



ARTH C1100 - Survey of Art from Prehistory to the Medieval Era

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

Unit(s): 3.00

Lecture: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

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Course Description: This course introduces students to visual art and architecture from prehistory to the medieval era with a focus on art from Europe, North Africa, and the near East. The course will further consider global interactions involving these regions. (C-ID ARTH 110).

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Identify, examine, and assess representative works of art and architecture from prehistory to the medieval era employing appropriate art historical terminology.
2. Analyze works of art and architecture in terms of aesthetic, socio-political, religious, historical, technological, and cultural contexts in which they were created.
3. Develop critical thinking, information literacy, and problem solving through an engagement with art, architecture, artists, and patrons from prehistory to the medieval era.

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic

Lecture

Topics

Lec Hrs

This course critically examines the art and architecture of the following periods with an integration of history, theory, aesthetics, and cross-cultural connections:

51.00

1. Prehistory, visual analysis before writing
2. Mesopotamia
3. Ancient Egypt
4. Ancient Aegean cultures
5. Ancient Greece
6. Etruria
7. Ancient Rome
8. Contextualizing Monotheism
 - a. Judaism
 - b. Early Christianity
 - c. Early Islam
9. Byzantine
10. Medieval
11. Gothic
12. Introduction to the discipline of Art History: terms, concepts, methodology

Total Hours: 51.00

Methods of Instruction

- A. Class Activities
- B. Discussion
- C. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- D. Lecture
- E. Reading Assignments

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Methods of evaluation will include:
1. Written essays and/or research projects
 2. Exam with essay component

Methods of evaluation may also include:

1. Discussions
2. Objective exams
3. Projects and presentations
4. Quizzes
5. Group Assignments
6. Museum Assignments

Methods of evaluation are at the discretion of faculty.

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read Chapter 1 on Prehistoric Art and come to class prepared to discuss the various theories about the possible functions of Upper-Paleolithic art.
2. Access Oxford Art Online, through the Library website, and research the Akkadian "Victory Stele of Naram-Sin". Be prepared to discuss or write on the parallels between this sculpture and the Egyptian "Palette of King Narmer".

Writing Assignments

1. Combining Cultures: In a 1-2-page essay, define "syncretism" and use an example of Early Christian art to demonstrate the usage of the term. Apply historical context and pertinent visual analysis vocabulary to fully explain.
2. Spirit in the Stone: Using examples of art and architecture from Ancient Greece, Rome, and Medieval European Roman Catholicism (Romanesque and Gothic styles), write a 1-2-page essay on the religious uses of material objects and constructed environments. Why did people seem to need tangible concrete objects and structured environments to effectively practice their various spiritual faiths?

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Explore the art at a local art gallery or museum. Find an artwork of interest to you. Write a 500-word paper in which you describe, interpret, and evaluate the selected artwork. Alternative options to complete this assignment will be identified in the instructions.
2. View a selection of six Roman portrait busts in class, and attempt to infer characteristics of their personalities from the way the sculptors represented them. Then research these individuals, and write a 500-word paper comparing their actual personalities to your initial impressions. How close did the sculptors come to conveying the actual personality of each person?

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Janson, H. W. (2019). Janson's History of Art: The Western Edition. *Pearson*, 8th. 9780135570142.

Stokstad, M. & Cothren, M. (2025). Art History, Volume 1. *Pearson*, 7th. 9780138095468.

Kleiner, F. (2021). Gardner's Art Through the Ages: The Western Perspective, Volume 1. *Cengage*, 16th. 9780357370384.

Kleiner, F. (2020). Gardner's Art Through the Ages: A Global History, Volume 1. *Cengage*, 16th. 9781337696593.

Zero Cost Textbook

Kilroy-Ewbank, L. (editor). (2025). Reframing Art History. Smarthistory. (OER). <https://smarthistory.org/reframing-art-history/>

Gustlin, D. & Gustlin, Z. A World Perspective of Art History. (OER).

[https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Art/A_World_Perspective_of_Art_History%3A_1400CE_to_the_21st_Century_\(Gustlin_and_Gustlin\)](https://human.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Art/A_World_Perspective_of_Art_History%3A_1400CE_to_the_21st_Century_(Gustlin_and_Gustlin))

Other Learning Materials

These are representative texts. Texts used by individual institutions and individual instructors will vary.

Met Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

Smarthistory's (Khan Academy) materials/books

Smarthistory OER Commons

Minimum Qualifications

Art (Masters Required)

Art History

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