

SCHOOL OF FINE ART AND MUSIC
Fall 2017
ARTH*2480-01
INTRODUCTION TO ART THEORY AND CRITICISM

INSTRUCTOR: Martina Meyer, PhD
TIME: Tuesday & Thursday 10:00-11:20 pm
LOCATION: MacKinnon Building, Room 114
OFFICE: TBA
PHONE: TBA
EMAIL: meyer@uoguelph.ca
OFFICE HOURS: Thursdays 4:00-5:00 pm (or by appointment)



CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

This course provides an overview of some of the most significant methodological approaches and critical practices used by art historians to write about visual culture. Traditional methods of art historical analysis include connoisseurship, iconography, and formalism. With these we will be exploring newer interpretative models and multidisciplinary approaches such as structuralism, semiotics, post-structuralism, and psychoanalytic theory, as well as political theories such as feminism and socio-cultural theory.

Prerequisite(s): (2 OF ARTH*1220, ARTH*1510, ARTH*1520)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

How do art historians interpret works of art? In this course students will become familiar with the basic methodologies and theoretical practices fundamental to the discipline of art history, including: Biography, Formalism, Psychoanalytic Theory, Iconography, Semiotics, Post-Structuralism, Marxism, Feminism, and Postcolonial Theory. We will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these various approaches, and consider the factors that contributed to shifts in art historical approaches. We will examine how artistic practices in various media inform thought and, more specifically, visual theory by focusing on the ideas reflected in the texts of such authors and thinkers as Plato, Kant, Hegel, Winckelmann, as well 20th century theorists such as Wölflin, Panofsky, Foucault, Nochlin, and Barthes. We will engage with the questions and debates that have shaped the field of art history, and attempt to understand how the discipline itself is part of historical processes. Through critical reading and reflective response, we will not only investigate art history's history, but also begin to articulate our own positions and voices.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Introduce the history of Western art criticism and its methodologies
2. Define the central tasks and goals of diverse methodological approaches and critical practices used by art historians to talk about visual culture
3. Understand works of art as manifestations of human belief, thought, and experience
4. Recognize the various roles of art in our society
5. Demonstrate an increased knowledge of the events and ideas that have come to shape the history of art and its contemporary counterparts
6. Encourage studio majors to practice their art with a deeper understanding of its relationship to the history of art and its current placement and relationship to contemporary art
7. Introduce the relevant terminology and theoretical approaches in order that students may confidently express their ideas with proficiency in the languages of artistic expression

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Cynthia Freeland, *But is it Art?* Oxford University Press, 2002. ISBN: 9780192853677
Donald Preziosi , *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology.* Oxford University Press, 2009. ISBN: 9780199229840

Recommended

Grant Pooke & Diana Newall, *Art History: The Basics* (2008)
Robert Nelson, *Critical Terms for Art History* (2003)
Cynthia Freeland. *Art Theory: A Very Short Introduction.* (2003)

METHOD OF EVALUATION:

Midterm 1 (Oct. 3 rd)	25%
Midterm 2 (Nov 7th)	25%
Take Home Exam (TBA)*	35%
Group Term Project & presentation (Nov. 23 rd , 28 th , 30 th)	15%

Midterms:

The midterms may include identification of terms, short answers, and an analysis of an image/s (from a study list provided beforehand) drawn from course lectures and assigned readings.

Group Term Project:

Each group (or individual) will apply a method of their choice towards an analysis of a work of art. For fun, you might wish to select a work or a style that you dislike. Discuss the work by determining how the application of a critical theory establishes a framework of understanding. How well does the theory work towards enlightenment? Importantly, are YOU convinced, or can you criticize the logic employed? In either case, please state why. Endnotes and a bibliography must accompany the essay, based on an appropriate style manual. The choice is up to you (MLA, Chicago, APA). Your written discussion should be 1000 words.

Take home exam:

The exam will contain a choice of questions about class material, readings, and works discussed in class. Selected readings, topics and art works to be addressed will be indicated in each question. The exam questions will be distributed in the last class of the term and must be returned no later than TBA.

* An in-class exam has been scheduled for Dec. 14, 7-9pm. However, I have requested a take home.

ELECTRONIC RECORDING OF LECTURES:

Electronic recording of lectures is expressly forbidden without prior consent of the instructor. When recordings are permitted, they are solely for the use of the authorized student, and may not be reproduced, or transmitted to others, without the express written consent of the instructor.

CSD:

If you require assistance or reasonable accommodations to complete assigned course work (such as modifications in testing, readers, special equipment, etc.) students must advise the instructor that