

A History of American Painting

BTP2NA T 28 01

AIMS:

This course offers an overview of the *art of painting* in the United States from Colonial times through the 1960s and explores how the new country was busy creating a *national art* of her own. The aim of the course is to trace how the American art of painting evolved from European dependence to a triumphalist status by the 1950s with abstract expressionism, the first significantly American art movement, and to a world leading position with the rise of pop art in the 1960s. Through studying selected works of American painting from three centuries (18th-20th) we will consider how portraiture, landscapes, history painting, American impressionism, realism, and avant-garde contributed to the intellectual maturation and cultural enrichment of the country. Thus cultural codes such as the construction of American identity, individualism, the formation of American democracy, the impact of technological change on the individual as represented in works of art will also be discussed.

Method of teaching: The course is taught in a seminar format where the class time is devoted to the study of a particular theme or movement through the detailed analysis of four or five artists' major works representing the period under study (paintings pertaining to the period are uploaded on the eLearning platform).

Reading assignment: for each occasion students are required to read designated passages from Wayne Craven's *American Art: History and Culture* as well as relevant studies from JSTOR (uploaded on the eLearning platform).

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

In-class presentation: a max. 10-minute talk on a work/movement/school/artist on the agenda. It should serve as a good starting point for the discussion of the relevant work of art.

Writing assignments

Response paper: a 250-300-word subjective reflection on **ONE picture** uploaded on the eLearning website prior to the seminar. Since the aim is to develop a careful "reading" of visual works (in terms of topic, colors, structure, perspective, focus, handling of brushstrokes) students are required to put down their responses **without consulting any theoretical or descriptive material**. The response papers must be submitted **in PRINT** on each class. If you miss a class, you can make up for the response papers within two weeks.

Midterm test: it will check students' familiarity with the paintings, their contexts, and the readings discussed up to that point in the semester.

Take-home essay: an analytical essay that discusses one of the works (or several) that the seminar covers. *Format:* 8 pages, Times New Roman 12 pt, 2,5 cm margins, double spaced, full and correct citation, alphabetical works cited (MLA Style), with student's name on each page. The essays should be handed in **electronically** no later than **midnight Dec 8**.

Evaluation Criteria:

Participation: 20%

Response paper: 10%

Presentation: 20 %

Midterm test: 30 %

Take-home essay: 20 %

