Course Description and Objectives:

This course is a history of the visual arts, including architecture, sculpture, painting, and design, from the ancient world to the present. We will examine and discuss major works of art in the Western tradition, paying special attention to the relationship of art to society and to the meaning and function of a work of art in its cultural, political, and social contexts. Through presentations, discussions, and writing assignments, this course also places strong emphasis on visual analysis and the cultivation of visual literacy as a basis for interpreting objects and for understanding how the visual arts communicate.
Contact Information:

Matthew Bailey  
Email: mbailey@wustl.edu  
Office hours: By appointment (I am always willing to meet with students and help them with any concerns or course material—just let me know!)

Course Materials:

Required: Marilyn Stokstad and Michael W. Cothren, Art: A Brief History, 5th edition. Available in the university bookstore. All supplemental readings, which will be used as a basis for brief writing response assignments and for in-class discussions, will be distributed in class and posted on Blackboard, an online resource for students and faculty, https://bb.wustl.edu. (Mozilla Firefox works best with Blackboard.) All supplemental readings, assignments, discussion prompts, PowerPoints, and a syllabus with updated readings will be posted to Blackboard as they are assigned. Check Blackboard regularly and often!

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation: 25%  
Short Quiz: 5%  
Visual Analysis Essay: 15%  
Midterm Exam: 20%  
Exhibition Review: 15%  
Final Exam: 20%

Course Policies and Assignments:

All assignments must be turned in on the date scheduled at the beginning of class. Attendance is required. Excused absences require a valid medical excuse and a note from a doctor or evidence of conflict with an approved university activity. A note from your dean or advisor will be necessary in the case of the latter. Unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your participation grade.

Your participation grade is also based on brief, weekly out-of-class writing responses to texts, artworks, and concepts that will be guided by prompts I will provide the week prior. These 1-2 page responses, in which I will also ask you to provide 2-3 questions, will serve as a basis for class conversations and especially the designated “discussion” portions of class listed in the course schedule. These exercises, which will be due at the end of class, are not necessarily meant to make sure you are doing the readings; rather, they are aimed at making you critically engage with texts and concepts, helping you cultivate tools of visual analysis, facilitating class discussions, and helping you prepare for you essay assignments and exams by practicing writing. Periodically, we will also engage with in-class writing responses—brief and impromptu practices
which will help get our minds going, exercise the same skills, and further our conversations.

Periodically, class discussions will also be based on local, national, and international issues in today’s art world in order to engage us with contemporary concerns, trends, exhibits, and events. Culled from various Internet sources, I will distribute these (often short) articles the week prior. Although it is not required, I would also ask you to occasionally peruse the websites below and explore some of the articles that may be of interest to you. If you find anything you would like to discuss with the class—such as an intriguing exhibition review or piece of art criticism, an article about a political or social issue in the contemporary art world, or interesting art historical articles—please let me know and I will distribute the text to the course as well as post on Blackboard!

For your essay assignments, I am always willing to help with writing and read drafts to help improve your writing and facilitate your success in the course. However, I recommend you take advantage of the services available at the Writing Center, Eads Hall 111, tel. 935-4981. The center offers free tutorial to all undergraduates. See http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~writing/home.html for further information regarding summer schedules and available appointment times. Clarity of writing and grammar will be a factor in grading your assignments, which the Writing Center can help you with. In addition, you may want to review Sylvan Barnet’s A Short Guide to Writing About Art, which offers strategies for ways of approaching and executing the kind of visual analysis that will be expected of you in your essays and exams. Although we will be reading excerpts from this text periodically, a copy of the book is on reserve in the Art & Architecture Library in the bottom floor of the Kemper Building. Ask me or see the front desk of the library for details.

Academic Integrity:
Academic dishonesty is a serious matter in the academic community and will not be permitted or excused in your assignments and exams. This includes plagiarism, cheating on an examination, copying or collaborating on assignments without permission, and engaging in any other forms of deceit or dishonesty. The Washington University Undergraduate Student Academic Integrity Policy may be found at http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html. Violation of Washington University policy may result in serious consequences. If in doubt about proper forms of citation or any of the policies outlined in the above website, consult your instructor.

Class Schedule


Week Two: Jan. 20: Prehistoric Art and Art of the Ancient Near East

Readings: Stokstad, 18-47; Tucker, “Intelligent Seeing” and Barnet, “Formal Analysis and Style”
Discussion: Techniques of Visual Analysis
**Week Three: Jan 27: Art of Ancient Egypt**

*Readings: Stokstad, 48-67*
*Distribution of Visual Analysis Essay Assignment*

**Week Four: Feb. 3: Ancient Greece and Aegean Art**

*Readings: Stokstad, 92-127; TBD*
*Discussion: Cultural Patrimony and the Case of the Elgin Marbles*

**Week Five: Feb. 10: Etruscan and Roman Art**

*Readings: Stokstad, 128-157*
*Short Quiz*

**Week Six: Feb. 17: Byzantine and Islamic Art**

*Readings: Stokstad, 169-203; TBD*
*Discussion: Understanding Islamic Iconoclasm: The Case of Charlie Hebdo, Part I*

*Optional: Group tour of St. Louis Art Museum, Sunday Feb. 22 (time TBD)*

**Week Seven: Feb 24: Gothic Art**

*Readings: Stokstad, 260-291*
*Midterm Review and Practice*
*Visual Analysis Essay Due*

**Week Eight: March 3: Midterm Exam!**

*Screening of Film Excerpt: The Agony and the Ecstasy*
*Discussion: The Changing Role of the Artist in Modern Culture*

**Week Nine: March 10: Spring Break!—No Class**

**Week Ten: March 17: The Early Renaissance**

*Readings: Stokstad, 292-323*
Week Eleven: March 24: Art of the High Renaissance and Reformation

Readings: Stokstad, 325-365; Excerpts from Giorgio Vasari’s Lives of the Artist
Discussion: Vasari and the Beginnings of Art History

Week Twelve: March 31: Baroque Art

Readings: Stokstad, 367-401; TBD
Discussion: Nazi Plunder

Week Thirteen: April 7: European and American Art, 1715-1840

Readings: Stokstad, 447-473; TBD
Discussion: The Development and Role of Art Criticism
Distribution of Exhibition Review Assignment

Week Fourteen: April 14: European and American Art 1840-1910

Readings: Stokstad, 475-509; TBD
Discussion: The Politics of Realism and French Caricature: The Case of Charlie Hebdo, Part II

Week Fifteen: April 21: Modern Art in Europe and the Americas, 1900-1945

Readings: Stokstad, 510-549; TBD
Discussion: The Great Debate: Realism or Abstraction??

Week Sixteen: April 28: Art Since 1945

Readings: Stokstad, 551-591; TBD
Final Exam Review and Preparation
Distribution of Final Exam Essay

May 5: Final Exam!

Exhibition Review Due