Art History: Theories and Approaches

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
The Research Paper:
□ Topic proposal, 2 double-spaced, typewritten pages (due Feb. 17)  5
□ Preliminary bibliography (due Mar. 2)  5
□ Draft of paper (due April 13) 15
□ Final paper (due May 6) 30

Other Writing Assignments:
□ 3 in-class essays reviewed by peers 15
□ Midterm exam essay 15
□ 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)


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
Preziosi, The Art of Art History, 21-30 ("Art as History").

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).
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
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 Wölflin)
Preziosi, The Art of Art History, 166-67 (on Riegl), 169-76 (Riegl), 112-14 (on Wölflin), and 115-26 (Wölflin).
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

In-class writing exercise

April 6  No class (Passover)

April 13  Approaches to artistic production and reception

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.

In-class writing exercise

April 27  Feminism and art history

May 4  Semiotics and art history / theories of authorship
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.)

Research paper due

May 13  Final exam, 2:30 pm

Note: This course outline is subject to minor revisions.