Art: Its History and Meaning (Fall 2022)

Instructor: Prof. Khushmi Mehta

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays at 12:30 or by appointment.

Course Objectives

In this class, students will:

* Acquire familiarity with artworks from a range of geographical regions, cultures, and mediums and gain an understanding of the multiplicity of chronologies within art history.
* Critically engage in discussions about the roles of art institutions, the role of art in social movements, and an interpretation of artworks as artifacts of social, political and economic discourse.
* Develop skills of visual analysis and learn methodologies including citation practices and research techniques used to build art historical arguments.

*Pathways Learning Outcomes*:

1.  Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.

2.  Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.

3.  Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

4.  Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring creative expression, including, but not limited to, arts, communications, creative writing, media arts, music, and theater.

5.  Analyze how arts from diverse cultures of the past serve as a foundation for those of the present and describe the significance of works of art in the societies that created them.

6.  Articulate how meaning is created in the arts or communications and how experience is interpreted and conveyed.

Communication and Office Hours

* Email will be the primary means of communication for this course. I do my best to reply to emails within 24 hours. Students are expected to check email frequently and ensure that you provide me with the email you use most frequently.
* I am available for office hours at 12:30 on Tuesday and Thursdays or by appointment. I welcome conversations at any point of the semester regarding learning styles, final paper topics, progress check-ins etc.

Class policies

Attendance

* Attendance and active participation in every class is mandatory and will be recorded at the beginning of class.
* If you are unable to attend class due to illness, religious holiday, or another legitimate conflict, please email me to be excused.
* More than four unexcused absences may result in a failing grade.

Deadlines

* Late submissions will be graded down by one letter grade.
* Students are responsible for all assignment due dates. You can find all the important dates and deadlines on this syllabus and on the front page of the class website.
* Extensions must be requested at least one week in advance, other than those for unforeseen circumstances such as illness or family emergencies. Extensions will be granted at the discretion of the instructor.

Required readings

There are no books to purchase for this course. PDFs of the readings are posted on the class website. You are expected to come to class having completed the readings and prepared to have a discussion on them.

Student accommodations

The Center for Student Disability Services (CSDS) is committed to ensuring students with disabilities enjoy an equal opportunity to participate at Brooklyn College. In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with CSDS. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to schedule an interview by calling (718) 951-5538 or emailing [Josephine.Patterson@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:Josephine.Patterson@brooklyn.cuny.edu). If you have already registered with CSDS, email [Josephine.Patterson@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:Josephine.Patterson@brooklyn.cuny.edu) or [testingcsds@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:testingcsds@brooklyn.cuny.edu) to ensure accommodation emails are sent to your professor.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for policy implementation can be found at [www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies](http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies). If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation. Students should be aware that faculty may use plagiarism detection software.

Assignments and grading

Discussion posts: 10%

* Every Monday, you will be expected to respond to a question I post to the Blackboard discussion forum, based on the readings or theme for that week.
* This forum is intended to be an informal space of discussion. You are not being graded on the complexity or language of these posts, but rather for participation and understanding of the material. You can be as creative as you like with your posts! Feel free to attach images, links or other media to your posts.

Class participation: 10%

* You will be assessed based on your participation during the class. I encourage students to actively ask questions, develop their ideas beyond what is presented through the course material and push the limits of the topics each week.
* One of the objectives of this course is to develop skills of writing and analysis. For this, we will work on writing assignments and worksheets in class related to the weekly topics which will also contribute to your class participation grade.

Visual Analysis essay: 20%

Midterm Exam: 30%

Final Exam: 30%

Extra credit

There will be a few opportunities for extra credit throughout the semester in the form of online events relevant to the course material. The details of the events will be posted on the CUNY Commons website. If you attend any of the listed events, please submit a ½-1 page reflection on the event to be graded for extra credit.

Class schedule

Note: I may make slight changes to the material or dates over the course of the semester.

These changes will be made in accordance with class needs and you will be given as much notice as possible. In case of changes, I will make an announcement and upload the updated syllabus to the Commons website.

**Th 25 Aug: Introductions, Syllabus review**

**Unit 1: Culture formations**

T 30 Aug: Prehistoric art

Th 1 Sept: Egyptian art

**Unit 2: Art, Myth and Power**

T 6 Sept: Ancient Near Eastern Art

Th 8 Sept: Greek and Roman art

**Unit 3: Art and Faith**

T 13 Sept: Byzantine and Islamic art and architecture

Th 15 Sept: Chinese Art

**Unit 4: The Place of Art in Museums**

T 20 Sept: African art and The Restitution Debate

Th 22 Sept: Museum Visit (details TBD)

T 27 Sept: No class

Th 29 Sept: No class

T 4 Oct: No class

Th 6 Oct: Hindu art

T 11 Oct: Class cancelled

Th 13 Oct: Midterm review

T 18 Oct: Midterm review

Th 20 Oct: Midterm exam

**Unit 5: European Art through the Ages**

T 25 Oct: Renaissance to the Middle Ages

Th 27 Oct: Baroque to Impressionism

**Unit 6: Art in Times of Crisis**

T 1 Nov: Cubism and Futurism

Th 3 Nov: Dadaism and Surrealism

**Unit 7: Embodied Art**

T 8 Nov: Abstract Expressionism

Th 10 Nov: How to write a research paper

**Unit 8: Art and Revolution**

T 15 Nov: Harlem Renaissance

Th 17 Nov: Chinese Cultural Revolution

Sunday 20 Nov: Papers due

Tu 22 November: Museum visit TBD

Th 24 Nov: No class (Thanksgiving break)

**Unit 9: Global Modernisms**

T 29 Nov: Postcolonial art in Africa

Th 1 Dec: Mexican Muralism

**Unit 10: Art and the Everyday**

T 6 Dec: Pop Art

Th 8 Dec: Contemporary Art and New Media

**Finals week**

T 13 Dec: Open office hours

Th 15 Dec: Final exam

Course related notices

COVID-19 policies

* CUNY is offering free PCR testing at [**CUNY testing sites**](https://cuny.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=b6b1f93a018d8441f6ca8c64e&id=7e8e3ab019&e=6d12b50f6b)to all CUNY students.

You can find information regarding Brooklyn College’s COVID-19 guidelines here: <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/about/initiatives/initiatives/return.php>.

Note on writing and language

If you need help with your writing or learning, I would encourage you to work with a writing tutor. Especially if English is not your first, (or second, or third!) language, please know that I will not penalize grammatical or spelling errors in exams or papers. It is important that your ideas are clearly conveyed and your writing reflects a good understanding of the content. If you are worried about this, please let me know and we can discuss strategies for you to get the best out of assignments and convey your thoughts most effectively.

However, writing academic research papers is one of the learning objectives of this course and is a skill we will be working on throughout the semester. The assignments and workshops are therefore designed to provide you with tools to develop this skill. If you are dealing with any kind of hindrance to your writing, please try to communicate with me about it so that I can do my best to support you.

Campus resources

Brooklyn College offers a number of services to support all students. free counselling, a center for disability services where students can get evaluated if they are not already diagnosed, a food pantry, immigration services as well as services for undocumented and DACA recipients, veteran and active military services, groups for Women, Black and Latino Males, and LGBTQ students, in addition to emergency financial assistance and a health clinic.  All can be found on this page: <https://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/about/offices/studentaffairs/student-support-services.php>. You also have access to a Personal Counselling program, details of which can be found here: <https://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/about/offices/studentaffairs/student-support-services/isso/counseling.php>

Gender and identity

It is CUNY policy, along with my own, to use proper names rather than gender binary Ms/Miss/Mrs/Mr. If you have a preferred name or form of address, please let me know and I will change the register. My pronouns are She/Her.

Sensitive content notice

Art History often presents us with images and histories that can be triggering, painful, or covered by religious taboo. If for whatever reason you have objections to looking at particular material (images of the nude body, for example) please understand that such images may come up for discussion and that if they are important to the syllabus, they cannot be censored from it. However, to the best of my ability, I will try to anticipate this, provide trigger warnings and create the space for us to discuss difficult material sensitively and openly as a group.

I also welcome feedback from students who identify with the material we discuss in this course and wish to help all of us understand it more richly, personally, and responsibly, (during and even after class). I will do my best to maintain an atmosphere of care and careful listening in this course and will appreciate all students doing the same.

Code of conduct

It is extremely important that the classroom be a safe and respectful environment for all students. To that end, there are a few expectations for behaviour in all learning spaces, including class discussions and the blog posts. When responding to a classmate, please do so respectfully, even when disagreeing. When disagreeing offer evidence or ask questions in a collegial way that encourages further discussion, rather than invalidating a classmate’s ideas. Should there ever be an issue, please feel free to contact me.