



Art History 2642F  
Fall 2020

Expressionism to Surrealism  
Tuesdays, 9:30-11:30  
Online synchronous

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Hours: by appointment  
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Prerequisite: 1.0 from Art History 1640 or two of Art History 1641A/B-1648A/B, or the former VAH 1040 or two of the former VAH 1041A/B–1045A/B, or 1.0 essay course from Arts and Humanities, FIMS, or Social Science, or permission of the Department.

Course Description: This course examines the path of the visual arts from ca. 1900 to ca. 1940, focusing particularly on the European art scene. It is a period of contradictions filled with excitement, violence, optimism, failure, dogmatism, pessimism and utopianism, which embraced total freedom in art to the point of rejecting art completely. Inevitably, the art of this period embodies the historical and social conditions in which it emerged, often attempting to integrate and lead society while, at times, wanting to escape it completely. Out of all this confusion one thing remains unchallenged in terms of the legacy of this moment: it radically and irrevocably redefined art and its role. In this course, we will attempt to navigate this minefield of artistic creativity and destruction in the hopes of emerging with a better understanding of a tumultuous period in art history that continues to haunt art today.

#### Learning Outcomes:

The point of this course, beyond the obvious acquisition of knowledge of the topic we will be addressing over the term, is to have you engage in an open and active discussion of key historical and contemporary issues from the various perspectives offered by the authors we read, the course instructor, as well the thoughts of your peers on the topics addressed in class discussions. You should be able to critically engage with the readings and the designs encountered in this course, both verbally and in writing, and both in a summary form and

more expansively. In some cases, some students may be encouraged to take a more inventive approach to looking at the problems and issues presented in this course. By the end of this course you will have acquired an introductory understanding of the history of modern art between 1900 and 1940, as well as have gained a knowledge of some of the key issues and expectations that dominated the period.

Evaluation: marks will be based on the following:

1. 15% Secondary reading summary for one of sections 2-7, due November 3, 2020. You must write up a 2-3 page (500-750 words) summary of the main points raised in the secondary reading assigned for one of the sections of this course excluding section 1. For example, I've decided I'll write the summary for section 3, "Capturing the Essence of Reality and Beyond", the text I'll be summarizing will be Charles Harrison, "Abstraction," C. Harrison *et. al.*, Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction: The Early Twentieth Century (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), chap. 3.
2. 40% Short essay, due December 8, 2020. Construct a 5-7 page essay (1250-1750 words) using only the primary readings from one of the course sections listed below. In other words, you must read the texts from the Harrison and Wood book, form a topic, then develop that topic using only the material from those readings. For example, say you chose section 1 "Reflections and Refractions from Modern Life," you'll read all of the Harrison and Wood selections listed in 1 a. and b., then from those form a topic and write on it inserting material from as many of the readings from 1 a. and b. as possible. You can use the secondary text from section 1, Gill Perry's "Primitivism and the 'Modern'", or any material you can find on the Fauves and German Expressionism, although ultimately, your argument must be built around and supported by the primary readings. The section you select cannot be the same as the one chosen for assignment 1.
3. 25% Pop quizzes. There will be two pop quizzes during the term for this course, both occurring between October 15, 2020, and the last class on December 8, 2020. The best grade of the two will make up the final mark for this assignment. The quizzes themselves will be in the nature of an essay question and you will have 24 hours to submit your answer. Both quizzes must be submitted to receive a final mark. If you miss one without proper accommodation for doing so, your mark will be 0, even if you submitted the other. These quizzes will be assigned the day of class and will be due by noon the following day.
4. 20% Biography of a building, due October 6, 2020. Build a narrated PowerPoint presentation on a single (max. 10 slides), influential structure from the period covered in this course, namely 1900-1940, using all of the resources available to you, making sure you list them all on your last PowerPoint slide (no. 10 if you are using all 10). A list of building choices will be provided.

Penalties: any assignment submitted late will be penalized 5% per day and will not be accepted 5 days past its due date. If there are medical grounds, then documentation must be provided to the Academic Counselling Office of your home Faculty.

Course Materials: the textbooks for this course are C. Harrison et. al., Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction: The Early Twentieth Century (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); B. Fer et. al., Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art between the Wars (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); and, C. Harrison and P. Wood (eds.), Art in Theory, 1900-1990 (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993). As each of these texts are currently out-of-print, the readings from them have been scanned and made available on the OWL course site. They are excellent texts, trust me! We will be including some optional articles and books. In other words, there are no textbook purchases for this course (add celebration here).

Websites: the following offer some excellent introductions to material covered in our course. I would strongly encourage taking full advantage of them.

- [www.kahnacademy.org](http://www.kahnacademy.org)
- [courses.lumenlearning.com/zeliart102/](http://courses.lumenlearning.com/zeliart102/)

