Module Title | Art History: An Introduction
Module Code | FFAH002S4ACB
Programme | Cert HE History of Art
Credits/Level | 15 credits at Level 4
Class Times | Mondays 6pm-8pm
First Class | 30 Sept - 9 Dec 2019 and 13 Jan - 23 Mar 2020
Terms Dates | 30 Sept - 13 Dec 2019 and 13 Jan to 27 Mar 2020
Taught By | Daphne Hunter

Module Description
The module begins by focusing closely on a wide range of artworks, then moves to fostering skills in thinking, writing, and talking about what you see. Different ways of approaching art are explored, such as considering the status of the artist, the significance of patronage and the market, social and historical contexts for particular artworks, and the varied forms of art-historical writing.

The course is required for those wanting to complete the Certificate in Higher Education but is also recommended for those coming to art history for the first time. Additionally, it will be of interest to and valuable for those wishing to understand the issues and debates central to art history, both in the past and today.

Module Content
The module is taught in five blocks, each devoted to a different theme or approach. Blocks 1, 2, 3, and 5 are the same every year and in each occurrence of the module, but flexibility is introduced to block 4, where individual lecturers develop the ideas introduced early in the module according to their own chosen theme. There is no half-term break.

Greater details about each block, together with reading lists and coursework information will be provided in class. The following is a framework setting out the main issues and learning objectives.

Block 1: Visual and Contextual Analysis (Weeks 1-6)
The first block is the longest, because it aims to introduce both essential study skills, and the essence of a critical approach to visual and verbal material. Examples of art objects – paintings, sculptures, prints, photographs or buildings will be drawn from different periods and different media – to demonstrate how an analytical approach to art objects yields different types or information about art itself and its histories. Students will be encouraged to think about what
they bring to the art of looking, how they can put their looking into words, what affects the way art is written about, and how texts are read and interpreted.

**Block 2: The Artist (Weeks 7-9)**
Where the first block analysed works of art, the second considers how conceptions of ‘the artist’ affects the way art is understood. Looking at changes in the education, training and working processes of artists, it will also focus on why aspects of their practice such as originality, skills, craftsmanship or drawing have been very differently valued at different moments in history.

**Block 3: Patronage and the Consumption of Art (Weeks 10-12)**
Creating art has rarely been easy or even possible without patronage, sponsorship or access to a market. This block looks at the social and economic conditions under which art is produced. It will also consider ways art reaches its audience and is valued: through exhibitions, collections, criticism, and prizes.

**Block 4: Special Subject (Weeks 13-17)**
The contents of this block will vary from class to class, and will be based on themes selected by the lecturer. Who will provide you with further information and reading. The purpose of block 4 is two-fold: to develop the student’s sense of history and to explore the interaction between art and its audiences.

**Block 5: Thinking About the History of Art (Weeks 18-22)**
The aim of this block is to examine the assumptions and critical framework of different approaches to art history. This will include an introduction to sources and materials of history and close reading of specific texts. Classes will look at how the visual arts have been discussed in terms of social and cultural history, style and formalism, and the biography of artists, and also the variety of new alternative approaches developed in the 1980s, which came to be known as the New Art History.

**Taster Images**

*Giotto, The Birth of the Virgin, 1304-6, detail from the Arena Chapel, Padua.*
Coursework and Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessed Component</th>
<th>Basic Requirements/Word Count</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual Analysis Exercise</td>
<td>1,000 words</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source Critique</td>
<td>1,500 words</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>2,500 words</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Assignment 1: Visual Analysis Exercise**
  You will be asked to look carefully at a particular work of art and describe in detail what you see, using the language and the techniques introduced in the first block. If you would like to do this exercise as an oral presentation, accompanied by a short report, please discuss with the lecturer.
• **Assignment 2:** Source Critique  
The literature on art ranges from scholarly studies, to web databases, to coffee table books, and labels in museums, and more. This exercise encourages you to look closely at one or more sources on a given topic, and to ask questions about them which will help you to determine whether they are useful and valid for academic purposes. This assignment can serve as a follow-up to assignment 1, research for assignment 3, or as an independent research exercise. As above, if you would like to do this exercise as an oral presentation, accompanied by a short report, please discuss with the lecturer.

• **Assignment 3** Essay  
A study with references and bibliography, on one of the topics discussed on the course. Here you will be drawing on the visual analysis and source evaluation skills learned earlier in the course to research and write an academic essay.

**Key Readings**  
*Students are advised not to purchase extensively from the list prior to ensuring that their chosen module will be running.*


**Teaching and Learning Methods**  
Teaching on our modules is varied and interactive. It may include seminars, short lectures, group work, discussion, and student presentations. Active student participation is encouraged in all our classes. Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate students with disabilities.

**Aims**  
Module aims describe the knowledge and skills that the module seeks to advance.

This module aims to:
- Develop students’ knowledge and understanding of the history of art.
- Provide students with first-hand experience of art objects.
- Develop students’ critical analysis and judgement in relation to the subject.
- Provide students with experience of close textual analysis of different kinds of relevant writing.
- Demonstrate the importance of context and the relationship of art history to other disciplines such as literature, social history, film and visual media, and the history of ideas.
- Develop academic study and writing skills.

Outcomes
Learning outcomes are directly linked to the aims set out above. They describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of the module.

By the end of this module, you should be able to:
- Begin to engage with the concepts, values and debates that inform the study and practice of the history of art, including an awareness of the limitations and partiality of all historical knowledge.
- Analyse, describe and interpret objects, images, buildings and artefacts closely and systematically.
- Show understanding of the objects, contexts and issues relevant to two or more specific areas of the history of art.
- Select relevant evidence from the wide range of possible types of evidence used in the history of art and apply it to the examination of art historical issues and problems.
- Complete all coursework and assessment requirements.

©Birkbeck, University of London