

Early 20th Century Art in US and Europe 1900-44

City College CUNY | 21036-1XM | Summer 2026

Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-4:50pm
Online-(a)synchronous
Prof. Arnaud Gerspacher
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This course will introduce you to key art movements from Western Europe and the United States from 1900 to the beginning of WWII. We will go in-depth in this class and always attempt to contextualize the works we examine within a larger historical, political, and intellectual context. Be prepared to work in a multi-disciplinary way. As a remote course, we will be working asynchronously through posted video lectures and online writing as well as synchronously over Zoom.

Objectives:

By the end of this course:

- You will be familiar with the key early 20th century movements in Western Europe and the US;
- You will be able to identify major artists and their art practices;
- You will learn how to describe their work in formal terms (i.e. how it looks and affects the viewer);
- You will be able to discuss these works conceptually by accounting for the ideas and histories that drive them.

Required Text:

Hal Foster, et al., *Art Since 1900 modernism antimodernism postmodernism 1900 to 1944* (v.1)

Academic Integrity:

Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Students found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty will fail the assignment for which an infraction is suspected and substantiated.

Students with Disabilities:

In order to receive academic accommodations due to a disability, a student must first register with Student Disability Services. If approved, they will be given an *SDS Accommodation Letter* to submit to their instructors—otherwise they will not be eligible to receive accommodations in that course.

If you have a need for academic accommodations, or suspect you may have a disability, please contact:

The AccessAbility Center/Student Disability Services
North Academic Center (NAC)
Room 1/218
160 Convent Avenue
(212) 650-5913. &
disabilityservices@ccny.cuny.edu

Requirements:

1) Comment Section Participation (40% of grade):

With your CUNY Academic Commons account, you can post comments under the lectures on our website. For each session you will write one original comment and one reply to a fellow student. See the “Comment Section Guidelines” tab on the website for more details.

2) Partnered Presentations (20% of grade):

You will partner with a fellow student for a presentation during one of our Zoom sessions over the semester. You will co-present on a specific art object relating to our lectures. These should be fun and conversational, but also critical and informative. See the “Partnered Presentations” tab on the website for more details.

3) MoMA Exhibition Paper (40% of grade)

You will write a research paper on a past exhibition from the Museum of Modern Art online archives (the only limitation is that the exhibition be related to our time period). See the “MoMA Exhibition Paper Guidelines” tab on the website for more details.

Schedule and Readings

<https://early20th.commonsonline.gc.cuny.edu>

See website for all assignment due dates

June 2 (zoom@2:00pm)

Introduction

Hello + Setting up the course

June 4 SHOCK

Readings (chapter titles are by dates):

1906

1909

1914 (the section on Duchamp)

June 9 PRIMITIVE

Readings:

1903

1907

1922

June 11 ABSTRACT

Readings:

1908

1911

1915

1917a (optional)

June 16 Partnered Presentations I (zoom@2:00pm)

June 18 WORDS

Readings:

1912

1927a

1928b

June 23 DREAMS

Readings:

1900a

1924

1930b

June 25 WAR

Readings:

1916

1920

1925b

June 30 Partnered Presentations II (zoom@2:00pm)

July 2 REVOLUTION

Readings:

1914 (the section on Tatlin)

1921b

1933

July 9 MACHINE

Readings:

1923

1925a

1927c

July 14 PHOTO

Readings:

1916b

1929

1936

July 16 TOTALITARIAN

Readings:

1934a

1937a

1937c

July 21 Partnered Presentations III (zoom@2:00pm)

July 28

- Final Project Due

Class Policies:

Be respectfully at all times. When emailing, take the time to compose an e-mail (especially when sending an attachment). For a remote course it is important to keep the lines of communication open—so please do not hesitate to email me or check-in with me with any questions or concerns