

Syllabus
ART 201
Rhode Island College
Visual Arts in Society

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Instructor

Course Description: This survey course is designed to acquaint the student with the vocabulary and language used in studying and analyzing the visual arts from a global perspective. The content of the course will provide impetus for exploring the various political, social, economic and religious conditions affecting the relationships of artists to their culture.

Course objective and methodologies:

Visual Arts in Society is a history-based course dealing with a variety of critical, personal, political and cultural themes as they interweave and impact on the development of the student's own artistic concerns and activity as it pertains to professional goals and objectives. The course is designed to be an inter-media and interdisciplinary process focused on offering the student the opportunity to explore the functions of visual language and other symbols in the context of art and their influences. Historical perspectives will be established and developed and explored from existing genres of art and art education so that students have a praxis to work from. Selected elements from the media and their inter-relationships to the expression of philosophies and ideologies will examine the possibilities of an art, that is reflective of an exploration of the sociopolitical nature of our culture, with an emphasis on pursuing cross-cultural perspectives. These iconographies or systems of meaning become the process of investigation for the contextualization of the course with the instruction of art as its underpinning. This course is a postmodern view of art instruction and understanding.

Students will focus on developing their conceptual directions by examining and questioning commonly held perceptions about figure/ground, positive/negative subject and object. These formal notions about art will help guide and generate the class discussions. Emphasis is to be placed on completing projects and papers that would address the issue of image and the role images perform in our culture. Issues of aesthetic accessibility to the art viewer will be considered/viewed as an integral element to the transformative power art can embody. That is, does the art maker endeavor to invoke the manipulation of form and language from a metaphoric praxis that seeks to unite them? In addition to the aesthetic questions offered by the course students are expected to consider the impact the studio experience might have on their strategies. The successful integration of the studio experience with classroom art practice and discussion is then a desired outcome of the course.

This course is further designed to introduce students to the basic principles of analyzing art and understanding art. We will examine the terminology, techniques and the general history of art from its prehistoric dawn to that of our present day a general goal will be to train students in how to consider visual thinking skills visual information and then construct an interpretive analysis. Learning how to think critically and articulate thoughts is part of this goal.

Evaluation:

To receive full credit, major assignments must be submitted as a requisite. Since many activities will be offered students will have the opportunity to redeem one or two missed

activities by participating and doing above satisfactory on other assignments. Field experiences are a required component of the course and a 10-page paper on an artist or art movement. One of the isms...

Attendance will be a factor in the final evaluation; poor attendance and constant lateness will hinder a student's best effort. During emergency situations, students have the opportunity to decide whether it is to your advantage to attend class or take care of some unforeseen difficulty. Please consult the college handbook for further information. Art literacy cannot improve without instruction and therefore absence will affect the final grade. Learning occurs in the interaction with the instructor and with other students during critiques and lecture sessions. Please inform the instructor of any learning style matters that would be useful to know in ensuring the potential for success in the course.

Text: Janson, History of Art Sixth Edition ISBN 0-13-192621-7. Other appropriate and functional readings will be assigned that are deemed pertinent to understanding how art and life are interconnected.

Additional Readings: Will be assigned and available in the library

Learning Outcomes:

1. To provide students with an understanding and perspective of the diverse cultures studied and their artistic achievements.
2. To explore cross-cultural perspectives as related to the study of the artworks.
3. To ask students to be more contemplative and introspective about their own cultural experience as it might pertain to the arts as learned through other cultures.
4. To foster the development of visual thinking skills as essential to one's education.
5. After selecting an art object or work of art at a regional museum for study, the student will write a 3-page paper relating that work to class material, while incorporating their personal response to the selected work.
6. Class will be constructed on the Socratic Method as well as other non-western communal learning styles. This will contribute to student development in self-directed learning.

Course Requirements/Grading Policy:

1. Quizzes: Slide I.D. will use multiple-choice format. 4 Quizzes @ 5% each
2. Mid-term Exam: Slide I.D. Contrast & Compare, M.C. Format Definitions 20%
3. Museum Paper, 20%
4. Final Exam: Slide I.D., C/C, M.C. Definitions 20%
5. Class participation and individual contribution. 10%
6. Oral Presentations on a selected artist 10%

The determination of the final grade is based on the above in addition to the quality of the work and the effort/evidence of your conceptual growth and experimentation.

Attendance Policy: While attendance will not be a factor in your final evaluation, poor attendance and constant lateness will hinder your best effort. Remember we are all bound by college regulations and policies.

Policy on Academic Honesty:

Any form of academic dishonesty is condemned at RIC, whether it occurs within a testing session or in the form of plagiarism in reports, term papers, themes or essays. For additional information please refer to the College Handbook

The College ADA Statement:

In compliance with and in the spirit of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 and applicable disability law, the College is committed to addressing the educational needs of all students. If any student has a disability that is documented with the Learning Resource Center, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. The instructor will assist you to make the appropriate arrangements.

Course Outline

Week 1

Introduction

Week 2

Forms and Functions of art: “ Masterpieces and the Mundane”

Slide lecture on the different art forms and their possible functions, considering famous masterpieces as well as ordinary objects.

Week 3

Visual Elements: The Language

Acclimates students to pertinent terminology in the arts and how artist apply visual elements in their art making.

Week 4

Developing a Critical Eye: Analysis and Interpretation

Students will begin to learn to respond to art based upon how much or how little information is given them. Does the work illustrate its subject in a fully narrative manner (e.g. Norman Rockwell)) or is there ambiguity, allowing for interpretation of the subject and its meaning (e.g.. Wassily Kandinsky)?

Week 5

Techniques; Drawing and Painting

The beginning of a 4 week study and exploration of different materials and techniques applied in the making of art. Students will learn principles of 2-dimensional pictorial design through basic drawing assignments and slide presentations.

Week 6

Techniques: Prints, Graphic Design, Photography and Film

The history of multiple imagery will be discussed and then associated with the culturally pervasive presence of the above in Contemporary Art and in our lived lives.

Week 7

Techniques: Sculpture and Crafts

Three-dimensional media, from stone carving to beadwork, will be explored through slides and a studio project.

Week 8

Week 9

Architecture and Environment: Stonehenge and the Spiral Jetty

How do artists shape our surroundings, both natural and constructed? Through we will examine architectural trends and practice. A discussion on “environmental art” will link the notion of architecture and the earth as inherently sculptural

Week 10

The fear and love of God: Religion in Art (Christian, Eastern and Indigenous)

The next 6 weeks will introduce students to topics in art, beginning with the picturing of God in cultures throughout the world. From Christendom to Buddhist Southeast Asia.

Week 11

Classical Art: Greco-Roman Roots and Modern Manifestations

Art from Classical Athens to the neoclassical architectural renaissance in American architecture. Late 19th century buildings in Rhode Island (e.g. State House) will be highlighted

Week 12

The role of Patrons in Influencing Art

How an artwork or building is designed is often times greatly influenced by who commissioned it.

Week 13

The search for Finding and Abandonment of “Beauty”: Impressionism- Abstraction

During this pivotal period, ideals to picture what is beautiful radically changed. How was this influenced by changes in society the psychological and pre-world War One unrest?

Week 14

Public Art and Censorship

As a culture are we restricting freedom of speech and expression by censoring artwork and art exhibitions? Should federal and state tax revenues fund controversial art?

Week 15

Making Sense of Art Today

In an increasingly complex world, isn't it logical that Contemporary Art would be complex? How has the viewer's role changed in the act of understanding art? How and what has the artist's role changed? Final Thoughts and review of topical issues.