

Art History: Theories and Approaches

11456 01

Spring 2004
Professor Reva Wolf
Lecture Center 107
Tuesdays, 3:30-6:20

Office: Smiley Art Building (SAB) 108
Telephone: 257-3877
E-mail: wolfr@newpaltz.edu
Office Hours: Mon., 10-12; Tues., 1-3, and by appointment

Course Description

What is art history? We will examine this question by reading selected passages from the history of the discipline and from recent writings that call into question traditional approaches to the interpretation of art. We will look at a wide variety of approaches that have been used to study art, including biography, psychoanalysis, formalism and style, periodization and national identity, iconography and iconology, patronage, feminism, Marxism, reception theory, and semiotics. *This course fulfills the Writing-Intensive requirement.*

Requirements

% of Grade

The Research Paper:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Topic proposal, 2 double-spaced, typewritten pages (due Feb. 17) | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary bibliography (due Mar. 2) | 5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Draft of paper (due April 13) | 15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Final paper (due May 6) | 30 |

Other Writing Assignments:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 in-class essays reviewed by peers | 15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Midterm exam essay | 15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Final exam essay | 15 |

For the term paper, each student will select one essay or book of significance to the subject matter of the course, and will write an in-depth analysis of it based on careful research. The paper topic will be developed in stages, as outlined above.

Required Texts (available at the campus bookstore)

Freud, Sigmund. *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*. New York: W. W. Norton (most recent edition).

Minor, Vernon Hyde. *Art History's History*. 2d ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 2001.

Preziosi, Donald, ed. *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Schedule of Classes

- January 27** **Introduction / Discussion of paper topics**
- February 3** **Early approaches to the art object**
Minor, *Art History's History*, 31-45.
Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* (photocopies of selected passages distributed in class).
- February 10** **Biographical approaches**
Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* (photocopies of selected passages distributed in class).
Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (1568)
(photocopies of selected passages distributed in class).
Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment* (1934; 1979 English translation), selections (photocopies distributed in class).
In-class writing exercise
- February 17** **Approaches to understanding styles and periods: the Renaissance**
Minor, *Art History's History*, 67-71.
Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 21-30 ("Art as History").
Vasari, "Preface to the Third Part," *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (photocopy distributed in class).
Approaches to understanding styles and periods: the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries
Minor, *Art History's History*, 79-82 (Charles LeBrun, Roger de Piles); 85-89 (Winckelmann).
Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 31-39 (Winckelmann).
Roger de Piles, *The Principles of Painting with a Balance of Painters* (1708) (photocopy of selected passage distributed in class).
Topic proposal due
- February 24** **Approaches to understanding styles and periods: the nineteenth century**
Charles Baudelaire, "What Is Romanticism?" (1846), Salon of 1846, in Baudelaire, *The Mirror of Art: Critical Studies* (N6847 .B362 1956; book on reserve).
Minor, *Art History's History*, 125-33 (connoisseurship; Giovanni Morelli).
- March 2** **Approaches to understanding styles and periods: the twentieth century**
Minor, *Art History's History*, 102-24 (Alois Riegl; Heinrich Wölfflin)
Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 166-67 (on Riegl), 169-76 (Riegl), 112-14 (on Wölfflin), and 115-26 (Wölfflin).
Review for midterm exam
Preliminary bibliography due
- March 9** **Midterm exam**
- March 16** **Spring break**
- March 23** **Formalist approaches**
Minor, *Art History's History*, 133-39 (Roger Fry, Clement Greenberg).

- March 30** **Iconographic and contextual approaches: Aby Warburg, Erwin Panofsky**
 Minor, *Art History's History*, 171-73.
 Edgar Wind, "Warburg's Concept of *Kunstwissenschaft*," and Margaret Iversen, "Retrieving Warburg's Tradition," in Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 207-25.
 Erwin Panofsky, "Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art" (1939), in Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (N7445 .P22; book on reserve).
In-class writing exercise
- April 6** **No class (Passover)**
- April 13** **Approaches to artistic production and reception**
 E. H. Gombrich, "Truth and Stereotype," in Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (1961) (N70 .G615 1969; book on reserve).
Psychoanalytical approaches: Sigmund Freud and beyond
 Minor, *Art History's History*, 194-203.
 Sigmund Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*.
Draft of research paper due
- April 20** **Politics and art history: Marx through World War II**
 Minor, *Art History's History*, 140-49.
 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," from Benjamin, *Illuminations* (PN514 .B3623; book on reserve).
In-class writing exercise
- April 27** **Feminism and art history**
 Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 339-43, and 344-55 (Nanette Salomon, "The Art Historical Canon: Sins of Omission")
 Linda Nochlin, "Women, Art, and Power" and Ludmilla Jordanova, "Linda Nochlin's Lecture 'Women, Art, and Power,'" both in *Visual Theory: Painting and Interpretation*, ed. Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (professor's copy on reserve).
- May 4** **Semiotics and art history / theories of authorship**
 Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in Barthes, *Image / Music / Text* (PN37 .B29 H4; book on reserve).
 Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 299-314.
 Michel Foucault, chapter 1 of *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (AZ101 .F6913 1973; book on reserve), on Diego Velázquez's painting *Las Meninas*.
- May 6** **Conclusions and review for final exam**
 (Tues. classes meet on this Thurs.) Donald Preziosi, "The Art of Art History," in Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 507-25.
Research paper due
- May 13** **Final exam, 2:30 pm**
 Thursday

Note: This course outline is subject to minor revisions.