

ARTD 1010 || Art: Its History and Meaning
Boylan Hall, Room 5145
Monday & Wednesday, 12:50 – 2:05 PM

Instructor: Jeremy Bleeke
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Office Hours: MW 3-4 PM, 5307 Boylan

Syllabus

Course Description

This course will examine the history of visual art across world cultures from the fourth millennium BCE to the twentieth century CE. Starting with the early civilizations of ancient Mesopotamia, we will explore the ways in which art has shaped, and been shaped by, the development of empires, cities, religions, politics, and social life through history. Our focus will be on major monuments and artworks that are exemplary of their time and place, but we will also look at lesser known objects to nuance and deepen our historical understanding. Classes will be primarily lecture-based, with time for discussion and questions as we explore the issues raised by both the artworks and the required readings.

Course website: <http://art1010bleeke.blog.brooklyn.edu>

Required Reading

Because most art history survey textbooks are expensive (\$100+), all required reading for this course is drawn from two free online resources: the website *Smarthistory* (<https://smarthistory.org/>) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (abbreviated to HTAH on the syllabus) (<https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/>). Each week's readings are listed on the syllabus, with links, and are to be completed ahead of the class for which they are assigned. On both Smarthistory and HTAH there are images and other links to be explored. Because the articles themselves are all relatively brief, I expect you to spend some time looking at the artworks and familiarizing yourself with the vocabulary and specialized terminology presented.

Should you wish to consult a physical textbook as you prepare for class and study for exams (recommended), the Art Department's Meier Bernstein Art Library on the fifth floor of Boylan keeps many copies of standard survey texts. Two options are:

- 1) Marilyn Stokstad and Michael W Cothren, *Art History. Volumes 1 and 2* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2018). [6th edition]
- 2) Fred S Kleiner et al., *Gardner's Art through the Ages: A Global History* (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2020). [16th edition]

The library is in 5300 Boylan, and hours are generally 9 AM to 6 PM, Monday through Thursday. The latest schedule is always posted on the door.

Another free and valuable resource, accessible with your Brooklyn College computer login through the College Library, are the online encyclopedias *Grove Art* and *Oxford Art Online*: <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/groveart>. If you have trouble accessing either resource, consult with a College librarian.

Optional Reading

Optional reading is also listed in the syllabus for each topic. PDFs of these readings will be posted to the course website: <http://art1010bleeke.blog.brooklyn.edu>. These readings are not always directly related to the works we will be looking at, but they have been chosen to supplement and enrich your understanding of the cultures and issues we are studying. They are drawn from a variety of sources and offer a range of perspectives to consider. You will encounter art historical analysis, museum catalogues, cultural criticism, journalism, travelogues, historical eyewitness accounts, and excerpts from the poetry and prose of world literatures. Please come speak with me during Office Hours if you have any questions or would like to further discuss either the required or optional readings.

Learning Objectives

This course focuses on the development of visual literacy, close looking, critical thinking, and precise, analytical writing. Learning objectives include:

- 1) Building a foundational art historical **vocabulary**
- 2) Understanding how to perform attentive **visual analysis**
- 3) Practicing **descriptive writing**
- 4) Expressing visual observations in **clear and cogent language**
- 5) Drawing connections between **text and image**
- 6) **Speaking knowledgeably** and confidently about art and its history from the ancient world to the present

As these objectives demonstrate, the course aims to develop skills that will be widely applicable across academic disciplines, in and out of the classroom. It is my hope that even if you don't plan to pursue a degree or career in art history, you will benefit from the deductive and analytical reasoning that we practice during the semester.

Assessment

You will write approximately 1000 words for this class over the course of the semester and will sit for two in-class examinations. The midterm exam will cover material from the first half of the class, and the final exam will cover everything after the midterm (it will not be cumulative). You will also be required to write two short papers – 500 words each. Detailed instructions for all writing assignments and exams will be distributed in class and posted to Blackboard.

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

First paper:	15%
Second paper:	25%
Midterm:	25%
Final:	35%

Grade scale:

97 – 100%	A+
94 – 96%	A

90 – 93%	A-
87 – 89%	B+
84 – 86%	B... etc.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend every class session. If you incur three absences, your final grade will be dropped by a letter (from B to C, for example). A fourth absence will result in an additional letter grade deduction. Five absences will result in automatic failure of the course. If you can produce documentation of serious illness or family emergency, your absence for that day will be excused. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. If you come in after your name has been called you will be marked late (it is your responsibility to register your lateness with me at the end of class; otherwise, you might be marked absent). If you are late three times it will be counted as an absence.

Classroom Expectations

Late work will not be accepted under any circumstances. There will be NO makeup exams. If you foresee an unavoidable conflict with either of the above, you must speak with me well in advance in order to see if a resolution might be possible. I make no guarantees that special accommodations can be made.

Getting up and walking around during class is distracting to both the teacher and your fellow students. Unless it is an emergency, you should not leave the room before end of class.

Please do not eat in class. The use of laptops is permitted for note taking only.

Brooklyn College Statement on Academic Integrity

The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: <http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies>. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation.

Accommodation

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment at the Center. If you have already registered with the Center for Student Disability Services please provide your professor with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with him/her. If you qualify, then you need to notify the professor to make arrangements for a quiz/exam in the testing center at least one week before the exam/quiz date. No special accommodations will be made for anyone unless there is a documented reason.

PLEASE NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus as needed over the semester. By remaining enrolled in this class, you accept that this syllabus is a binding contract between the student and professor.

Class Schedule:

August 28 (Wed.)

- **Topic: Introductions, Syllabus, Thematic Overview**
- **Optional reading:** E.H. Gombrich, “On Art and Artists,” in *The Story of Art*, pp. 15-37; Elaine Scarry, “Beauty Prompts a Copy of Itself,” in *On Beauty and Being Wrong*, pp. 1-7

September 2 (Mon.) – COLLEGE CLOSED. No classes scheduled

September 4 (Wed.)

- **Topic: Sumer and Akkad (3500-2000 BCE)**
- **Required reading:** Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History (HTAH): “The Origins of Writing”, “Art of the First Cities”, and “The Akkadian Period” (all in the Sumerian section: <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/keywords/sumerian-art/>)
- **Optional reading:** Creation and flood narratives: *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and the Hebrew Bible

September 5 (Thurs.) – *Classes follow a Monday Schedule*

- **Topic: Ancient Egypt: Giza and the Old Kingdom (2600 – 2100 BCE)**
- **Required reading:** Smarthistory: “Egypt, An Introduction” (<https://smarthistory.org/ancient-egypt-an-introduction/>); HTAH: “Egypt in the Old Kingdom” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/oking/hd_oking.htm)
- **Optional reading:** Metropolitan Museum of Art guide to Ancient Egypt, Section III, pp. 19-58; Malcolm Daniel, “Photographers in Egypt,” in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, Metropolitan Museum of Art

September 9 (Mon.)

- **Topic: Minoan & Mycenaean Art (2700 – 1000 BCE)**
- **Required reading:** HTAH: “Minoan Crete and Mycenaean Civilization” (<https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/keywords/minoan-art/>); Smarthistory: “The Palace at Knossos” (<https://smarthistory.org/ancient-mediterranean/the-palace-at-knossos-crete/>)
- **Optional reading:** Selections from Homer, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*

September 11 (Wed.)

- **Topic: Assyria and Babylon (1400-500 BCE)**
- **Required reading:** HTAH: “Nineveh” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/nveh/hd_nveh.htm) and “Babylon” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/babl/hd_babl.htm)
- **Optional reading:** Excerpts from the Code of Hammurabi; Nebuchadnezzar II’s Inscription from the Ishtar Gate

September 16 (Mon.)

- **Topic: Greek Art I (Sculpture) (500 BCE)**
- **Required reading:** HTAH: “The Art of Classical Greece” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tacg/hd_tacg.htm) and “Architecture in Ancient Greece” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/grarc/hd_grarc.htm)
- **Optional reading:** Johann Joachim Winckelmann, description of *Apollo Belvedere* in *The History of Ancient Art*, Osgood and Co, pp. 812-814; “The Art of Classical Greece” in the Heilbrunn timeline

September 18 (Wed.)

- **Topic: Greek Art II (Architecture) & Persepolis (500 BCE)**
- **Required reading:** Smarthistory: “The Parthenon” (<https://smarthistory.org/the-parthenon-athens/>); HTAH: “Ernst Emil Herzfeld in Persepolis” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/herz_2/hd_herz_2.htm)
- **Optional reading:** Herodotus, selections from *The Histories*, Book I, on the Persians

September 23 (Mon.)

- **Topic: China: The Qin & Han Dynasties (300 BCE – 200 CE)**
- **Required reading:** HTAH: “Shang and Zhou Dynasties: The Bronze Age of China” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/shzh/hd_shzh.htm); “Qin Dynasty” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/qind/hd_qind.htm); “Han Dynasty” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/hand/hd_hand.htm)
- **Optional reading:** Lothar Ledderose, “A Magic Army for the Emperor” in *Ten Thousand Things. Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art*, pp. 51-73.

September 25 (Wed.)

- **Topic: Rome I: Architecture (500 BCE – 600 CE)**
- **Required reading:** HTAH: “Theater and Amphitheater in the Roman World” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tham/hd_tham.htm); Smarthistory: “The Pantheon” (<https://smarthistory.org/the-pantheon/>)
- **Optional reading:** “Prologue: The History of Rome,” and “Cicero’s Finest Hour,” in Mary Beard, *S.P.Q.R.* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015), pp. 15-52.

September 30 (Mon.) – No classes scheduled

October 2 (Wed.)

- **Topic: Rome II: Art (500 BCE – 600 CE)**
- **Required reading:** Smarthistory: “Augustus of Prima Porta” (<https://smarthistory.org/augustus-of-primaporta/>) and “Equestrian Sculpture of Marcus Aurelius” (<https://smarthistory.org/equestrian-sculpture-of-marcus-aurelius/>)
- **Optional reading:** “Prologue: The History of Rome,” and “Cicero’s Finest Hour,” in Mary Beard, *S.P.Q.R.* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015), pp. 15-52.

October 7 (Mon.) – *FIRST PAPER DUE*

- **Topic: The Byzantine Empire (500 – 1000 CE)**
- **Required reading:** HTAH: “Byzantium” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/byza/hd_byza.htm) and “Hagia Sophia” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/haso/hd_haso.htm)
- **Optional reading:** Procopius, “The Hagia Sophia”, in *Buildings of Justinian* (1888), reprinted in Peter N. Stearns, ed., *Documents in World History*, Vol. 1 (New York: Harper Collins, 1988), 156–158.

October 9 (Wed.) – No classes scheduled

October 14 (Mon.) – COLLEGE CLOSED. No classes scheduled

October 16 (Wed.)

- **Topic: Art of the Umayyad & Abbasid Caliphates (600 – 1200 CE)**
- **Required reading:** HTAH: “The Nature of Islamic Art” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/orna/hd_orna.htm), “The Art of the Umayyad Period” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/umay/hd_umay.htm), “The Art of the Abbasid Period” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/abba/hd_abba.htm)
- **Optional reading:** Yakut, “Baghdad under the Abbasids, c. 1000 CE” in William Stearns Davis, ed., *Readings in Ancient History: Illustrative Extracts from the Sources*, pp. 365–367

October 21 (Mon.)

- **Topic: Art of the Americas: Maya and Aztec Empires (700 – 1500 CE)**
- **Required reading:** Smarthistory: “The Maya, an introduction” and “Palenque (Classic Period)” (<https://smarthistory.org/maya-intro/>); Smarthistory: “Introduction to the Aztecs” and “The Templo Mayor and the Coyolxauhqui Stone” (<https://smarthistory.org/templo-mayor-at-tenochtitlan-the-coyolxauhqui-stone-and-an-olmec-mask/>)
- **Optional reading:** Hernan Cortés, from “Second Letter to Charles V, 1520” (selections); “An Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico”; “Moctezuma’s Greeting to Hernan Cortes” [all available at Internet Modern History Sourcebook, Fordham]

October 23 (Wed.)

- **Topic: Buddhist Art in China and Southeast Asia (300 – 1000 CE)**
- **Required Reading:** HTAH: “Buddhism and Buddhist art,” “Life of the Buddha,” “Chinese Buddhist Sculpture” (all in the Buddhism section: <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/keywords/buddhism/>) and “South Asian Art and Culture” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/sasa/hd_sasa.htm)

October 28 (Mon.) – MIDTERM EXAM

October 30 (Wed.)

- **Topic: China: Tang and Song Dynasties (600 – 1200 CE)**
- **Required reading:** HTAH: “Tang Dynasty”, “Northern Song Dynasty”, “Southern Song Dynasty”, and “Landscape Painting in Chinese Art” (all in the China section: <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/keywords/china/>)
- **Optional reading:** “The Chinese Scholar-Official,” from the Weatherhead Institute’s *Timeline of Asia in World History*: http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_600ce_scholar.htm

November 4 (Mon.)

- **Topic: Angkor Wat and Hindu Art (900 – 1200 CE)**
- **Required reading:** Smarthistory: “Angkor Wat” (<https://smarthistory.org/angkor-wat/>); HTAH: “Hinduism and Hindu Art” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/hind/hd_hind.htm)
- **Optional reading:** Philip Shenon, “Washing Buddha’s Face,” *The New York Times Magazine*, June 21, 1992.

November 6 (Wed.)

- **Topic: Amiens and the Gothic Cathedral (1100 – 1400 CE)**
- **Optional reading:** Smarthistory: “Gothic architecture, an introduction” (<https://smarthistory.org/gothic-architecture-an-introduction/>) and “The Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Paris” (<https://smarthistory.org/notre-dame-fire/>)
- **Required reading:** *Amiens, Cathédrale Notre-Dame* on the “Mapping Gothic France” website (text and images): <http://mappinggothic.org/building/1063#/>; Renaud de Cormont, “Inscription in the Labyrinth of Amiens Cathedral,” 1288

November 11 (Mon.)

- **Topic: Art of the Early Renaissance (1250 – 1450 CE)**
- **Required reading:** Smarthistory: “Giotto, Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel” (<https://smarthistory.org/giotto-arena-scrovegni-chapel/>); HTAH: “The Rediscovery of Classical Antiquity” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/clan/hd_clan.htm)
- **Optional reading:** Bates Lowry and Sydney J. Freedberg, “Florence,” *New York Review of Books*, Letter to the Editor (following the Florence flood), December 15, 1966; Kay Larson, “Survival of the Greatest,” [on the Cimabue exh. at the Met] *New York Magazine*, September 27, 1982

November 13 (Wed.)

- **Topic: The High Renaissance in Italy and Northern Europe (1450 – 1600)**
- **Required reading:** HTAH: “Sixteenth-Century Painting in Venice and the Veneto” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/veve/hd_veve.htm), “The Papacy and the Vatican Palace” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pope/hd_pope.htm); Smarthistory: “An introduction to the Northern Renaissance in the sixteenth century” (<https://smarthistory.org/an-introduction-to-the-northern-renaissance-in-the-sixteenth-century/>)
- **Optional reading:** “Renaissance Paragone: Painting and Sculpture,” from *Grove Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/page/Renaissance-Paragone-Painting-and->

Sculpture; Alberti, excerpts from *On Painting* (TBD); W.H. Auden, "Musée des Beaux Arts" (1938)

November 18 (Mon.)

- **Topic: Ottoman Empire and Mughal India (1500 – 1700 CE)**
- **Required reading:** HTAH: "The Art of the Ottomans before 1600" (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/otto1/hd_otto1.htm); Smarthistory: "The Blue Mosque" (<https://smarthistory.org/the-blue-mosque-sultan-ahmet-cami/>) and "The Taj Mahal" (<https://smarthistory.org/the-taj-mahal-2/>)
- **Optional reading:** Excerpt from Orhan Pamuk, *My Name is Red* (1998); Excerpts from Sidi Ali Reis, *Mirat ul Memalik (The Mirror of Countries)*, 1557 CE (available on the Internet Indian History Sourcebook, Fordham University)

November 20 (Wed.)

- **Topic: Italian Baroque (1600 – 1700 CE)**
- **Required reading:** HTAH: "Baroque Rome" (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/baro/hd_baro.htm); Smarthistory: "Baroque art, an introduction" (<https://smarthistory.org/a-beginners-guide-to-baroque-art/>)
- **Optional reading:** Ovid, excerpt from "Apollo and Daphne," in *The Metamorphoses*; "Power and Glory," in Gombrich, *The Story of Art*, pp. 435-445

November 25 (Mon.) – *SECOND PAPER DUE*

- **Topic: Painting of the Dutch Golden Age (1600 – 1700 CE)**
- **Required reading:** HTAH: "Still-Life Painting in Northern Europe," (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/nstl/hd_nstl.htm), "Landscape Painting in the Netherlands" (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/lpnd/hd_lpnd.htm); Smarthistory: "Rembrandt, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*" (<https://smarthistory.org/rembrandt-anatomy-lesson-of-dr-tulp/>), "Rembrandt, *The Jewish Bride*" (<https://smarthistory.org/rembrandt-jewish-bride/>)
- **Optional reading:** "Cornucopia," in Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches* (New York: Vintage, 2007), 290-322

November 27 (Wed.)

- **Topic: Arts of Oceania and the South Pacific (1200-1800 CE)**
- **Required reading:** HTAH: "Easter Island" (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/eais/hd_eais.htm), "European Exploration of the Pacific, 1600-1800" (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/expa/hd_expa.htm); Smarthistory: "Maori Meeting House" (<https://smarthistory.org/maori-meeting-house/>)
- **Optional reading:** Introduction to Eric Kjellgren, *Oceania: Art of the Pacific Islands in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (2007), pp. 3-22

December 2 (Mon.)

- **Topic: Arts of Africa (1500-1900 CE)**
- **Required reading:** Smarthistory: “Aesthetics,” “The human figure, animals and symbols,” and “Form and meaning” (all in Art of Africa: <https://smarthistory.org/aesthetics/>)
- **Optional reading:** Metropolitan Museum of Art, *The Art of Africa: A Resource for Educators*, pp. 11-38 and skim the works of art

December 4 (Wed.)

- **Topic: Neo-Classicism (1700 – 1800 CE)**
- **Required reading:** HTAH: “Neoclassicism” (https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/neoc_1/hd_neoc_1.htm); Smarthistory: “The Age of Enlightenment, an introduction” (<https://smarthistory.org/a-beginners-guide-to-the-age-of-enlightenment/>), “Thomas Jefferson, Monticello” (<https://smarthistory.org/jefferson-monticello/>)
- **Optional reading:** Wilton, Andrew, and Ilaria Bignamini, eds. *The Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century*. Exhibition catalogue. London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1996. [excerpt TBD]; “Rome and the South,” in Jeremy Black, *Italy and the Grand Tour*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003, (pp. 46-67).

December 9 (Mon.)

- **Topic: Nineteenth-century art**
- **Required reading:** Smarthistory: “Impressionism, an introduction”, “What does ‘Impressionism’ mean?” and “Impressionism: painting modern life” (all in Impressionism section: <https://smarthistory.org/a-beginners-guide-to-impressionism/>)
- **Optional reading:** “Beauty, Fashion and Happiness,” “The Artist, Man of the World, Man of the Crowd, and Child,” “Modernity,” and “The Dandy” from Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life*, first published 1863, republished New York: Phaidon Press, 1995, pp. 1-29.

December 11 (Wed.)

- **Topic: Modernism (1850-1950)**
- **Required reading:** Smarthistory: “Les Demoiselles d’Avignon”, “Inventing Cubism”, and “Still Life with Chair Caning” (<https://smarthistory.org/pablo-picasso-les-demoiselles-davignon/>)
- **Optional reading:** “A Climate for Modernism,” in Peter Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy* (2008), pp. 1-32.

December 16 (Mon.) – FINAL EXAM