Course number: ART 406A

Course Title: Art Criticism: Theory and Practice

Winter Semester 2024

Dr. Shatarupa Thakurta Roy and Dr. Rajarshi Sengupta

3L-0T-0P-0A (9 credits)

Objective of the course: Lecture topics are aimed at refinement of visual literacy to improve visual communication skills by introducing various methods and techniques of critical art appreciation. Students explore art genres, decision-making of the artists and their historical context in a focused way and take up applied projects related to critical writing activities. This is to cultivate a knack for critical thinking among the students that will last with them a lifetime not just as a hobby but also as a rare professional skill.

Specialized Infrastructure requirement: A good projection facility and audio system to display audio-visual material in the classroom. The lectures are supported with visual references from authentic sources like original artworks, books, prints and digital photographic images. The practice sessions do not include long distance travel and therefore do not require extra infrastructural support except for basic art materials.

Mode of Assessment: Assignment on professional and original critical review writing, recognizing art works, genre and art style. Written test.

Course content: The course content includes historical outline, philosophy, and aesthetics in the purview of art as visual cultural phenomena. The course introduces the students with methods of critical art appreciation theory by guiding them to use three layered analysis technique to write professional art-reviews. It is supported by an overview of the nature of methodological approach in art criticism referring John Dewey, Barkan, Feldman, Jack Hobbs, Solomon’s Phenomenological Model of Criticism, and Ducasse’s Language of feeling, Roland Barthes’ structuralist approach, Linda Nochlin’s take on gender discrimination in art history, T. J. Clark’s social history of art, Abanindranth Tagore’s theory of Indian aesthetics

TOPIC ONE: READING IMAGES

Visual Expression: Images speak

Visual construct: Visual hierarchy (Focal emphasis in composition, composition and hierarchy in Indian sculpture and painting)

What is Art in a visual design? Form and Content to determine ‘Visual Style in Art’

Elements and principles of Art: A revision (Creative Process: looking, thinking and doing)

Illusion of Space, Rhythmic coherence, Harmony in colour combination, Line, Shape

Social history and contextual analysis of art

Culture and its impact on reading and appreciating art

TOPIC TWO: ART AS EVIDENCE

Image as record: Historical outline of world art

Characteristics of Art movements: Primitive, ancient, art of middle age, art of

dark age, classicism, mannerism, renaissance, Avant-Grade,

Modernism, Postmodernism

Fragmentary objects (pottery, textile, stone), evidence and historical documentation

Art in India: Sculpture, painting and architecture as evidence and beyond

Suppressed histories of women artists

TOPIC THREE: ART AS PROPAGANDA

Victory monuments, War narratives, Ancestors’ portraiture

Patronage and its absence in Art: Ancient Egypt and Assyria, Greco-Roman style, Medici Family, Early Christian Art, Bayeux tapestry, Folk and Minor Art

Patronage of medieval temples in India, miniature paintings and colonial princely portraits

Posters and calendar images from the Indian bazaars

TOPIC FOUR: VISUAL ANALYSIS

Introduction to methodological approach in art criticism, Kant’s aesthetic theory, Panofsky’s iconography and iconology, Feldman’s four-step method

The tools of art criticism

Types of art criticism: Solomon J. Solomon’s phenomenological model, John Dewey’s art as experience, Ducasse’s language of feeling

Kinds of critical judgment: Roland Barthes’ structuralist approach

Barkan, Jack Hobbs

Aesthetics: Six Limbs of Indian Art, Bhava and Rasa (Bharata’s Natyashastra, Vatsayana, Abhinavagupta, Hsieh Ho) Charvak, Abanindranath Tagore’s theory of Indian Aesthetics, Six Canons of Far Eastern Art

**End Semester Examination on full syllabus (Full Marks 40)**

**Evaluation**

Quiz 1- 10

Mid Sem- 30

Quiz 2-10

End Sem - 40

Attendance - 10

**Attendance**: **Full Marks 10**

Students are expected to attend each class. Experience demonstrates that regular attendance enhances academic success.

However, the marking policy is as follows:

100-90%=10

89-80%= 9

79-70%=8

Below 70%=5

Below 50%=0

**Class presentations are based on the following books,**

1. Varieties of visual experience: Art as image and idea, [Edmund Burke Feldman](https://www.amazon.com/Edmund-Burke-Feldman/e/B001HD1ZTO/ref=dp_byline_cont_book_1)
2. Design Basics, [David A. Lauer](https://www.google.co.in/search?tbo=p&tbm=bks&q=inauthor:%22David+A.+Lauer%22)

**References:**

1. Art in theory: Charles Harrison & Paul Wood

2. Selected essays from Moving Focus, The living tradition and Magic of Making by

K.G.Subramanyan

3. Berger, J. *Ways of Seeing* Pan 1972, *About Looking*

4. Carrier, D. *Artwriting* Amherst University of Massachusetts Press 1987

5. Carrier, D*. Principles of Art History Writing* University Park; the Pennsylvania State

University Press 1991

6. Elizabeth Prettejohn, Beauty and Art: 1750-2000

7. Learning to Look at Paintings, Mary Acton

8. The Books that Shaped Art History: Richard Shone and John-Paul Stonard

9. E.H. Gombrich, Art and Illusion

10. Artworld Prestige: Arguing Cultural Value, Timothy Van Laar - Leonard Diepeveen

**Grading Policy**

Above Course Average A\*, A, B+, B, C+

Below Course Average C and Lower Grades

Extra text and reference material:

1. Art in theory: Charles Harrison & Paul Wood

2. Selected essays from Moving Focus, The living tradition and Magic of Making by

K.G.Subramanyan

3. Berger, J. Ways of Seeing Pan 1972, About Looking

4. Carrier, D. Artwriting Amherst University of Massachusetts Press 1987

5. Carrier, D. Principles of Art History Writing University Park; the Pennsylvania State

University Press 1991

6. Elizabeth Prettejohn, Beauty and Art: 1750-2000

7. Learning to Look at Paintings, Mary Acton

8. The Books that Shaped Art History: Richard Shone and John-Paul Stonard

9. E.H. Gombrich, Art and Illusion

10. Artworld Prestige: Arguing Cultural Value, Timothy Van Laar - Leonard Diepeveen