

ARTH 200: Survey of Western Art

Professor Christopher A. Gregg

373 A in Robinson B

cgregg@gmu.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:00-1:00pm, or by appointment

Course Description

This class is designed to introduce the student to the artistic tradition of Western culture from the Stone Age to the Gothic period, presenting development of style and theme in the primary artistic media (sculpture, architecture, and painting) as well as minor arts (metalwork, cameo). We will focus on pieces that exemplify each period and practice detailed visual readings in order to better understand their function within the original culture's context as well as the impact which they have had on modern Western European and American artistic ideals. This is a very detail oriented class, and students will be responsible for specific information regarding the material under discussion. Furthermore, attendance is vital: missing even a single class will put you at a disadvantage since lectures include material not in the textbook but for which the student is responsible on the exams. ARTH 200 is approved to fulfill the University Fine Arts general education credit.

Textbook

Gardner's Art Through the Ages, Volume I (13th Edition),
edited by Fred Kleiner.

Texts are available in the Campus Bookstore for approximately \$169 new, \$120 used, \$80 rental, and a possibility of free etext. If you choose to buy elsewhere, consider that time is a factor: you will need the texts at the very beginning of the session. If you choose to use an earlier edition of the text, you are responsible for keeping up with the syllabus and all information presented from the 13th edition.

Objectives

- Become familiar with materials and styles of representation common to the Western artistic tradition from the Stone Age to the Medieval period.
- Perceive the continuity and recurrence of styles from ancient Mediterranean cultures in the modern Euro-American tradition.
- Practice detailed visual observation of sculpture, painting, architecture and other art forms.
- Learn recognition and proper use of art historical vocabulary.
- Appreciate the influence that historical/political events can have on the creation of artistic images.
- Understanding the cultural diversity of art and architecture as it reflects the society which created it.

Graded Requirements

Exam 1	Monday, Oct. 1 st	30%
Exam 2	Monday, Nov 5 th	35%
Exam 3	Consult Final Exam Schedule	35%

No extra credit assignments are offered in the class.

Grading Scale:

A+ (100-97) A (96-93) A- (92-90) B+ (89-87) B (86-83) B- (82-80) C+ (79-77)
C (76-73) C- (72-70) D (69-60) F (59 and below)

Exams

Exams will be short answer and multiple choice: dates, titles, artists, material, technique, application of appropriate terminology, etc.
You will need to be able to link images with ideas, so studying with flashcards or the interactive cd provided by your textbook is a good method.
Written image identifications or fill in the blanks/short answers will also be included on the exams.
Images will be of objects/monuments found in your textbook and discussed in class.
Questions will be drawn primarily from lecture and discussion.
A study guide will be distributed several days before each exam: the study guide, however, will not be comprehensive. You are responsible for studying all material covered in class.
Exams 1 through 3 will each cover only the material in the preceding section of the course. Exam 4, the final exam, will focus on the last section of the course but will also include some material from earlier sections (specified in the final exam study guide).

Note-taking:

Although the readings in your textbook are critical for the course, class lectures will bring the material together, and it is from the class lecture that substantial portions of each exam will be drawn. You need to take thorough notes in order to be prepared for the exams. If there are terms on a slide, include the term, its definition and application in your notes. This is a class based on the content and the context of images and that means attention to details: most people are not able to retain all of the specific details without studying copious notes taken during lecture. Do not assume that showing up to class and simply “listening” will be sufficient to prepare you for exams.

Important Notes

- **Attendance at exams is MANDATORY: no make-up exams will be offered without a doctor's excuse or other official documentation. If you miss an exam, you must contact me within 24 hours to schedule the re-take with valid documentation.**
- **I encourage questions and open discussion in class. Please, however, refrain from “quiet” talking to one another during lectures. It is distracting both to your classmates and to myself. If you persist in this during lectures, I will ask you to leave the classroom.**
- **Please turn off cell phones when class begins. Texting during class will be treated the same as talking during lectures.**
- **Use of electronic devices (including cell phones) during exams will be treated as an honor code violation. You will receive a “0” on the exam at the very least.**
- **Arrive on time for class. Coming in late is disruptive for everyone. If you have a class prior to ours which causes a problem with arriving on time, please discuss it with me.**

- Discuss any special academic needs with me at the start of the term. Do not wait until after the first exam or later!
- Since the material in this course is based on the art and literature of other cultures, some topics of violence, gender, and sexuality may be contrary to individual beliefs, but we will deal with them in an academic and intellectual manner.
- All reading assignments should be completed before class each day.
- No extra credit assignments are offered in the course.
- The schedule and pace of the course may be adjusted as needed. If the need arises, a revised syllabus will be distributed. It is your responsibility to keep up with the most recently distributed version of the syllabus

All university policies of academic integrity and honesty will be enforced in this class: make sure that you are familiar with these policies.

If you have not already signed up for the Mason Alert system, which will send texts concerning weather cancellations, etc. please do so at: <https://alert.gmu.edu>

Reading assignments: Ideally, each chapter should be read in its entirety at the beginning of each section. I will not always follow the order of material in the textbook, so reading the entire chapter at the beginning will give you an overview of the material that will allow you to better follow the lectures. For longer chapters, I have broken down the assignments, but they may not correspond exactly to the material covered in class on that specific day.

August

M 27 Introduction: Course Basics, What is the Western Tradition of Art?

W 29 Prehistoric: Paleolithic

Gardner's Art Through the Ages, vol 1 (for all subsequent reading assignments):
Chapter 1: "Art Before History" pp. 16-29

September

M 3 No Class: Labor Day

W 5 Prehistoric: Neolithic

See previous assignment

M 10 Mesopotamia, part 1

Chapter 2: "The Ancient Near East" pp. 30-51

W 12 Mesopotamia, part 2

See previous assignment

M 17 Egypt, part 1

Chapter 3: "Egypt Under the Pharaohs" pp. 52-79

W 19 Egypt, part 2

See previous assignment

M 24 Egypt, part 3
See previous assignment

W 26 Egypt, part 4 and Aegean, part 1
Chapter 4: "The Prehistoric Aegean" pp. 80-97

October

M 1 Exam I (Prehistoric through Egypt)

W 3 Aegean, part 2
See previous assignment

Tuesday 9th (Academic Monday: Monday classes meet) Greek, part 1
Chapter 5: "Ancient Greece" pp. 98-113

W 10 Greek, part 2
Chapter 5, pp. 114-125; 134-136 ("Painting")

M 15 Greek, part 3
Chapter 5, pp. 125-134

W 17 Greek, part 4
Chapter 5, pp. 137-155

M 22 Etruscan and Early Roman
Chapter 9: "The Etruscans" pp. 222-235
Chapter 10: "The Roman Empire" pp. 235-242

W 24 Roman, part 2
Chapter 10, pp. 254-263

M 29 Roman, part 3
Chapter 10, pp. 245-253 (Pompeii and Roman painting)

W 31 Roman, part 4
Chapter 10, pp. 263-271

November

M 5 Exam 2 (Aegean through Roman, part 4)

W 7 Late Antiquity
Chapter 10, pp. 272-286
Chapter 11: "Late Antiquity" pp. 289-309

M 12 Byzantine
Chapter 12: "Byzantium" pp. 310-339

W 14 Early Medieval and Romanesque

Chapter 16: "Early Medieval Europe" pp. 406-429

M 19 To Be Announced

Thanksgiving Break November 21-25

M 26 Romanesque, part 2

Chapter 17: "Romanesque Europe" pp. 430-459

W 28 Islamic and Early Gothic

Chapter 13: "The Islamic World" pp. 340-363

December

M 3 Gothic

Chapter 18: "Gothic Europe" pp. 460-477

W 5 Gothic

Chapter 18: pp. 479-482; 486-495

Consult with the GMU Exam Schedule for the date and time of Exam 3, which will take place during the final exam period.

It is the policy of the University and the Art History Department not to give early exams: make your travel plans accordingly.

General Education Assessment Outcomes

Identify and 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 or performance culture in its social, historical, and/or personal contexts

Engage in the artistic process, including conception, creation and ongoing critical analysis