**ARTH 101: Introduction to the Arts**

*Instructor: Laura McCloskey*
*Term: Spring 2022, asynchronous online course*
*Email: lmcclosk@gmu.edu*
*Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30-11:30am or by appointment, online.*

**Description and Goals**

This course provides an overview of the content and principles of the visual arts. The central goal of this course is to provide you with the terminology and background to be able to effectively analyze, critique, and appreciate visual art from the prehistoric period to the present day. The course begins with an introduction to artistic media, principles of graphic design, and stylistic techniques employed across the spectrum of artistic periods. The first month of the course provides the foundation for formal analysis and is critical to understanding the terminology used in the study of art. Next we will explore the applications of artistic techniques as they are representative of places, people, and periods through the scope of history. Our understanding of the past and the development of civilizations is fundamentally linked to the images and objects left behind: what can these art pieces tell us about the history of a people or area? How does artistic media influence our perception of the past? How are art movements defined and why? Finally, the course concludes with an in-depth discussion of the applications of art: how is art used to evoke social change, define cultures and movements, memorialize important people and events, and symbolize personal beliefs?

This course meets the General Education Fine Arts requirement and is part of the Mason Core curriculum.

**Texts and Readings**

There is one required textbook for this course. The textbook publisher provides a wealth of additional optional online learning tools available for use with the text.

**REQUIRED:**

**Assignments**

The following assignments will be due throughout the course. The reflections and discussions constitute your attendance and class participation grades: these assignments allow you to interact with your fellow classmates and make deep connections with the course content. I will provide detailed personalized feedback to your quizzes, journals, and papers.

**Here is how your grade will be calculated:**
- Quizzes- 20% (2 quizzes x 10% each)
- Final Exam- 20%
- Individual Reflections- 10% (5 posts x 2% each)
- Museum Paper - 20%
- Discussions- 10% (5 discussions x 2% each)
- Online Introduction post- 5%
- Optional Extra Credit Assignment- 5%
- Short Essays - 15% (3 prompts x 5% each)

**Introductory Post**

For your introductory post, post a paragraph about yourself in the appropriate forum on our discussion board. You may want to include information such as your year at Mason (freshman, sophomore, etc.), major, future goals, and why you are interested in our course.
Short Essays
Roughly one week before each quiz and the final exam I will provide a brief prompt related to the overall themes or concepts of what we have covered in class. Your short essay response should be roughly one full double-spaced typed page in length and clearly address all aspects of the prompt. These essays are designed to help you integrate reflection, discussion, and reading material and help you prepare for the essay portions of our assessments (the two quizzes and the final exam).

Museum paper
This essay is designed to help you "bring it altogether" so-to-speak and is due at the end of the semester. In this paper you will visit a local museum or online collection and choose three artworks that best exemplify key terms or concepts that we have studied in this course. You could, for example, choose three paintings that have a strong use of perspective, three sculptures that are representative of one artistic genre, three works of various media that all have a similar theme, etc. Using terminology from class, your course textbook, and at least one other scholarly peer-reviewed resource, you will need to articulate and explain your rationale for choosing these artworks. Your paper should contain an introduction with a thesis statement, a supporting paragraph for each art piece, and a conclusion. Total length should be between 3-5 pages, 12 point font, double-spaced. Upload this assignment on our Blackboard page.

Quizzes
There will be two quizzes: one quiz midway through the class and one before the final exam to make sure you are following the chronology, terms, and themes of the course. Quizzes will consist of ten multiple choice questions and two short answer responses. I often also include a vocabulary matching section or map.

Final Exam
The exam will be a combination of multiple choice questions, term matching, and essays. You may not consult notes, books, classmates, the Internet, etc.

Individual Reflection Assignments
Prompts for individual comments related to the previous or current week's lecture, readings, or course progress will be provided in class each week listed on the syllabus. You must complete all 5 reflections to receive full grade points for this category. Reflections should be at least one paragraph in length (5-7 well-planned, cohesive sentences) and clearly demonstrate to me that you are actively engaging with course lectures, themes, and readings.

Discussion Participation
Prompts for discussions will be provided each week listed in the syllabus. The topics in our course build on each other; taking content week-by-week helps you break it into manageable chunks. There is a good deal of complicated vocabulary in the course – engaging with others while practicing the terms is a great way to build fluency. (It also ensures that you’re on target for what will be tested on the quizzes and final.)

Late Work
• The short essays and museum paper will receive a 10% grade deduction for each day that they are late unless you have received an extension from me prior to the deadline for that assignment.
• Discussions and Reflections must be completed in the weeks listed in the schedule. These count as the participation aspect of our class.
• Quizzes can only be completed on the dates assigned. If you will be absent from a quiz please let me know beforehand so that we can reschedule a time for you to complete the assessment.
• No work will be accepted after the last day of the semester.
• The final exam will take place according to the University calendar. Extensions will only be granted if you have a legitimate and documentable excuse (doctor note, note from an employer, etc.).

Grading

I use a 100 total point system for the entire semester.

Gentle warning: It is easy to let things slip. I strongly urge you to make a solid plan for each week and follow it to the best of your ability.
### Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>IN = incomplete (You must request an IN no later than two weeks before the end of the semester and be passing the course at the time of your request; deadlines for IN work follow the Registrar’s calendar.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>101 and above</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>91-94</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>69-72</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>65-68</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>64 and below</td>
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### Extra Credit

We are very fortunate to be so close to a wealth of art museums in Washington D.C. and the surrounding areas. You can earn up to five additional points of extra credit by critiquing a museum exhibit (not the same exhibit you used in your museum paper). Focus on your personal experience of the exhibit: how did the curator guide you through the exhibit - did the objects flow from one to the next? How? What was particularly effective about the exhibit? You are also welcome to critique an online exhibition if you cannot visit a museum in person.

Alternately, you may attend a Learning Services Workshop at any point during the semester.

This review is due by the last day of class and should be 1-2 pages in length.

What I need in your synopsis:
- What did you do/see and when was it?
- How was it related to images, ideas, or themes we have discussed? OR, if you attended a campus event, what was your impression of the event?
- What are your "take-aways" from the event - how has it impacted you?

### Class Policies

#### Participation/Attendance-
I have built in numerous participation checkpoints for you in the curriculum: it shows me that you are following the course themes and truly comprehending material. The Mason online catalog states: “Students are expected to attend class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also 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.” Patterns of non-participation in self-reflection or group work will be noted and points deducted accordingly. If you are ill for two weeks or more (consecutively) or you have other personal matters that will require you to frequently miss participation deadlines, you should let me know immediately and provide a doctor note or other acceptable documentation.

#### Disability Assistance-
Mason has a wonderful Office of Disability Services on the main floor of SUB I; if you have a documentable learning disability, I urge you to pay the ODS a visit early in the semester. I am happy to work with you to accommodate your needs, but I will need written documentation from the ODS. [http://ods.gmu.edu/](http://ods.gmu.edu/)

#### Writing Center-
If you need some assistance in writing your paper or would like to attend study skills workshops, please do not hesitate to take advantage of the resources on campus. [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/)

#### Academic Workshops -
Academic Workshop schedules can be found in Learning Services within Counseling and Psychological Services on the 3rd floor of SUB I. [http://caps.gmu.edu/](http://caps.gmu.edu/)

#### Office Hours -
I will be available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30-11:30 online (Zoom is preferred). If that time does not work for you, I am flexible – just let me know a day ahead of time when you would like to chat via back-and-forth email. If you have a request for an incomplete or an assignment extension, I will only address those matters in person or via Mason email.

#### Email and Course Communication -
It is critical that you have a reliable way to obtain course information. Please be sure that you check your GMU email account regularly or have your GMU email messages forwarded to your preferred email account. If I need to send a message to you individually, I will send it to your GMU email account. Please note that if you have trouble with your GMU email, you can also use the messaging feature in Blackboard if necessary.
Honor Code
Abiding by the Mason Honor Code is essential if you plan on passing this course:

“Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.”

Academic Integrity: [http://oai.gmu.edu/](http://oai.gmu.edu/)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important Mason Dates</th>
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<tr>
<td>✔️ Last day to add classes: 1/31.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔️ Last day to drop classes (full refund): 2/7.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔️ Selective withdrawal period: 3/2 – 4/11.</td>
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Class Schedule and Readings
Units will be incrementally released to help you pace yourself.
Each quiz and the final exam have comprehensive study guides; plan ahead to do your best.
All assignments are due online by 11:59pm on the Sunday ending each listed week.

### UNIT 1: FORMAL ANALYSIS AND THE STUDY OF ART

#### WEEK 1: January 24 – January 30
**Introduction to the Course and the Study of Art**

**Readings:**
1. Syllabus
2. Art Matters Ch. 1 and 2

**Assignments:**
- Individual Reflection 1
- Introductory Post (online)

#### WEEK 2: January 31 – February 6
**Understanding the Fundamentals of Art and Design**

**Readings:**
1. Art Matters Ch. 3 and 4

**Assignments:**
- Discussion 1

#### WEEK 3: February 7 – February 13
**Methods and Materials: Drawing, Painting, Printmaking, and Sculpture**

**Readings:**
1. Art Matters Ch. 5, 6, 7, and 10

**Assignments:**
- Individual Reflection 2

#### WEEK 4: February 14 – February 20
**Methods and Materials: Photography, Film, Video, and Graphic Design**

**Readings:**
1. Art Matters Ch. 8 and 9

**Assignments:**
- Discussion 2
- SHORT ESSAY 1 DUE

### UNIT 2: ART HISTORY - TECHNIQUES AND STYLISTIC MOVEMENTS

#### WEEK 5: February 21 – February 27
**Traditional Craft Media and Architecture; Quiz Review**

**Readings:**
1. Art Matters Ch. 11 and 12

**Assignments:**
- QUIZ 1 due by 11:59pm 2/27

#### WEEK 6: February 28 – March 6
**Early Art History: Prehistory, the Ancient Mediterranean, and the Middle Ages**

**Readings:**
1. Art Matters Ch. 13 and 14

**Assignments:**
- Discussion 3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 7: March 7 – March 13</th>
<th>Art of India, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assignments:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Art Matters Ch. 18</td>
<td>Individual Reflection 3</td>
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</tbody>
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**WEEK 8: MARCH 14 – MARCH 20**
**NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK**

**WEEK 9: March 21 – March 27**
Art of the Americas, Africa, and the Pacific Islands

**Readings:**
1. Art Matters Ch. 16 and 17

**Assignments:**
Discussion 4

**WEEK 10: March 28 – April 3**
The Renaissance

**Readings:**
1. Art Matters Ch. 15

**Assignments:**
SHORT ESSAY 2 DUE

**UNIT 3: ARTISTIC APPLICATIONS AND MODERN USES OF ART**

**WEEK 11: April 4 – April 10**
Art of Europe and America: Rococo to Realism

**Readings:**
1. Art Matters Ch. 19

**Assignments:**
QUIZ 2

**WEEK 12: April 11 – April 17**
The Modern Aesthetic

**Readings:**
1. Art Matters Ch. 20

**Assignments:**
Individual Reflection 4

**WEEK 13: April 18 – April 24**
Late Modern and Contemporary Art

**Readings:**
1. Art Matters Ch. 21

**Assignments:**
Individual Reflection 5

**WEEK 14: April 25 – May 1**
Understanding Spirituality, Identity, and Social Politics through Art

**Readings:**
1. Optional additional readings in Blackboard

**Assignments:**
Discussion 5
SHORT ESSAY 3 DUE

**WEEK 15: May 2 – May 7 (May 7th is a Saturday and is the last day of the semester.)**
Course Conclusions and Final Exam Review

**Readings:**
Catch up on past readings, re-read chapters as needed to help you complete the study guide for the final exam.

**Assignments DUE by May 7**
MUSEUM PAPER DUE
EXTRA CREDIT DUE
Complete the course evaluation.

**WEEK 16: Final Exam**

The final exam will be available the entire week of **May 11 – May 18, online.** *No extensions will be allowed unless you have a legitimate, documentable emergency that precludes you from taking the exam during the scheduled time period.*

**Useful links:**
- GMU Registrar Semester Calendar: [https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/spring_2022-1/](https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/spring_2022-1/)
- Art Matters: Student Resources: [https://learninglink.oup.com/access/gordon-student-resources](https://learninglink.oup.com/access/gordon-student-resources)