

American Painting and Sculpture-ARH4610

(80157), 4 credits, Fall 2012,

Monday/Wednesday 12-1:50pm

SO 207

Professor Karen J. Leader

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Office: SO(44)372

Office Hours: M/Th 9-11 or by appointment

561-297-3196

Pre-requisite ARH 2050 and ARH

2051 or permission of the

department.

Syllabus

Course Description: This course will examine major cultural, social and political trends in the United States, through the lens of the visual arts. In addition to surveying particular art categories, including Colonial Art, Hudson River School, American Realism and Impressionism, Regionalism, Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art and Minimalism, we will interrogate art history itself. The course will consist of roughly chronological, historical lectures, as well as examinations of critical methods. We will be reading primary sources such as historical documents, artists' writings, art history and contemporary criticism in addition to the required textbook. In light of the particularly hybrid nature of American society, special attention will be paid to the perennial question of what, if anything, is American about American Art.

Objectives: In this course you will:

1. Develop a solid grounding in the chronology and cultural specificity of visual art in the United States.
2. Continue to hone the skills necessary for visual observation, description and analysis.
3. Sharpen your critical thinking and writing about art and culture by producing a thoroughly researched and supported paper.
4. Deepen your understanding of various methodological approaches to Art History.

Required Text:

David Bjelajac, *American Art: A Cultural History*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005). Referred to herein as AA. Copy on reserve at Wimberly Library.

Additional readings on Blackboard. These are listed at the end of this syllabus, with questions you will be expected to answer in class, in writing, on the day they are assigned.

Recommended: Sylvan Barnet, *A Short Guide to Writing about Art* (Upper

Saddle River NJ: Pearson, 2011). Copy on reserve at Wimberly Library.

Office Hours: These are listed above, and I am also available by appointment. I enjoy speaking to students one-on-one, and this would be a good time to discuss your paper topic as well.

E-mail: You are required to regularly check your fau.edu e-mail address, as this is how I will communicate with you through the Blackboard. My e-mail address is listed above. I encourage you to use it to ask questions about material covered in lectures, your assignment, or the exams, or to make an appointment. Do **not** use it to tell me you won't be in class, or to ask me what was covered. You should have a friend in class for this purpose. Do **not** use it to ask me your grade on an exam, or in the class; I do not share this information via e-mail. Do **not** e-mail your assignment. If you do write to me, it should be in the form of a proper message such as:

Subject Line: American Art or ARH4610

Dear Professor Leader, or Hello, or Greetings, or Good Afternoon (not yo, or hey, or nothing)

Text of your message.

Thank you,
Jane Smith

Blackboard: Supplemental readings can be found as PDFs on the Blackboard under Content. Dates for these readings are listed in the calendar section of this syllabus. Study lists will be uploaded periodically to prepare you for the exams.

Class meetings: The class meets Mondays and Wednesdays, 12-1:20pm in SO 207. You are expected to attend, and will not do well in the class if you don't. I will take roll and this will contribute to the participation percentage of your grade. There are no "excused" absences as it is common for circumstances to occur which require missing class. Your grade will suffer only if this is a recurring problem. Special exceptions, including religious observances and other exceptions that are officially recognized by the university, will be discussed and accommodated *in advance* and on an individual basis.

Decorum: Late arrivals and early departures disturb the entire class and will not be tolerated. Occasionally you might have to leave early, and I greatly appreciate it if you let me know before class begins, and sit near the door that day. We will incorporate as much discussion as possible, so come prepared with questions, comments or observations. Civility and respect for the opinions of others will form the basis of these discussions, but debate and disagreement are encouraged. Excessive talking or other disruptions will result in removal from the class. **There is absolutely no eating in the classroom. Drinks in covered containers only.**

Assignments: There will be one written assignment, completed in two parts. The due dates for those parts are listed on this syllabus. Late papers will only be

accepted at the professor's discretion, in the case of a documented emergency (serious illness or accident, death in the immediate family.) Missed papers will be graded as an F. Do not under any circumstances e-mail an assignment without the express permission of the professor.

Exams: There will be an in-class mid-term and final. The dates are listed on this syllabus. A missed exam can be made up at the professor's discretion, only in the case of a documented emergency (serious illness or accident, death in the immediate family.) Missed exams will be graded as an F.

Grading:

- * Written Assignment 10% + 30%=40%
- * Mid-term and Final 25% each=50%
- * Participation 10%

Electronics: In accordance with university policy, mobile phones and beepers must be turned off during class time. In addition, laptops and other electronic devices are not allowed in class. Recording of lectures without the professor's advance permission and the recorder visible to all is strictly forbidden.

Academic Integrity: You are a member of an academic community where respect for the work of other scholars is paramount. Using without acknowledging intellectual property, either words or ideas, is theft. Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see

http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf

Writing Center: FAU maintains a wonderful resource to help students improve their writing skills: the University Center for Excellence in Writing (www.fau.edu/UCEW).

Students with Disabilities and Special Needs:

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require special accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)- SU 133 (561-297-3880), and follow all OSD procedures.

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations should make an appointment with the Office for Students with Disabilities, during the first week of class. Once you have been approved for accommodations, contact me to ensure the successful implementation of those accommodations.

Calendar

1) Monday, August 20: Introduction, scope of the course

Reading: Course Syllabus

2) Wednesday, August 22: The USA: An Illustrated History

Reading: AA, Introduction, ix-xi; and timeline, 478-489

3) Monday, August 27: Indigenous Art and Early Encounters

Reading: AA, 13-37

4) Wednesday, August 29: Colonial Culture

Reading: AA, 39-55, 67-72, 77-84, 99 (Feke portrait)-109

Monday, September 3, no class—Labor Day

5) Wednesday, September 5: Roots of Revolution

Reading: AA, 85-90(on Freemasonry), 115-130

6) Monday, September 10: Art and Revolution

Reading: AA, 131-144, Jefferson, The Declaration of Independence

7) Wednesday, September 12: Picturing a Young Nation

Reading: AA, 144-161

8) Monday, September 17: A National Landscape

Reading: AA, 163-167, 191-218

9) Wednesday, September 19: Field Trip, Jaffe Center and Special Collections

Class meets at the Jaffe Center for Book Arts 3rd fl. Wimberley Library

10) Monday, September 24: Library research session

Class meets at Wimberly Library LY136

11) Wednesday, September 26: Field Trip, Boca Raton Museum of Art

Reading: Mainardi, "Quilts: The Great American Art"

Class meets in front of the museum, Mizner Park

12) Monday, October 1: Photography

Reading: AA, 223-229

- 13) Wednesday, October 3: Resistances
Reading: AA, 187-191, 218-223; Hight, "Doomed to Perish"
- 14) Wednesday, October 10: Mid-Term Review
- 15) Monday, October 15: Mid-term exam
- 16) Wednesday, October 17: Writing Workshop 1
Paper proposal due
- 17) Monday, October 22: Reconstruction
Reading: AA, 229-240, 250-269; Lincoln, Gettysburg Address
- 18) Wednesday, October 24: The Expats: Cassatt, Sargent, Whistler
Reading: AA, 274-279, 286-295
- 19) Monday, October 29: Picturing Modernity, Part One
Reading: AA, 297-321
- 20) Wednesday, October 31: Picturing Modernity, Part Two
Reading: AA, 321-344; Davis, Is There an American Art?
- 21) Monday, November 5: Between the Wars
Reading: AA 335-344, 346-361, Cahill, "The Federal Arts Project"
- 22) Wednesday, November 7: Capital M Modernism
Reading: AA, 363-368, 373-398
- Monday, November 12, no class-Veteran's Day observed**
- 23) Wednesday, November 14: Writing Workshop 2
- 24) Monday, November 19: Proto-Pop, Pop, and Left Coast Cool
Reading: AA, 398-419, Plagens, Introduction, Sunshine Muse
- 25) Wednesday, November 21: The 1970s
Reading: AA, 421-435
Written Assignment Due
- 26) Monday, November 26: The Culture Wars
Reading: AA, 451-465; Cotter, The Topic is Race
- 27) Wednesday, November 28: Final Review
- Final Exam Friday, November 30, 10:30am-1pm**

Readings

Cahill, Holger. "The Federal Arts Project" [1936] in Herschel B. Chipp ed. *Theories of Modern Art: A Sourcebook by Artists and Critics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 471-473.

Question: Can you identify some ways in which Cahill discusses art that are significant to the American context of our course?

Cotter, Holland "The Topic is Race; The Art is Fearless," *New York Times*, March 30, 2008.

Questions: In what context does Cotter frame this review? Is it still relevant?

Davis, Stuart. "Is There an American Art?" [1930] in Herschel B. Chipp ed. *Theories of Modern Art: A Sourcebook by Artists and Critics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 521-523.

Question: How does Davis answer the question posed in his title?

Hight, Kathryn S. "'Doomed to Perish': George Catlin's Depictions of the Mandan" in Marianne Doezema and Elizabeth Milroy eds. *Reading American Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 150-162.

Question: In the more nuanced sense examined by the author, what does "doomed to perish" signify?

Jefferson, Thomas. "The Declaration of Independence" [1776] in David A. Hollinger and Charles Capper eds. *The American Intellectual Tradition: A Sourcebook, V. I: 1630-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 129-131.

Question: Jefferson's text is a justification for a radical act. What is the act, and what are some facts he uses to justify it?

Lincoln, Abraham. "Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg" [1863] in David A. Hollinger and Charles Capper eds. *The American Intellectual Tradition: A Sourcebook, V. I: 1630-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 475.

Question: Despite Lincoln's assertion that we would not, why do you think we still read and remember this short text? What was Lincoln's goal in delivering it?

Mainardi, Patricia. "Quilts: The Great American Art" in Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard eds. *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1982), 330-346.

Question: After reading this article and visiting the exhibition at the Boca Raton Museum of Art, what are some important aspects of the study of quilts? Are they the "great" American art?

Plagens, Peter. "Introduction," *Sunshine Muse: Art on the West Coast, 1945-1970* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 1-8.