ARHA (Art and the History of Art) 137

**AMERICAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE, 1600 TO THE PRESENT**

Professor Carol Clark

Fall 2011 Fayerweather 108 (campus box 2249)

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MW 12:30-1:50 e-mail: [ccclark@amherst.edu](mailto:ccclark@amherst.edu)

Office Hours: M 3-5 and by appt.

Through the study of form, content, and context of selected works of painting, architecture and sculpture made in colonial North America and the United States from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, this course will probe changing American social and cultural values embodied in art. We will study individual artists as well as themes, with particular attention to the production and reception of art in a developing nation, the transformation of European architectural styles into a new environment, the construction of race in ante- and post-bellum America, and the identification of an abstract style of art with the political ascendancy of the United States after World War II.

**Books to buy**

Two required books of readings are for sale at Amherst Books: Marianne Doezema and Elizabeth Milroy, eds., *Reading American Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) and Patricia Johnston, ed., *Seeing High & Low: Representing Social Conflict in American Visual Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

**Study Images and the Mead Art Museum**

Regular (daily!) study of images is essential to your work in this course. Each week I will provide study sheets of key works and will post PowerPoints of images discussed in class. You will find other works by artists and architects we study at <http://www.artstor.org/> .

The Mead <https://www.amherst.edu/museums/mead> has a fine collection of American art, particularly from the 18th through the early 20th centuries. The museum is open LATE four nights a week and offers coffee in the lobby. It’s a great place to look at art, to talk about it with others, and to study.

**Reading assignments**

I have indicated at corresponding points in the syllabus writings by historians and critics of American art (collected in *Reading American Art* [Am Art], in *Seeing High & Low* [High Low], or linked to our course homepage [link]), selected because they address a topic from a distinct point of view and/or effectively address individual works. You should be ready to discuss the approach and content of each reading in class.

Extend your study, guided by bibliographies and footnotes in the readings, browsing in Frost, and discussion with me. There are several good survey books of American art: one is Angela L. Miller et al., *American Encounters: Art, History, and Cultural Identity* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2007).

**Written assignments and examinations**

You will write two visual response papers of three pages each and one research paper of eight pages. The midterm examination is in class. The final examination will be scheduled by the registrar during exam period. Examinations require you to be prepared to fully identify and discuss all works on the study sheets and to have command of the assigned readings. You will have the opportunity to test your skill at identifying works of art that we have not studied in class by proposing an artist, architect, or a building location for a dozen “unknown” works on the midterm and on the final examination.

**Week of**

**Sept 5 (One class meeting this week, Wed. Sept. 7)**

**A colonial world: architecture**

Dell Upton, “White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia” (link)

**Sept 12 A colonial world: architecture (continued) and painting**

Wayne Craven, “The Seventeenth-Century New England Mercantile

Image: Social Content and Style in the Freake Portraits” (Am Art)

Paul Staiti, “Character and Class: The Portraits of John Singleton Copley” (Am Art)

**Sept 19 Independence**

David Steinberg, “Educating for Distinction?: Art, Hierarchy, and Charles Willson Peale’s *Staircase Group*” (High & Low)

Roger B. Stein, “Charles Willson Peale’s Expressive Design: *The Artist in His Museum*” (Am Art)

**Sept 26 Mid nineteenth century: narrative painting and sculpture**

Patricia Johnston, “Samuel F. B. Morse’s *Gallery of the Louvre*: Social Tensions in an Ideal World” (High & Low)

William T. Oedel and Todd S. Gernes, “*The Painter’s Triumph*: William Sidney Mount and the Formation of a Middle-Class Art” (Am Art)

Joy S. Kasson, “Narratives of the Female Body: *The Greek Slave*” (Am Art)

**\*Sept 28 visual response paper due\***

**Oct 3 Mid nineteenth century: landscape painting**

Alan Wallach, “Thomas Cole and the Aristocracy” (Am Art)

**Post Civil War: home**

Sarah Burns, “Cartoons in Color: David Gilmour Blythe’s Very Uncivil War” (High & Low)

Nancy K. Anderson, “’The Kiss of Enterprise’: The Western Landscape as Symbol and Resource” (Am Art)

**\* Oct 10-11 mid semester break \***

**Oct 10 (One class meeting this week, Wed. Oct. 12)**

**Post Civil War: home (continued)**

Elizabeth Johns, “*The Gross Clinic*; or *Portrait of Professor Gross* (Am Art)

Jules D. Prown, “Winslow Homer in His Art” (Am Art)

**Oct 17 Post Civil War: abroad**

Griselda Pollock, “Mary Cassatt: Painter of Women and Children”

(Am Art)

**\*Oct. 19 midterm examination\***

**Oct 24 Post Civil War: sculpture and still life**

Melissa Dabakis, “’Ain’t I a Woman?’ Anne Whitney, Edmonia Lewis, and the Iconography of Emancipation” (High & Low)

Kirsten P. Buick, “The Ideal Works of Edmonia Lewis: Invoking and Inverting Autobiography” (Am Art)

Kirk Savage, “Uncommon Soldiers: Race, Art, and the Shaw Memorial” (link)

**Oct 31 Late nineteenth-century: architecture**

James F. O’Gorman, “Urbanism” (link)

**Nov 7 Early twentieth century: urban and suburban subjects**

Joanne Lukitsh, “Alone on the Sidewalks of New York: Alfred Stieglitz’s Photography, 1892-1913” (High & Low)

Patricia Hills, “John Sloan’s Images of Working-Class Women: A Case Study of the Roles and Interrelationships of Politics, Personality, and Patrons in the Development of Sloan’s Art, 1905-16” (Am Art)

**\*Nov 9 research paper due**\*

**Nov 14 Realism and abstraction: contests of meaning**

Anna C. Chave, “O’Keeffe and the Masculine Gaze” (Am Art)

Anthony W. Lee, “Workers and Painters: Social Realism and Race in Diego Rivera’s Detroit Murals” (link)

Carol Troyen, “The Open Window and the Empty Chair: Charles Sheeler’s *View of New York* (Am Art)

Wanda Corn, “The Birth of a National Icon: Grant Wood’s *American Gothic*” (Am Art)

**\*week of Nov. 21 Thanksgiving Break\***

**Nov 28 Modernist architecture and painting**

Michael Leja, “Jackson Pollock: Representing the Unconscious” (Am Art)

William H. Jordy, “The Laconic Splendor of the Metal Frame: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s 860 Lake Shore Drive and his Seagram Building” (link)

**Dec 5 The Sixties**

Leo Steinberg, "Jasper Johns: the First Seven Years of his Art" (link)

Thomas Crow, “Saturday Disasters: Trace and Reference in Early Warhol” (link)

**\*Dec 7 visual response paper due\***

**Dec 12 What is postmodern in art and architecture?**

Henry M. Sayre, “Open Space: Landscape and the Postmodern Sublime”

**\*Final examination—scheduled by registrar in exam period, Dec. 18-22\***

List of linked readings:

Dell Upton, “White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia,” *Places* 2:2 (1985), 59-72.

Kirk Savage, “Uncommon Soldiers: Race, Art, and the Shaw Memorial,” *Hope & Glory: Essays on the Legacy of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiment*, ed. Martin H. Blatt et al. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 156-167.

James F. O’Gorman, *H. H. Richardson: Architectural Forms for an American Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 71-89.

Anthony W. Lee, “Workers and Painters: Social Realism and Race in Diego Rivera’s Detroit Murals,” *The Social and the Real: Political Art of the 1930s in the Western Hemisphere*, eds. Alejandro Anreus, Diana L. Linden, and Jonathan Weinberg (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 201-220.

William H. Jordy, *The Impact of European Modernism on the Mid-Twentieth Century* (American Buildings and Their Architects, vol. 5) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 221-277.

Leo Steinberg, “Jasper Johns: the First Seven Years of his Art,” *Metro* 4/5 (1962), reprinted with revisions in *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 17-54.

Thomas Crow, *Modern Art in the Common Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 49-65.

Henry M. Sayre, *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde Since 1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 211-245.