

Proposed Syllabus

Comm B sections

ILS 204: Western Culture: Literature and the Arts, Renaissance to Contemporary

Professor Mike Vanden Heuvel (Chair, ILS)

Lecture T-TH 1:00-2:15

Discussion sections (4-credit, Comm B option)

Students may only be enrolled in a Comm B section of they have completed their Comm A requirement, or have received the appropriate exemption. It is the student's responsibility to check his or her status for a Comm B section.

Objectives

- Develop advanced analytical skills for reading the history of ideas and cultural artifacts, literary and visual
- Develop advanced skills in persuasive written and oral communication, in the use of libraries and other research resources, and in formal writing styles
- Connect formal analysis of literature, visual art and other forms of expression with cultural analysis
- Challenge you to reflect actively upon the course material in ways that allow you to attain a comprehensive introductory understanding of the main currents of Western art and culture from the Renaissance to the present.

Attendance policy

Attendance in your two weekly Discussion sections is not only mandatory, but the clearest path to succeeding in achieving the learning aims stated above. A total of three (3) absences are allowed without penalty, but each subsequent absence after that will lower your total point accumulation by 50 points, a significant penalty. Your three absences may include (but are not limited) to athletic events, extracurricular activities, religious observances or illness: but after three such absences no exceptions will be made except in extreme – and therefore extremely unlikely – circumstances. Regular tardiness to class will affect the constant group work and if the instructor deems such tardiness habitual you may have points deducted.

Participation

Active engagement with class material, assignments and discussions are required and form the basis for your grade. Successful participation includes completing the assigned readings before lectures and Discussion sections, bringing the appropriate readings to class, having a command of materials presented in lecture, and then contributing to class discussions in a constructive manner. You are periodically evaluated on your participation so consistent engagement in class is required to earn full points.

Discussion Lead

Spirited discussion and the exchange of perspectives is integral to the course, as is your ability to communicate effectively with your peers. Each student will be paired with another to lead a classroom discussion for about 30 minutes. Paired students will present a detailed lesson plan one week before the class they are scheduled to lead. You will be graded on your preparation and effectiveness at prompting a productive discussion.

Communication

Although I will make every effort to respond promptly to your email questions, and will use other electronic means to communicate with you over the class website, if you encounter a concern that needs to be addressed quickly you should make an appointment to see me. As well, it is your responsibility to regularly check the class website and your wisc.edu email account regularly to keep up to date on plans and activities.

Academic Honesty

All sources of intellectual material other than your own must be properly cited, and we will use class time to discuss the proper method for doing so. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism, and when you have any doubt you should err on the side of caution and cite your sources, including websites, Wikipedia, and other digital archives. You can also consult the UW System Administrative code (14.03) for more detailed definitions of plagiarism, and consult the Writing Center website.

Assignments

- 1) Art analysis essay. You will select a work of art hanging at the Chazen Museum created between 1350-1650 and write a 1,000-word paper ((3-4 pages) analyzing the formal qualities of piece. Sample essays from Sylvan Barnet's *Looking at Art* will be studied as models of formalist analysis and thesis-driven writing. Once completed, the papers will be peer-reviewed before being handed in. Following the instructor's comments, the paper will be revised using feedback from peers and the TA.
- 2) Art and context Pecha Kucha. You will conduct image-based research based on a session by a research librarian at Memorial Library. Pairs of students will then present a PK that links the selected work of art to larger artistic movements and contexts: examples might include the contrasts between Italian, fresco-based painting and Northern oil-based work; the use of organic as opposed to rectilinear composition in Baroque sculpture and architecture; the use of a specific poetic form (such as the sonnet) to express

- the ideals of a movement; and the like. Preparation for the assignment includes instruction in oral presentation, and your grade will be based on both the quality of the content as well as the presentation (in which both partners must participate).
- 3) Midterm exam. A take-home exam consisting of 8 short answer questions (2-3 sentences each) and a 500-word essay on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.
 - 4) At least one individual conference with each student, preferably early in the semester to discuss the student's writing and/or speaking
 - 5) Literature analysis. You will select an assigned work not covered substantively in our discussions, and write a 1000-word essay analyzing the form and content of the work in relation to its cultural context. Either fiction or non-fiction examples can be used, and when we are reading only a selection from a longer work you may complete the assignment without having to read the entire piece (although you are encouraged to do so!). A draft of the essay is due by XX, which after peer review is revised and submitted by XX.
 - 6) Final cross-arts project. This is the major project for the class, and although you may not arrive at your topic so early in the term, preparations for completing it begin early in the term. A number of short writing and oral presentation tasks are assigned after the midterm that will illustrate different methods for conceiving and executing the cross-arts project. Fundamentally the objective is to select course themes and investigate them across different art forms and periods. Thus, you might take the theme of "the Other" and look at early attempts to represent non-Western peoples and cultures in travel literature in order to compare it to the use of primitivist motifs in modern art (Cubism, Dada, Surrealism).
 - a. By the 10th week you will prepare a précis of your intended research
 - b. By the 12th week you will do a poster presentation that shows some of the visual research and indicates where your argument is going
 - c. By the 14th week you'll prepare a draft for peer review
 - d. By the final week, you will turn in a fully-developed paper that may be accompanied by a poster (e.g. Glogster), presentation (Powerpoint, Prezi, etc.) or movie (iMovie, FinalCut, etc.). Depending on the elaborateness of the digital material, the written component of the project may run anywhere between 6-12 pages.