

## ARTH 499 Impressionism

Professor Lisa Passaglia Bauman

Office: Robinson Hall B, room 373A

Office Hours: Thursday 1:30-3:00; Friday 10:30-11:20; or by appointment

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### Course Description:

Beneath seemingly simple paintings seen as essentially truthful renderings of an unproblematic world, or as concerned mainly with questions of perception and the “fleeting glance”, Impressionism raises deeper issues and begs serious questions. Some of the issues we will examine are gender in representation/gender and representation, labor and industry, sexuality, truthfulness, and modernity. We are going to explore pictorial evidence and art historical theories to present a complex whole, grounded in the historical context in which the works were made. Each week we will try to focus on an issue central to Impressionism. For the sake of clarity, these themes are arranged within a roughly chronological development. Sometimes a week is devoted to a theme that is particularly relevant to a certain artist. Other weeks, we may find a wider range of artists.

**Course Objectives:** Learn to place works of art in their social and historical context. Develop your visual analysis skills. Read critically, write engagingly, present professionally both in lecture and in written form, and meet deadlines. But most of all to develop a sense of joy and wonder in research.

### Required Text:

T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life. Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers.*

Revised Edition (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1984).

Readings available on e-reserve. Password: impressions (no spaces, no caps)

### Recommended Text:

Robert Herbert, *Impressionism. Art, Leisure, and Parisian Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

**Tech requirements and policy:** All students must activate and check their GMU e-mail accounts on a regular basis. I will ONLY use the e-mail distribution list from the class registration. If you prefer to use a commercial account, you must activate the forwarder on your GMU account.

A successful seminar is made by the collaborative efforts of the group. That means being a group—doing the reading before seminar, being engaged in seminar. To that end, there are no cell phones in my 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). No laptops either.

**Method of Assessment:** This is not a lecture class. Seminar is interesting when people are engaged. Attendance and informed participation are the coin of the realm and are therefore required of all students. If you cannot attend seminar due to medical reasons or an emergency, I am available to discuss that missed course material. You will need to bring me proper documentation for that absence. If you just miss because your heart was recently broken and you are having a hard time leaving your bed, then you’ll need to see a very obliging classmate. Obviously, this impacts your participation grade. After one missed class, each unexplained absence will cost you 10% of your participation grade. An unexcused absence during the weeks of student presentations will drop your **final grade** by 10%.

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| • Participation and Attendance             | 20% |
| • Response papers (5 total at 4% each)     | 20% |
| • Article/Object Presentation (15 minutes) | 5%  |
| • Research paper—preliminary steps         |     |
| ○ Topic                                    | 5%  |
| ○ Physical materials                       | 5%  |

- Research paper—rough draft 15%
- Research paper—presentation (30 minutes) 10%
- Research paper (7 pages) 20%

The grading model is as follows: A+ (100-97); A (96-93); A- (93-90); B+ (89-87); B (86-83); B- (82-80); C+ (79-77); C (76-73); C- (73-70); D (69-60); F (59 and below)

#### Weekly assignments:

1. **Reading and Discussion.** You are responsible for all the reading on the syllabus for each week. This means the **core reading/primary source reading** and the **student project reading**. It is about 100 pages a week. From time to time, I will also put **background reading** on the syllabus but this is optional and there to help you fill in any gaps in your understanding of the Impressionist movement as a whole. You can skim it or avoid it as needed. You are also responsible for being prepared to participate actively in a discussion of each week's material. How does one do that? Bring in at least 5 topics of discussion—ideas, quotes, comparisons with other material discussed in class.
2. **Response Papers.** To help discussion and to practice writing, you will write papers based on the core reading. Choose 5 weeks between weeks 5-12 when you will write these response papers. (Let me just clarify this then: there are 8 possible weeks for response papers; you need to turn in response papers 5 of those weeks.) These writing assignments are worth 4% of your final grade each, or 20% total. Hard copies are due in class on the day we discuss those readings. No late work accepted; you simply take a pass on that week. Specific instructions for each of these response papers are on the schedule; it is your responsibility to follow the guidelines.

**Obviously the purpose of the first two points here is to make sure you are doing the reading. If, however, I find that the class is not reading the assignments with adequate attention to detail and memory, I will institute brief weekly quizzes. They will be graded and will count in the participation category of the grades. I will not announce the beginning of the quizzes. Don't make me turn this into middle school.**

3. **Article/Object Presentation:** Pick the article/object topic from the list of student presentations that you are most interested in. This is the core of your research paper, so choose carefully. On the week when it appears on the syllabus, you will present the article to the class and relate this article to the image I've assigned to it. A summary of the reading and a critical approach to the text is a required part of the presentation. This is essentially the same type of work as the response papers so you can use that three-part format (see below) as a guide. Remember to communicate your ideas effectively, address issues raised in the class readings, and illustrate your points with other images if needed. It is your responsibility to create a power point presentation with the image and any other comparative images you'd like. Your presentation must stimulate class discussion so come prepared with questions for the class. Since this presentation forms the root of your research paper, you can use this opportunity to present ideas for possible paper topics, themes, or places you want to pursue in your research. Presentations should be 10 minutes (and no, that does not include the discussion).
4. **Research Project:** Using your Article/Object as a starting point, think up a research topic for a 7-page paper. Research topics are as variable as you are. You can explore an artistic theme or a cultural idea; you can pursue an argument of the type that you've been reading. I'm hesitant to say too much here for fear of stifling your creativity. I want you to find something that seems interesting to you and then go explore it.

Places to begin searching: (1) use the bibliography from your article. (2) For books: Title and Subject searches on the library search engine (<http://library.gmu.edu>) (3) For articles: (often the way to find the most recent writing on an artist or image): Title and Subject searches on articles databases such as Art Index, JSTOR). If you have questions about using these search tools, please contact the Visual Arts Liaison Librarian: Jenna Rinalducci, Fenwick Library (703/993-3720); [jrinaldu@gmu.edu](mailto:jrinaldu@gmu.edu).

- a. **Week 4: get approval for research project.** This can be done via email (although I'm always available to discuss this in person). You are responsible for emailing me sometime in week 4 and telling me what your research project is going to be. I want to see a title, a rough thesis statement, and 1-3 questions that your paper will answer.

Remember that a topic is not the same as a thesis. Topics are general; a thesis is your specific avenue of investigation into your topic. Your thesis should be a specific line of inquiry into your topic with an idea of what you want to prove or disprove. Make sure you get an email response back from me with my approval.

- i. Why? It's my responsibility to make sure it's doable within the confines of our time frame and the material available. And it keeps you on schedule
- b. **Week 7: show me the physical materials.** Bring me four articles from peer-reviewed journals or books that you are going to use for this paper. Physically bring them to me. You'll need to make an appointment to do this and it needs to happen in week 7. I'm on campus every day. The Clark or Herbert texts may NOT count as sources for this; I want to see four new things. No web-based sources, except for illustrations. Obviously articles from peer-reviewed journals that you **access** via the web, such as through JSTOR, are not web-based sources and are, of course, allowed. What I am not allowing are web-based sources like Wikipedia or museum websites whose academic integrity may be difficult to gauge.
  - i. Why? One of the significant learning experiences I want you to have is the joy and wonder of research. It begins with a reference to a book in an article and so you go to the library to pull that book. Then you find that the book next to it on the shelves also looks interesting and so you take that one too. You go through their bibliographies and track down some other books or articles which then send you back to the library until you find yourself deep in its cool stacks, sitting on the floor with piles of books and ideas surrounding you. That won't happen if you don't go through the door.
- c. **Week 10: Turn in a rough draft of your paper in class.**
  - i. Why? Writing a rough draft this far in advance of the final deadline serves two purposes. First, it guarantees you are working on the paper. Now. Not in week 15. Second, it guarantees you the opportunity to rewrite. I know; you don't want to rewrite. You want to sit down at your computer and just be brilliant. I want that too; trust me. But that is very hard to do. What often sounds like a great idea at 3 in the morning with two Pop-Tarts and a Red Bull coursing through your system ends up reading very differently in the cold hard light of day. If your paper is perfect, great; you're on automatic pilot the rest of the semester. If it needs work, there is still time to do it. I will return your rough draft in two weeks at week 12. That gives you plenty of time to rewrite before the final deadline in week 15.
- d. **Weeks 13, 14 and 15: Student presentations.**
  - i. Present your paper to the class as if you were giving it at a conference or as a guest lecturer in my ARTH 360 class. You will need to provide a handout that outlines your topic, provides a bibliography, and gives a list of illustrations. (This also provides your classmates with a place to write notes or questions.) Your presentation should be about 20 minutes with another 5-10 minutes for questions and discussion.
- e. **Monday, December 10, by 5pm: Final papers turned in to my mailbox in Robinson B359.** Turn in your paper with your original rough draft. The paper must be 7 pages (normal margins, double-spaced, 12 point font, I prefer Times New Roman) and have at least five bibliographical sources from peer-reviewed journals or books, plus illustrations (which do not factor into your page count). Clarity of argument, structure, grammatical issues will all be factored into the final grade of your paper along with the quality of the research.

**Important dates:**

**September 3.** Labor Day recess. No class.

**September 4.** Last day to add classes; Last day to drop a class with no tuition penalty.

**September 18.** Last day to drop a class with 33% tuition penalty.

**September 28.** Final drop deadline with 67% tuition penalty.

**October 8.** Columbus Day recess. No class. **But Monday classes meet on Tuesday**

**that week, so I will see you all on Tuesday, October 9.**

**English as a second language:** If English is not your first language, please discuss any concerns you might have about the writing assignments with me. Please, however, give me plenty of notice (at least a week) before any due dates. And don't forget about the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>).

**Standards of Academic Integrity:** GMU has an Honor Code that you can consult at the Office for Academic Integrity (<http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/>). Aristotle famously described the relationship between an abstraction and its human manifestation. How does one become honorable? By doing honorable deeds. Who does honorable deeds? The man with the sense of honor. Through persistence and habit, we can increase our quotient of honor.

**Students with disabilities:** All accommodations must be arranged through the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. If you qualify for accommodation, the ODS staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for you to give to me. Please do that within the first month of class.

**Schedule.** I think it works, but if something needs to be changed, I will let you know well in advance.

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