

Early 20th Century Art in US and Europe 1900-44

City College CUNY | A6430-1XX | Summer 2022

Tuesday/Thursday 6:15–9:05pm
Off-campus/Online
Prof. Arnaud Gerspacher
Office Hour: by appointment
agerspacher@gradcenter.cuny.edu

This course will introduce you to key art movements from Western Europe and the United States from 1900 to the beginning of WWII. We will go in-depth in this class and always attempt to contextualize the works we examine within a larger historical, political, and intellectual context. Be prepared to work in a multi-disciplinary way. As a remote course, we will work synchronously and asynchronously: reading groups will be conducted over Zoom, while lectures will be posted on the course website every Friday to watch when most convenient (though ideally before the corresponding Zoom session).

Objectives:

By the end of this course:

- You will be familiar with the key early 20th century movements in Western Europe and the US;
- You will be able to identify major artists and their art practices;
- You will learn how to describe their work in formal terms (i.e. how it looks and how it affects the viewer);
- You will be able to discuss these works conceptually by accounting for the ideas and histories that drive them;

Required Text:

Hal Foster, et al., *Art Since 1900 modernism antimodernism postmodernism 1900 to 1944* (v.1)

Academic Integrity:

Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Students found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty will fail the assignment for which an infraction is suspected and substantiated.

Students with Disabilities:

In order to receive academic accommodations due to a disability, a student must first register with Student Disability Services. If approved, they will be given an *SDS Accommodation Letter* to submit to their instructors—otherwise they will not be eligible to receive accommodations in that course.

If you have a need for academic accommodations, or suspect you may have a disability, please contact:

The AccessAbility Center/Student Disability Services
North Academic Center (NAC)
Room 1/218
160 Convent Avenue
(212) 650-5913. &
disabilityservices@ccny.cuny.edu

Requirements:

1) Attendance/Participation (10% of grade):

You are expected to attend every Zoom meeting. If you are engaged and speak consistently, you can miss one session during the semester and remain in the A range. More than one absence and your overall grade goes down a letter grade. +/- determined by the quality of participation.

2) Reading Responses (25% of grade):

We have 12 sessions with graduate student readings. You will choose 5 of these sessions to write reading responses, which will be due on or before the day of their corresponding session. Guidelines found on website.

3) Reading Group Leading (25% of grade):

Twice during the semester, each student will be a discussion leader with a partner on the graduate readings. This entails offering a good synopsis and overview of the argument(s), how the readings relate to the textbook chapters for that particular session, questions for other students, and a mind towards facilitating dialogue over zoom. Guidelines found on website.

4) Literature Review Essay (40% of grade)

The summer session is not long enough to write a proper research paper. Instead, you will write a literature review essay. Guidelines found on website.

Schedule and Readings

<https://early20grad.commons.gc.cuny.edu/>

See website for all assignment due dates

June 6

Introduction ([zoom@6:15pm](#))
Hello + Syllabus and Website

June 8 Shock of the New ([zoom@6:15pm](#))

Vienna Secessionism
Reading: Foster et al., *Art Since 1900*, “1900a” (readings listed by date, which are the chapter main titles)
Fauvism
Reading: “1906”

Zoom Reading Group: Wright, “Arche-tectures: Matisse and the End of (Art) History”

June 13 “Primitivisms” ([zoom@6:15pm](#))

Primitivism: From Gauguin to Picasso
Reading: “1903” & “1907”

Zoom Reading Group: Foster, “Primitive Scenes” in *Prosthetic Gods*

June 15 Cubism ([zoom@6:15pm](#))

Cubism: Picasso and Braque
Readings: “1911” & “1912”

Zoom Reading Group: Bois, “Kahnweiler’s Lesson”

June 20 Back to the Past/Future ([zoom@6:15pm](#))

German Expressionism: *Der Blaue Reiter* and *Die Brücke*
Reading: “1908”
Futurism: Accelerating towards Fascism
Reading: “1909”

Zoom Reading Group: Poggi, “Futurist Velocities,” in *Inventing Futurism*

June 22 October ([zoom@6:15pm](#))

October Revolution: Suprematism and Constructivism
Readings: “1914” (Tatlin section), “1915,” & 1921b

Zoom Reading Group: Buchloh, “From Fraktura to Factography”

June 27 Dada ([zoom@6:15pm](#))

Dada I: Politics of Unreason—Zurich and Berlin
Readings: “1916a” & “1920”

Zoom Reading Group: Lavin, “Strategies of Pleasure and Deconstruction: Hannah Höch’s photomontages in the Weimer years”

June 29 Duchamp ([zoom@6:15pm](#))

Dada I: Politics of the Readymade—Duchamp in New York
Readings: “1914” (Duchamp section) & “1918”

Zoom Reading Group: Checking in on Lit Reviews (no readings) [Annotated Bibliography Due](#)

July 6 Surrealism ([zoom@6:15pm](#))

Surrealism I: Breton
Reading: “1924”
Surrealism II: Bataille
Reading: “1930b”

Zoom Reading Group: Foster, “Beyond the Pleasure Principle?” in *Compulsive Beauty*

July 11 Machine Aesthetic ([zoom@6:15pm](#))

Bauhaus, Purism, Precisionism
Reading: “1923” “1925a” & “1927c”

Zoom Reading Group: Silver, “PURISM: Straightening Up After the Great War”

July 13 Cynicisms (zoom@6:15pm)

Neue Sachlichkeit (“New Objectivity”)

Reading: “1925b” & “1929”

Zoom Reading Group: Lewis, “Lustmord: Inside the Windows of the Metropolis”

July 18 Realisms (zoom@6:15pm)

Mexican Muralism

Reading: “1933”

After October: Soviet Realism

Reading: “1934a”

Zoom Reading Group: Kaier, “Was Socialist Realism Forced Labor?”

July 20 Fascism (zoom @ 6:15pm)

National Socialism and *Guernica*

Reading: “1937a” & “1937c”

Zoom Reading Group: Fiss, “In Hitler’s Salon: The German Pavillion at the 1937 Paris Exposition” + Buchloh, “The Dialectics of Design and Destruction: The *Degenerate Art* Exhibition (1937) and the *Exhibition internationale du Surréalisme* (1938)

July 25 Harlem Renaissance (zoom @ 6:15pm)

Harlem Renaissance

Reading: “1943”

Zoom Reading Group: Dickerman, “Aaron Douglas and Aspects of Negro Life”

July 27

- Free research/writing day

Class Policies:

Please have your camera on during the Zoom discussions whenever possible. Remain kind and respectful at all times.