



SYLLABUS

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Direzione Accademica

PALAZZI FLORENCE ASSOCIATION FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
FLORENCE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS
SAS - SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Format revised 2015
Syllabus revised 2017

SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY
COURSE TITLE: CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN ART
COURSE CODE: LAAHCI360

3 Semester Credits

1. DESCRIPTION

The course explores the works of artists who, over the last 50 years, have made today's art and constructed the relationship between artists and the city of Florence in the Italian context. Emphasis is placed on comparing the panorama of traditional, historic Florence and Italy to international contemporary art. The course will involve lectures (a survey of art in Tuscany and Italy, including abstract experiences, Italian pop art, minimal art, Poesia visiva, Trans-avant-gardism and the present-day tendencies of figurative art) and fact-finding visits to artist ateliers where course participants are encouraged to ask questions, i.e. which factors led artists towards certain decisions, which cultural forces led artists to adopt certain forms, etc. The course alternates between fieldwork for visiting galleries and ateliers and carrying out interpretative analyses of the fieldwork in the classroom. The course encourages contact with the living tissue of art. The Florentine creative scene, vibrant but rooted in history, is varied and complex; this course gives the student the opportunity to establish direct, informed contact with it.

2. OBJECTIVES

The goal of this course is to elucidate how Italian art has participated in the world art debate of the last fifty years. Students will be given tools to approach the very complex languages of visual arts of the late 20th century and the beginning of 21st century, and to understand their issues. Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Recognize the principal protagonists of Italian and international artists of the last fifty years
- Construct a chart of Italian and world art of the last fifty years
- Express and justify the historical reasons that have produced certain movements and art issues in Italy as well as in those countries covered by the course
- Utilize sources to support their thesis and to express critical points of view supported not only by the study of texts and primary sources, but also combining those with relevant direct experiences
- Demonstrate the capacity of clearly distinguishing topics and issues proper to modernism and postmodernism
- Recognize connections between artistic phenomena seemingly far away from each other
- Demonstrate the capacity for creating and discovering connections between contemporary events of any sort and the art world of today
- Acquire the capacity for communicating, sharing, selecting, and synthesizing those aforementioned abilities in oral and written form

3. REQUIREMENTS

Survey of Western Art or equivalent.

4. METHOD

This course consists of lectures, class discussions, and visits. Mediums for instruction used will include, but are not limited to, interactive and hands-on activities which challenge thought processes, academic texts and studies, videos, slides, guided problem solving, and experiential and/or field learning activities where applicable.

5. TEXT BOOK – FURTHER READINGS – RESOURCES

Foster H., Krauss R., Bois Y. A., Buchloh B., *Art Since the 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*. Thames and Hudson, 2004.

The text book is mandatory for successful completion of the course.

Where applicable, additional materials, handouts and/or notes will be provided by the instructor.

FURTHER READINGS

(Books in the list below are available in FUA library)

AA.VV., *Art in Theory, 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Blackwell, 2002

AA. VV., *Transvanguardia*, Skira, 2003

BARTHES R., *The Death of the Author*, "Aspen", n. 5+6, 1967

BONAMI F., *Italics: Italian Art between tradition and Revolution, 1968-2008*, exhibition catalogue, Chicago, Venice, 2008

BOURRIAUD N., *Relational Aesthetics*, Presses du Réel, 2002

BUTLER C., *Postmodernism. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2002

CHRISTOV-BAKARGIEV C., *Arte Povera*, Phaidon, 1999

COTTON C., *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*, Thames & Hudson, 2004

FOSTER K., *Nick Cave. Meet me at the center of the earth*, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts 2009

GIUSTI L., GENSINI V., *Green Platform*, exhibition catalogue, Firenze, 2009

GOLDBERG Rose Lee, *Performance Art. From Futurism to the Present*, Thames & Hudson, 2001

RUSH M., *New Media in Art*, Thames & Hudson, 2005

LIBRARIES IN FLORENCE

The FUA library is located in Corso Tintori 21. Please consult the posted schedules for official opening times. Also, note that the library is for consultation only and it is not possible to borrow materials. The library is equipped with a scanner and internet access so that you may save or email a digital copy of the pages needed.

Students may also utilize additional libraries and research centers within the local community:

Biblioteca Palagio di Parte Guelfa

Located in Piazzetta di Parte Guelfa between Piazza della Repubblica and Ponte Vecchio. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:

http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca_palagio_di_parte_guelfa/

Biblioteca delle Oblate

Located in via dell'Oriuolo 26. Please consult the library website for hours of operation: www.bibliotecadelleoblate.it

The Harold Acton Library at the British Institute of Florence

Located in Lungarno Guicciardini 9. Please consult the library website for hours of operation. This library requires a fee-based student membership. For information: www.britishinstitute.it/en

6. FIELD LEARNING

This course may include a field learning activity.

7. COURSE MATERIALS

No additional course materials are necessary.

8. COURSE FEES

Course fees cover all course-related field learning activities, visits, and support the instructor's teaching methodologies. Book costs are not included in the course fee. The instructor will communicate the exact amount on the first day of class.

9. EVALUATION – GRADING SYSTEM

10% Attendance

15% Class Participation, Home Assignments and Reading

20% Mid Term Exam

25% Final Paper and/or Presentation

30% Final Exam

A = 93-100 %, A- = 90-92%, B+= 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B-=80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C=73-76%, C- =70-72%, D = 60-69%, F= 0-59%, W = Official Withdrawal, W/F = Failure to withdraw by the designated date.

10. ATTENDANCE – PARTICIPATION

Academic integrity and mutual respect between instructor and student are central to the FUA academic policy and reflected in the attendance regulations. Student presence is mandatory and counts toward the final grade.

On the **second absence**, the attendance and participation grade will be impacted. Please note that missing certain field learning activities may count for more than one absence.

On the **third absence**, the instructor may lower the final grade by one letter grade. (Example: Final grade average of 93% or A will become a B).

The fourth absence constitutes automatic failure of the course. Students with excessive absences will be asked to withdraw with a W (if before the deadline) or leave the course with a WF.

Late Arrival and Early Departure

Arriving late or departing early from class is not acceptable. Two late arrivals or early departures or a combination will result in an unexcused absence. Travel is not an exceptional circumstance.

Travel (or delays due to travel) is NEVER an excuse for absence from class.

It is always the student's responsibility to know how many absences he or she has in a course. If in doubt, speak with your instructor!

11. EXAMS – PAPERS – PROJECTS

Home Assignments

Home assignments aim at documenting your knowledge and understanding on specific aspects relating to the course topic. After each lecture, a question may be posted on the course's blog page (MyFUA) relating to the lecture. Students are expected to contribute a short, thoughtful response. Responses must be posted before the start of the next lecture (all posts are time stamped, late postings (after 9 am) will not be accepted). Be creative, in addition to your short text you can post

pictures and videos if you'd like.

Reading and quizzes

Reading of the text book is mandatory for successful completion of the course, further reading is highly recommended. Regular reading quizzes have been designed to ensure that you are completing the reading and engaging in active learning and critical thinking about course concepts outside of class. They are also designed to help you prepare for the final exam in manageable increments. Quizzes may be open-note, which means you may use your notes to assist you in taking the quiz. Notes must be originals (not photocopied) and in your own handwriting. Quizzes will NOT be open book.

Paper/Presentation

The instructor will provide you with specific information concerning the paper/presentation topic and length. Make sure your paper/presentation conforms to academic standards in terms of style and register. Your paper/presentation must include quotations and/or citations from scholarly books, journals, or articles. Your paper/presentation must be properly referenced and must include a bibliography. Evaluation will be based on the following criteria: Pertinence & Coverage; Analysis & Understanding; Organization & Structure; Language & Accuracy; References & Bibliography.

Exams

The Mid-term exam will take place on Lesson 7 whilst the Final Exam will take place on week 15. Note, **the date and time of the exams cannot be changed for any reason**, so please organize your personal activities accordingly.

Format (for both exams): the exam is divided into three sections:

- Part I: 10 Multiple choice questions. Each correct answer is worth 2 points, for a total of 20 points.
- Part II: 10 short-answer questions. Each correct and complete answer (concise explanations, main ideas, key words, names, etc.) is worth 5 points, for a total 50 points.
- Part III: two essay questions; each correct and complete answer is worth 15 points (based on content, vocabulary, detail, etc.) for a total of 30 points.

Note, the instructor may select a different format. Please, refer to study guide.

12. LESSONS

Lesson 1	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Course overview, content, structure, assessment and expectations. Introduction: psychoanalysis in modernism and as method. The social history of art: models and concepts. Formalism and structuralism. Poststructuralism and deconstruction.
Homework/ Assignments	The instructor will assign homework relevant to this lesson.
Reading	Textbook, pp. 14-51.

Lesson 2	
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Meet	In class
Lecture	The postwar Italian context: Burri and Fontana versus Abstract Expressionism. Some pieces at the Maramotti collection. Alberto Burri's environmental work in Gibellina. The economic boom in Europe (Italy and France) and in USA: Parallel researches of Piero Manzoni (Italian) and Robert Rauschenberg (American), American Neo Dada (Rauschenberg and Johns) and French Nouveau Realism, Nouveau Réalisme in France.
Objectives	Display knowledge of different art contexts in Europe and in the USA after WWII and at the beginning of the economic boom of late 1950's- early 1960's. Display understanding of how Europe and the USA reacted differently to the same phenomenon.
Homework/ Assignments	The instructor will assign homework relevant to this lesson.
Reading	Textbook, chapters: 1953, 1958, 1959, 1960a.
Recommended reading	Art in Theory, Piero Manzoni, "Free Dimension", pp. 722-724. Art in Theory, Restnay P., "The New Realists", pp. 724-725.

Lesson 3	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Italian Pop Art versus English and American Pop Art: The 1964 "CIA" Venice Biennale won by Raushenberg, and its effects of Italian artists.
Objectives	Compare the development of contemporary art in different countries and display awareness of the peculiarity of Italian contemporary art. Display knowledge of world-wide art movement such as Pop Art.
Homework/ Assignments	The instructor will assign homework relevant to this lesson.
Visit	Strozzina in Palazzo Strozzi
Reading	Textbook, chapters: 1953; 1956, 1957b, 1959, 1960c, 1964b.
Recommended reading	Art in Theory, Alloway L., "The Arts and the Mass Media", pp. 715-717. Guadagnini W., "Three Steps Ahead" and "The Rise and Fall of Imagery", in <i>Pop Art Italia, 1958 –1968</i> . Pp. 12–32 and 33–50.

Lesson 4	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Introduction to conceptualism: from Duchamp to Yves Klein and Joseph Kosuth. Italy: the extremists yesterday and today: conceptual art of Piero Manzoni and Cesare Pietroiusti. Poesia Visiva.
Objectives	Differentiate between the specific conceptual approach to art inaugurated by Marcel Duchamp and American Conceptual art. Examine a more "poetic" declination of conceptual art in Italy: Poesia Visiva.
Homework/ Assignments	The instructor will assign homework relevant to this lesson.

Reading	Textbook, chapters: 1967a, 1967c, 1968b, 1971.
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Lesson 5	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Introduction to American Minimalism: Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Sol Lewitt, Richard Serra, Donald Judd.
Objectives	Differentiate between minimalism in Italy and in the USA.
Homework/ Assignments	The instructor will assign homework relevant to this lesson.
Reading	Textbook, chapters 1962c, 1965, 1967a, 1969, 1970, p. 609 (The US Art War).

Lesson 6	
Meet	In class
Lecture	American Minimalism: Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Sol Lewitt, Richard Serra, Donald Judd. Italy: Arte Povera. Germano Celant with Mario Merz, Giulio Paolini, Jannis Kounellis, Pascali, Zorio. Michelangelo Pistoletto. Process art and anti-form: Italy and the USA.
Objectives	Explore Italian Arte Povera's influence on American art movements. Examine the meaning of "unconventional" in the artistic panorama of the 1970s.
Visit	Pecci museum in Prato
Homework/ Assignments	The instructor will assign homework relevant to this lesson.
Reading	Textbook, chapters 1964a, 1967b. Review all reading assigned so far in view of the mid-term exam.

Lesson 7	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Mid-term exam

Lesson 8	
Lecture	Academic break

Lesson 9	
Meet	In class

Lecture	American and Italian Land Art: when artistic gestures are prevented by a factual reality. Environmental Art in the USA and Arte Ambientale Italy: when language doesn't translate meaning.
Objectives	Assess the relation between a country's geographical characteristics and the development of Land Art. Discuss the differences in meaning of the expressions Environmental Art and the Italian translation "Arte Ambientale" (Crispolti, Venice Biennale, 1972).
Homework/ Assignments	The instructor will assign homework relevant to this lesson.
Reading	Textbook, chapters 1967a, 1970.
Recommended viewing	"Christo in Paris" and "Running Fence" on the anthology: Christo and Jeanne-Claude, A Maysles Films Production, 1974.

Lesson 10	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Critical post-modernism: Barbara Kruger, Cindy Sherman and the crisis and critic of authorship.
Objectives	Display knowledge of key issues related to post-modernism in Italy and elsewhere.
Visit	Galleria Il Ponte
Homework/ Assignments	The instructor will assign homework relevant to this lesson.
Reading	Textbook, chapters: 1975, 1976, 1977, 1980, 1984a, 1993a.

Lesson 11	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Aesthetic post-modernism and neo-eclecticisms: Italian Trans-avanguardia. German New Wilds and the American "Boonies".
Objectives	Display understanding of international influences on the Italian artistic landscape and vice versa.
Homework/ Assignments	The instructor will assign homework relevant to this lesson.
Reading	Textbook, chapters 1980, 1984a, 1993a.

Lesson 12	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Performance and body art: the body of the artist – from Klein to Abramovic and Matthew Barney. Italy: recent performances, from Beecroft, to Vascellari and Kinkaleri. Video art: from Nam June Paik to Daniele Puppi.

Objective	Display knowledge of key issues related to post-modernism in Italy and elsewhere.
Homework/ Assignments	The instructor will assign homework relevant to this lesson.
Reading	Textbook, chapters 1961, 1962a, 1962b, (optional), 1973, 1974, 1975, 1998.
Recommended reading	Art in Theory, Vergine L., from "The Body as Language", pp. 906-910. Goldberg Rose Lee, Performance Art. From Futurism to the Present, Thames & Hudson, 2001, selected paragraphs from p. 121 to 223.

Lesson 13	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Contemporary Italian artists: Maurizio Cattelan, Vanessa Beecroft, Francesco Vezzoli.
Objectives	Display knowledge of contemporary Italian art system and the way worldwide market influences it.
Homework/ Assignments	The instructor will assign homework relevant to this lesson.
Reading	Review all reading assigned so far in view of the final exam.

Lesson 14	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Students' presentations and/or revision in view of final exam.
Homework/ Assignments	The instructor will assign homework relevant to this lesson.
Visit	Museo Novecento
Reading	Review all reading assigned so far in view of the final exam.

Lesson 15	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Final exam