ART 428: 20th Century Art History

Spring 2009, T Th 11-12:15, 208 Powell

Instructor: Prof. Roann Barris
Office: 213 Powell; 831-6001

HRS: W 11-3; T H 12:30-1:30; T 4 - 5; M F by appt.
email: rbarris@radford.edu

Description:
This course is an examination of the many exciting changes which have taken place in the nature of art in the 20th century and to correlate these changes with social and historical developments. In contrast to a survey course, we will examine key issues in depth, giving more attention to formative issues at the beginning of the century and culminating in a less intensive examination of changes at the end of the century. An equally important goal of this class is to gain experience in the skills necessary to evaluate and think critically about art and the interpretations which others have made of art.

Textbooks
2. Class web site

A note on the readings: always read the work I put on the website – it is as important as the readings from the textbook. In some respects, the web site is your real text; Varieties of Modernism is another and often provocative point of view. There will also be additional readings on reserve in the library or available through electronic versions.

Goals and Objectives:
• to develop and demonstrate visual and analytic familiarity with significant movements, artists, and ideas of the 20th century
• to recognize the roles of gender, economic systems, and politics in both the creation and reception of art
• goal for art majors: to begin the never-ending process of situating yourself in the history of art by examining historical influences and their relevance to your goals
• goal for everyone: engage in independent exploration of a provocative issue, artist or work of art in terms of style and ideas and present your findings in a coherent and convincing paper

Web Sources:
class web site: www.radford.edu/rbarris (Link to the page for ART428)
ARTSTOR: www.artstor.org [class folder: ART428SPR2009; password: art428spr2009]
Directions for using artstor are included later in the syllabus.
Youtube provides several short videos explaining the features of Artstor and showing you how to register. Two useful links follow:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bP0VzhbeqC4
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAlQsiINIAA
WEEKLY TOPIC OUTLINE

Wk I. An introduction to modernism
• Key issues and artists at the end of the 19th century;
• Questions to ask about modernism; questions to ask about movements

Varieties: read the introduction and chapter 1, focus on questions, concepts, and primary “argument” of text

Wk II - III. Early 20th century developments: poles of abstraction
• decorative and expressionistic vs the focus on language and representation
• overview of movements and framework for comparison: expressionism, cubism, futurism
• different “readings” and interpretations of cubism
• Delaunay’s “orphic” cubism


IV - V. Reframing cubism and reframing apocalypse
• Italian futurism: the “anti”-cubism?
• German expressionism: Kirchner and die Brücke (Bridge)
• when expressive and expressionism are not the same: Matisse

Reserve: futurist manifestos in Mary Ann Caws, ed., Manifesto: A Century of Isms; pp 172-189; 213-216
Excerpt from the Brücke manifesto; Worringer: excerpt from Abstraction and Empathy, and Matisse, “Notes of a Painter,” in Art in Theory, 65-75.

V - VI: From pictures of things to pictures of nothing
• the “other” expressionism: Kandinsky and the Blaue Reiter (blue rider)
• absolute abstraction and the 4th dimension (Mondrian and Malevich)

Reserve: Kandinsky, Excerpts from Concerning the Spiritual in Art, and the Cologne lecture, in Art in Theory, 82-93
Franz Marc: 275-277, in Manifesto
Mondrian (neo-plasticism) and Malevich (suprematism), excerpts in Art in Theory, 289-298 and 387-393

VII - VIII. Order, Anti-Order, and the Art of Revolution
• Russian constructivism: Art as revolution
• From Dada to Surrealism: questioning the source, function and meaning of art
Reserve: excerpts from Barris, “Theatrical Constructivism and the Trial of the Spectator”
Dada Manifestos, in Manifesto, 290-309.

VIII - IX: Surrealism’s Exquisite Corpse
• Surrealism and the role of irrational desire
• other varieties of surrealism: magic realism; surrealists who were women
• Matisse and Picasso in the 1920s and 30s

Reserve: Breton, Surrealism and Painting; the 2nd Surrealist manifesto, 457-467, Art in Theory; Varieties, chapter 2

IX: Social and Socialist Realisms in the 1930s
• the new objectivity: another response to Dada
• totalitarian and democratic realism

Varieties: chapter 3

X - XI: World War II and the Crisis of Art
• from surrealism to American abstract expressionism
• the Greenberg/Rosenberg debate and the meaning of “action” painting

Varieties: chapter 4 and 5

XII - XIV: “Responses” to Abstract Expressionism
• European existentialism and the crisis of the figure
• “art brut” or the art of madmen
• the return of realism
• the commodification of art, objects and culture

Varieties: chapter 12 (European responses)
Varieties: chapter 6 and 9 (American responses)
Summary of Electronic Reserve Readings

Reserve readings wk II - III:

Reserve readings wk IV - V:
Futurist manifestos in Mary Ann Caws, ed., *Manifesto: A Century of Isms*; pp 172-189; 213-216
Excerpt from the Brücke manifesto; Worringer: excerpt from *Abstraction and Empathy*, and Matisse, “Notes of a Painter,” all in *Art in Theory*, 65-75.

Reserve readings wk V - VI:
Kandinsky, Excerpts from *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, and Kandinsky, the “Cologne lecture,” in *Art in Theory*, 82-93
Franz Marc: “Aphorisms” and “Der Blaue Reiter,” in *Manifesto*, 275-277

Reserve readings VII-VIII:
Dada Manifestos, in *Manifesto*, 290-309.

Reserve readings wk VIII-IX:
Breton, *Surrealism and Painting*; the 2nd Surrealist manifesto, in *Art in Theory*; 457-467

Reserve readings X - XI:

Books on reserve (sources of above readings):
Requirements:

Attendance and Participation:
Attendance is expected and necessary since lectures and reading material will often present opposing points of view. Participation is also expected, and is more than simply showing up for class. Some of your assignments will not be graded but not doing them will result in the loss of “a/p” points. Likewise, I will expect you to be prepared for discussion by having read the assigned materials before they are discussed in class.

Noticeable lateness, leaving early, or engaging in non-class related activities (ie, cell phone, text messaging, reading unrelated material are examples of inappropriate behavior. If they take place and persist, I will ask you to leave and count it as an absence. Although I generally allow the use of laptops in 400-level classes, you must sign an agreement with me before you can use it in class.

More than 4 absences without legitimate documentation of truly extenuating circumstances will result in an automatic F.

Graded Activities:
I. 5 identification quizzes:
These will be short, probably lasting no longer than 15 minutes, and will consist of accurate identification of art works seen and discussed in class. They may also include short answer questions about the readings and art works. You will not have study guides for quizzes and there will be no make-ups. (20 points each = 100)

II. 2 take-home essays:
Being able to organize your thoughts and to develop a convincing argument related to a conceptual question is an important goal of college. Rather than asking you to do this in the form of essay questions on exams, I will give you specific questions to answer at home. They will require you to make use of material from class as well as from the readings. Your answers should be written in Microsoft Word (either 2003 or 2007), should have a minimum word count of 1500 words (excluding your name; repetition of the question, if you’re inclined to do that; footnotes, if used; and headers, if used) and submitted to me as an attachment to an email before class meeting on the due date. Although late work will be accepted, your grade will be lowered 10 points/daily. Turning in an essay AFTER class will count as one day late. “Day 2" will begin at midnight. (100 points each = 200)

III. TERM PAPER OR ARTISTIC POLYLOGUE:

1. TERM PAPER:
The best approach to a term paper for this type of course is usually to choose an artist or specific work of art which interests you. If you focus on a specific artist, you should address a particular question or issue raised by that artist’s work. If you choose a particular work, the best approach is usually one which explores the various interpretations given that work and argues why one is more convincing or better than another. Papers on movements and styles ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE. You might, however, ask a question about a movement and use that as your means of examining a specific style. Since almost everyone in this class is an art major, I
would not be surprised if you have already identified artists of particular personal interest. I am open to papers which involve the reconstruction of another artist’s work in order to understand the technique used by that artist, its implications for the course of 20th century art, and its implications for your own work. Note that doing this still requires a written research paper, but part of your research is experiential and that experience should be discussed in your paper.

Types of Term Papers:
A. The Descriptive or Expository paper: this paper chooses a position which you will prove or substantiate. The typical topic for a paper like this is usually an investigation of some theme in the work of the artist (ex.: Although the CoBrA artists did not personally experience the Holocaust, the theme of the Holocaust unites their works through style and content). The general outline for this type of paper is a statement of the thesis with some description of the subject, enumeration of the key points that are necessary to prove your thesis, followed by the development of these points. The body of the paper therefore develops and demonstrates the validity of each point.
For a paper about a group of artists (such as the example I gave above), this would include examples of works of art for each point. If your topic concerns the demonstration of a particular idea in the work of one artist, your points to be developed would show how this idea is found in a body of work. If your topic is the detailed analysis of a single work, your thesis statement becomes a statement about the interpretation of the painting and your “points of proof” become the supporting “data” for your interpretation.

B. Argumentative Paper: As the title suggests, this paper is based on your establishment of a point of view which is contrary to that of someone else. [Example: Prof. Barris (or someone else: the influential critic Clement Greenberg) suggested that Alex Katz’s contributions to modernism are insignificant whereas I think they respond to a comparable development in fiction writing and are important because they demonstrate the widespread influence of a prevailing cultural trend in the 1960s.] In some respects, this paper uses a comparison format although you probably want to lay out the essence of each position at the beginning. The development of this paper then breaks down the two arguments into key points and shows how your position refutes the other position. To make this a convincing paper, you need to be able to support your own position with ideas from other sources (in other words, your point of view must be based on research. It’s not enough to say: “I think this is wrong”).

2. ARTISTIC POLYLOGUE
In this term paper, you are the subject. This is a paper which asks you to look at your art the way you would look at another artist’s and to ask yourself: who and what are the influences on this art? Why were they chosen? How does this work reconceptualize the sources we identify? And because you are the subject, you can also ask another question: What did this artist deliberately choose to reject? Sometimes, the decision not to follow a path is as important as the decision to go somewhere else. This is comparable to the expository paper described above.
The paper does require research, although the goal of your research is a little different. You
don’t need to uncover your background (you already lived it) but you do need to ask questions about the influences which have affected your art. Why those artists and styles? Why those subjects? What that medium?

Your paper should include examples of the work you identify as your influences and you should perform some comparisons between your own work and the models you’ve chosen. These comparisons will also reveal the ways in which you establish your unique identity and make your art more than an imitation of someone else’s.

Whether you choose a “traditional” term paper or the polylogue, it should be 7-8 pages in length, not including pictures, bibliography, title page, or other attachments. Longer is acceptable; shorter is not. Because font sizes vary, the required word count is 2800 ± 100, not including notes, bibliography, title page, etc. Specific directions for general term paper formats and documentation using the Chicago style, which is required, will be posted on the web site.

You must use academic journal and book sources in your bibliography. Books that CANNOT be used as sources include: survey textbooks; art appreciation textbooks; encyclopedias; the Time Life series; books written for adolescents or high school students or younger. Web sites that CANNOT be used include: Wikipedia, Encarta, and About: art history. Magazine that CANNOT be used include Life, Newsweek, National Geographic, other comparable magazines, and newspapers.

REQUIREMENTS FOR BOTH PROJECTS
1– regardless of which project you choose, you must make an appointment to discuss your project with me before you complete it. Submit your plan to me on paper or by email with a suggested date and time for a meeting. [required: no later than FEB 26]
2 –You must submit a complete bibliography for your paper; it will be graded for acceptability of sources, relevance of sources, and correct use of Chicago style. (100 points); [due: MAR 31 ]
3 – Prepare an outline or rough draft. Present preliminary ideas in small groups in class [required: APR 14]
4 – write a better draft and ask someone in class to read it and critique it. Ask someone else to proof it for grammatical and spelling errors. [this is optional but strongly recommended]
5 – turn in complete project no later than May 4, 5 pm. Final papers will NOT be accepted by email. Late papers (beginning at 5:01 pm) will be docked 50 points daily.

Grading Criteria:
1) thoughtful and creative synthesis of material covered in class with research and original thinking
2) all steps (whether graded or not graded) done thoughtfully and on time; feedback is used for more than grammatical changes
3) correct formatting used for entire paper; work demonstrates care and concern; writing does more than summarize: it synthesizes intellectual critique with the ability to extract key ideas from others’ work and to organize these ideas to develop a theme (200 points for the term project)
IV. FINAL EXAM: GROUP DISCUSSION EXAM – you will know your assigned group one week before the exam in order to arrange to study together. You will be allowed to bring notes in whatever form you choose. You will be able to work on your personal computers and submit one complete exam to me by email. I will provide a study guide for the final based on key art works, readings, and lecture material. (200 points)

V. ARTSTOR IMAGE GROUPS AND OTHER CLASS ACTIVITIES
Artstor is our digital library. Generally, you will be responsible for preparing your own study units. This will have three benefits: first, you will become familiar with searching techniques in artstor; second, you will be able to see for yourself the multiple views that are often included for a single work and decide which one is the most informative for your purposes. The third benefit is that you will be more actively involved in creating your own image groups. I will give you image lists for each unit.
As noted in other parts of the syllabus, there will be ungraded in-class and out-of-class writing assignments. In all cases (image group creation and writing assignments), I will expect you to be accountable for the work. If it is not done, you will lose points from your class participation pool.

RESOURCES:

Using the Class Web Site
My home page is: http://www.radford.edu/rbarris
On that page, you can find a link for the ART428 "home" page. If you’re working from your own computer, you can create a bookmark. This is where you will find the web readings I prepare for this class. Some of them will be illustrated; some of them will have a link to an illustration image group which you will find in Artstor.

Using ARTstor
Artstor is an image library to which Radford University subscribes. For a class like this, I rely heavily on the images in Artstor, along with images I’ve scanned or photographed myself. Whenever possible, I will upload my own images to Artstor in order to let you access them as well. As the syllabus states, rather than preparing image groups for you, I will give you lists of images and ask you to make your own image groups and save them in your personal work folder for this class. We’ll go over the process for doing this in class but basic facts for using Artstor are included below. You may have used it already, in which case you’re already registered. You do not need to register again, but you do need to sign up for the class folder for ART428.

For new users: VERY IMPORTANT!!! The first time you use Artstor, you must either be on campus or go to the artstor site by using the Radford library link. Once you have a log-in and password, you can work from home for 4 months without working on a campus computer. Registration for Artstor is simple: Hit the “go” button to enter the digital library. A new screen opens up with the Log In box in exactly the same place as the Enter box had been on the previous screen. To register, you enter your email, the password you want to use, and hit submit. After you register, whenever you use Artstor you will have to log in with the same information. Although you can do an image search without logging in, you will not be able to save anything and you will not be able to access the class folder.
All users: Make sure you allow pop-ups for this site. If you change computers when working, you will have set this feature on each computer you use. Otherwise, it will not work.

REGISTER FOR THE COURSE FOLDER. After you register for Artstor, you must register for the class folder. (This is not the same thing as RU course registration!) My course folders are password protected. Go to the FIND button at the top of the page, hit “unlock password protected folder” and follow the directions. The folder for this class is called: ART428SPR2009. It will not show up until you “unlock” the folder with this password: art428spr2009

After you unlock the folder, it will always show up in your menu of folders and image groups. Whenever I add an image group to the folder, you will be able to see it and open it. I generally add the image group for each topic before we cover it in class. This enables you to print out thumbnails of the images and keep them with you in class. The print options can be accessed under the SHARE button at the top of the page. If you need help with any of this, please come to my office. I’ll be happy to help you with it and show you how it works.

Due Dates and Personal Grading Chart (USE THIS TO KEEP TRACK OF YOUR GRADES – I will not provide grade updates or grade information through email):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points (ideal)</th>
<th>Points (actual)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 quizzes</td>
<td>wks 3, 5, 7, 9, 11</td>
<td>20 @ 5 = 100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>term project proposal and meeting</td>
<td>no later than Feb 26</td>
<td>[loss of 25 points if not done]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>essay 1</td>
<td>Mar 5, beginning of class</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>term project bibliography</td>
<td>Mar 31</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>outline or draft ready for presentation</td>
<td>Apr 14</td>
<td>[loss of 25 points if not done]</td>
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<tr>
<td>last day to withdraw and receive W</td>
<td>Apr 14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>essay 2</td>
<td>Apr 21, beginning of class</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Turn in term project</td>
<td>May 4, by 5 p.m.</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>May 7, 8 a.m., 208 PO</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation pool</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>900</td>
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A ≥ 810; B ≥ 720; C ≥ 630; D ≥ 540; F < 540
Classroom Contract

1. **Classroom behavior.**
The rules for class conduct are based on the principle of being considerate of others and strategies to enhance learning. Arrive on time, and be prepared to begin class when it is time for class to start. Turn off your cell, put it away and do not text during class. Note that I do not allow laptop use in large survey classes. No taping or recording of lectures in any format is allowed without prior permission. Unless it is an absolute and dire emergency, do not leave the room when class has started.

2. **Contacting me by email:**
When you send me an email, approach your email as a formal letter, think before you write, and reread it before you send it. I try to respond to all emails **IF** they include my name, are written thoughtfully, and ask a question which can be answered. I do not discuss grades in email and will not answer any questions about grades unless you come and see me in person.

3. **Academic Honesty**
Students are expected to abide by the Radford University Honor Code in this and all your classes. This includes the avoidance of plagiarism on all writing assignments. If plagiarism is suspected, I will give you a chance to establish your innocence. If you can’t, you will receive an F for that assignment.

4. **Assistance for Students with Disabilities:**
If you have a learning disability recognized by the Disabled Student Services Office of Radford University, you should advise me of the nature of your disability during the first week of the semester. **Other problems:** a lot of things happen to us and we can’t always cope with them as well as we’d like. You may not want to confide your personal life problems in me, but if something is impacting your performance, you should find a way to let me know; ideally, we’ll be able to work out a solution. At the same time, recognize that you have choices to make and a university education does make demands. Sometimes the right choice is knowing when you can’t do something.

5. **Academic Freedom: from the Radford University Handbook:**
Faculty and students “have the right to express their views without fear of censorship or penalty. Such freedom must apply both to teaching and research and includes not only the rights of a teacher in teaching but the rights of a student in learning.”

Education is a two-way venture. I do my best to prepare for class, to meet your learning needs, and to engage you in the material. What I can’t do is learn it for you. Read the syllabus, come to class, turn in your work, and take responsibility for the quality of your work and your learning. A last note: check this out for some good advice, courtesy of Profs. Franck and Brown: [http://mfranck.asp.radford.edu/images/35%20suggestions.pdf](http://mfranck.asp.radford.edu/images/35%20suggestions.pdf)

*I have read the classroom contract and syllabus and agree to do my best to follow the procedures and expectations listed. Sign below and keep this form in your notebook.*

*Signature and date:________________________________________________________