summarize collectively a reading in class, generate discussion questions, and provide a one-page written summary for distribution for posting on the class site. I will assign you to groups and readings after the class list has settled. These exercises will help you stay engaged with the reading and will help you become more proficient at analyzing works of art. Participation consists of your attendance, your contribution to both informal discussions and your in-class presentation.

NOTES: *WRITTEN WORK WILL BE SUBMITTED TO BLACKBOARD UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED.

*PLEASE TURN OFF MUSIC HEADPHONES BEFORE ENTERING THE CLASS

*TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES AND PUT THEM AWAY—OUT OF SIGHT—ABSOLUTELY NO TEXT MESSAGING DURING CLASS

*COMPUTERS SHOULD BE ON FOR NOTE-TAKING ONLY—NO EMAIL, NO SURFING

IMPORTANT: Please bring your books/xeroxes to class for that week. In many cases this semester we will need to look at pictures or examine text passages in the book, even though this year, I will have incorporated many of the works into our slide collection.

Attendance: It is the stated policy of the university that "students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. . . . instructors may use absence, tardiness or early departure as *de facto* evidence of non-participation" Because of the direct visual and intellectual engagement required by the material, attendance is essential to the learning process and the art history program feels strongly about adherence to this policy. This classroom is designed as a community of learners, and because of the nature of our group interactions, you have a responsibility to your fellow students to attend classes. Poor attendance by students undermines the work of the whole; be courteous, prompt, and save absences for illness. Students who fail to attend regularly should not have unreasonable expectations about their final grade. By the same token, paying your tuition and simply showing up for class does not automatically earn you a good grade.

<u>Grading:</u>	Quiz #1	10%
	Quiz #2	15%
	Paper #1	15%
	Paper #2	20%
	Final Exam:	25%
	Participation:	<u>15%</u>
		100%

There are pluses and minuses as indicated below (there is an A-, B+ and B-, and C+ and C-). You will earn some form of numerical grade so you will always have a clear indication of where you stand. Good papers and finals will include a thesis statement (what you will argue vs. what you will write about); the thesis should be supported by examples and evidence from relevant readings and images. All written work will be graded on grammar, style, content, organization, and clarity. Spellcheck, number pages, and proofread all papers before submitting them.

A 93-99%; A- 90-92% This is awarded for superior understanding of all concepts, an original or imaginative thesis, sophisticated interpretation and style and impressive presentation (no faults of organization, no errors of grammar, syntax, or spelling); imaginative projects that go beyond the assignment, and insightful class participation. For surprising me. I will not be using the A+ grade unless you write a publishable paper.

B+ 87-89%; B 83-86%; B- 80-82% This indicates above average mastery of the material, clear and well-produced and thoughtful written presentation and this range falls somewhere between leaning either toward A at the top, or C at the bottom.

C+ 77-79%; C 72-76% This is for average or merely adequate work, rudimentary understanding of factual material and just competent written presentation. Papers in this range usually exhibit errors in grammar and style, problems with logic, failure to correctly annotate quotations, unimaginative (pedestrian) arguments, careless errors.

C- 70-71% D=60-69% This suggests less-than-satisfactory preparation of factual material and poor written work--minimum effort and writing problems that require follow-up from a writing center tutor. If C- is a final grade it counts the same as a D. Only 12 hours of this work can be included toward graduation

F=59 and below. Unacceptable as college level work, with serious writing problems requiring intensive help.

0 Work not handed in on time (contact me before the due date with serious problems.)

IMPORTANT NOTE: In order to receive a grade for the course, all work must be completed. If you fail to turn in one paper, or the final exam you will not receive a passing grade, no matter what your other grades for the course. I do this to be fair—everyone must do the same amount of work for the course. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date, not in my mailbox, and not later in the day. Late papers will be downgraded 5 points a day unless I hear from you. If there are problems or if you need a moderate extension because of illness, contact me before the assignment is due. ****In order to be allowed to submit a late piece of work because of illness, or schedule a make-up, you must notify the department office, or me by email before the scheduled due time. Medical problems do occur. I will expect a physician's excuse. An unexcused illness will result in a grade of "0. Call (703) 993-1250 and leave a message with the secretary or on voice mail, or call me at (703) 993-4374 or send email—which is the best way of contacting me. You have a reading day prior to the beginning of final exams. Absolutely no work will be accepted after the last day of class. A final exam can only be excused through the Dean.**

Honor Code: This is found in the university undergraduate catalog and applies to this and all other courses. Cheating, plagiarism are expressly forbidden. For quick reference, plagiarism can be defined as: (1) presenting as one's own the words, work, or opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgement or (2) borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgement. Every single "direct" quote must be footnoted, even if you use the author's name in a sentence. Every sequence of ideas from elsewhere must be footnoted. All sources must be footnoted, no matter how ephemeral. This includes ALL websites, all museum brochures, all wall panels or label texts in museums. THIS MEANS YOU MUST FOOTNOTE NOT ONLY DIRECT QUOTES BUT ANY PARAPHRASES OF IDEAS, OR INFORMATION.

Helpful Hints: 1. Keep up with the reading. Be aware of weeks that are more demanding. Come with questions and stay engaged--this counts as class participation. Remember that you take away as much as you invest.

2. Take notes in lectures and discussions--some of my lectures may diverge substantially from the readings and remember that the classroom is where you see images. If we get involved in a class discussion, even jotting down the general direction and points of discussion will help you recall it later. Having class notes is very useful for EXAMS.

3. If you have any problems at all, please make an appointment to see me sooner rather than later--there is almost always a solution and it is better to catch things early on. I cannot stress this enough!

OFFICE HOURS: My office is in Robinson B336 in the Department of History and Art History (Robinson B359). My phone is (703) 993-4374 and e-mail is etodd@gmu.edu. My office hours are Wed. 1:00 to 3:00 and Thurs. 3:00 to 4:00 and by appointment (which means that I have some flexibility in my schedule—I know I will be in on some Mondays, for example). Please make an appointment even within office hours to assure yourself a time.

KEY DATES FOR THE COURSE:

Tue. Jan. 31	Last Day to add classes
	Last Day to drop with no tuition penalty
Thur. Feb 16	<u>Quiz #1</u>
Fri. Feb. 24	Last Day to Drop Classes
Feb. 27 to Mar. 30	Selective Withdrawal Period

Tues. Mar. 6	<u>Paper #1, Visual Analysis/Research Question Due</u>
Sat. Mar. 10 to Sun. Mar. 18	SPRING BREAK
Thur. Mar. 29	<u>Quiz #2</u>
Thur. Apr. 19	<u>Short Research Paper #2 Due—in class discussion</u>
Fri. Fri. May 4	Last Day of Classes. All work must be in.
Thur. May 10	<u>TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM DUE 1:30 PM.</u>

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS: (Subject to change/fluidity)

Assignments are to be completed for the day on which they appear BB is the Course folder on BLACKBOARD (<http://courses.gmu.edu>) or JSTOR. For Hills, I provide item numbers, but be sure to read introductions to sections as appropriate. There are excerpts from three textbooks in American Art on Blackboard. Erica Doss, *Twentieth Century American Art*, (Doss) *American Encounters*, and Frances K. Pohl, *Framing America* (Pohl) all on Blackboard. ** means in-class discussion or group presentation—mandatory attendance for these classes.

Tues. Jan. 24	Course Introduction. Syllabus Review. Brainstorming
Thur. Jan. 26	Mini-Course #1: How We Look: Image/Viewer READ: Handout
Tues. Jan. 31	Mini-Course #2: What We Do: Art History/Visual Culture READ: Handout. Hills preface. Corn preface
Thur. Feb. 2	Mini-Course #3: Tradition vs. Modern—Europe vs. America READ: Doss Chapter 1
Tues. Feb. 7	Before the Armory Show I: Ashcan School Realism and The Modern City READ: Doss Chapter 2. Hills, on realists, #1, 2, 3.
Thur. Feb. 9	Before the Armory Show II: Photography and the Art/Documentary Debate: Stieglitz and Lewis Hine. READ: In ch. 2; <i>American Encounters</i> , ch. 12, 400-401; 413-419. Hills, on photography, #14, 15, 16
Tues. Feb. 14	Before the Armory Show III: Early Modernism, Stieglitz and 291. READ: <i>American Encounters</i> , ch. 12, 401-413. Hills, #4-8, #10-12.
Thur. Feb. 16	<u>QUIZ #1</u> on mini-course/pre-Armory Show material
Tues. Feb. 21	The Armory Show: Modern Art Comes to America READ: Hills, section intro, #17-20. JoAnne M. Mancini "One term is a fatuous as another:" Responses to the Armory Show Reconsidered." <i>American Quarterly</i> 51 (Dec. 1999): 833- 870. JSTOR.

**In-class debate of Positions
ORGANIZATION OF DISCUSSION GROUPS FOR CORN

- Thur. Feb. 23 NO CLASS: Visit the Museum to work on Papers
- Tues. Feb. 28 **Spiritual America: American Intellectual Roots and National Identity
READ: Corn, Introduction. Hills. #9 by Coady.
- Thur. Mar. 1 **American DADA and Marcel Duchamp
READ: Corn, Chapter 1
- Tues. Mar. 6 **Gerald Murphy and American Things
READ: Corn, Chapter 2.
Hills, pp. 43-62 will be useful for this section, here, esp. #38/39
PAPER #1 Visual Analysis/Research Question Papers Due
- Thur. Mar. 8 **Joseph Stella and the Romantic Machine City
READ: Corn, Chapter 3. Hills #23, 24

SPRING BREAK: SATURDAY MARCH 10 THROUGH SUNDAY MARCH 18

- Tues. Mar. 20 **Charles Demuth and the Great Figure
READ: Corn, Chapter 4. Hills, #26, #30
- Thur. Mar. 22 **Georgia O'Keeffe and the Great American Thing
READ: Corn, Chapter 5, Hills, #34 by Waldo Frank.
- Tues. Mar. 27 **Charles Sheeler: Industrial and Vernacular Modern
READ: Corn, Chapter 6, Hills, #25, #27
- Thur. Mar. 29 QUIZ #2: On all Material since Quiz #1
- Tues. Apr. 3 The Harlem Renaissance: Ideas and Artists
READ: Hills, #8, 31, 32, 35-37; 43 #59-60 Mary Ann Calo, "Alain Locke and American Art Criticism" *American Art*, volume 18 (2004), pages 88–97. BB. ALSO READ: Amy M. Mooney. "Representing Race: Disjunctions in the Art of Archibald J. Motley, Jr." *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 24 no. 2 (1999) 162-179; 262-265. JSTOR
- Thur. Apr. 5 A New Look at the 1920s I: Silence, Order, and the New Body
READ: *Truth and Beauty*, Selection #1 BB
- Tues. Apr. 10 A New Look at the 1920s II: Places and Things
READ: *Truth and Beauty*, Selection #2 BB
- Thur. Apr. 12 NO CLASS: Work on Paper#2
- Tues. Apr. 17 Photography in the 1920s and 1930s: Form and Document
READ: *American Encounters*, Ch. 14, 466-468; Pohl, Ch. 12, 374-377; Hills, #49, 56. Sally Stein. "The President's Two Bodies: Stagings and Restagings of FDR and the New Deal Body Politic". *American Art* 18 (Spring 2004): BB and James Curtis, Dorothea Lange, Migrant Mother,

and the Culture of the Great Depression. *Winterthur Portfolio* 21 (Spring 1986): 1-20. JSTOR

- Thur. Apr. 19 **PAPER #2 Short Research follow-up Due for in-class Discussion
- Tues. Apr. 24 Women, Consumption, The Urban Scene: Florine Stettheimer and The Fourteenth Street School
READ: Ellen Wiley Todd, "Art, The New Woman, and Consumer Culture: Miller and Marsh on 14th Street," in *Gender and American History from 1890*, ed. Barbara Melosh (New York: Routledge): 127-154. BB; Pohl, *Framing America* Chapter 12, 399-403 BB.
- Thur. Apr. 26 The American Scene and Regionalism: Hopper, Benton, and Wood,
READ: *American Encounters*, Ch. 14, pp. 477-480; Ch. 15, 485-494 BB; Helen Appleton Reed. "Edward Hopper" *Parnassus* 5 (Nov. 1933): 8-10; 20, JSTOR; Wanda Corn. "The Birth of An American Icon: Grant Wood's *American Gothic*, in *Reading American Art*, Doezema and Miloy, eds., (Yale, 1998): 387-408 BB. Sue Taylor. "Grant Wood's Family Album" *American Art* 19 (Summer 2005): 48-67. BB (also JSTOR)
- Tues. May 1 Government, Society, and the Arts
READ: Pohl. Ch. 12, 364-374 BB, Hills, #44-47 #50-55. Doss, "Between Modernity and the Real Thing: Maynard Dixon's Mural for the Bureau of Indian Affairs" *American Art* 18 (Fall 2004) BB (also JSTOR)
- Thur. May 3 Labor, Conflict, and the American Mural
READ: POHL, Ch. 12, 381-396; READ: Anthony W. Lee. "Diego Rivera's The Making of a Fresco and its San Francisco Public." *Oxford Art Journal* 19 (1996): 72-82 JSTOR

THURSDAY MAY 10 TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DUE: 1:30 PM