

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND ART HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

ARH 339P/AMS 325: PAINTING IN THE UNITED STATES 1860-1913
SPRING 2019

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prefer mail via Canvas; ARH 339P in subject line

Office: DFA 2.116
Office Hours: T 1:45-2:45, Th 2:30-3:30
& by appt.

Class times: TTh 3:30-4:45 (DFA 2.204)

The syllabus is your contract with me. Read it carefully.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers a selective examination of American painting during the half century from the Civil War to the infamous New York exhibition of modern art known as the Armory Show. During that period, the United States was transformed from an agrarian nation to the world's leading industrial power. Against this background, we will examine such issues as the demand of America's moneyed elite for trappings of European high culture and its effect on native artists, the increasing pressure on artists to gain European training and experience, the dialogue between commerce and aestheticism, the professional challenges faced by women artists, and the valorization of masculinity in what came to be seen as a distinctly American aesthetic. Particular emphasis will be given to Winslow Homer, Thomas Eakins, John Singer Sargent, James McNeill Whistler, and Mary Cassatt.

A successful class depends on your active participation as we engage in collective discussion of paintings and assigned readings. At times, you'll work in small groups to assess the merits of particular scholarly and interpretive perspectives (including your own), which you will then collectively present, engaging in reasoned debate with members of other groups. My aim is to help you to expand your capacity to analyze both visual and written materials, skills of much wider application than knowing artists' names, dates, and other circumscribed facts. Rather than rushing through material to achieve any illusion of survey comprehensiveness, we'll take our time in class; the goal is not mere breadth but depth and quality of knowledge.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS CREDIT (VAPA)

This course fulfills the visual and performing arts component of the university core curriculum, addressing four core objectives established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board: communication skills, critical thinking skills, teamwork, and social responsibility.

CANVAS SET UP

Announcements – check regularly

Home/Syllabus – syllabus & class schedule **READ!** + course summary (due dates in order)

Assignments – prompts for all graded work

Modules – class schedule, various writing guidelines

People – all class members & teams once constituted

Files – all readings (those in specific assignments are linked in those rubrics)

READINGS

Much has been written about American art of the period, but no single text adequately covers the range of material we'll engage this semester or offers a sufficiently rich basis for discussion. Therefore, readings comprise primary sources and essays from periodicals, books, and exhibition catalogues—available online through Canvas, UTCat, free Google eBooks, or on reserve in FAL.

I strongly recommend acquisition of Sylvan Barnet's *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*, useful beyond its nominal subject. The book has been ordered for this class by the Co-op, but you may use any relatively recent edition you can find. Beyond its guidance on writing of papers (helpful for anyone taking humanities courses), Barnet offers tips for organizing your thoughts about art in ways generally appropriate to all of your work in this class, including exam essay composition. Henry M. Sayre's *Writing About Art* (which I have not ordered) addresses the subject at a somewhat more rudimentary level, but is also excellent and recommended if you feel at all insecure about visual analysis. You can find copies around town or from online sellers.

I also expect you to use a superb and extensive online writing resource, which the author has offered for fair use: "Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students," by Patrick Rael, Bowdoin College <http://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/>

ASSIGNMENTS (30%)

To promote class discussion and to ensure that readings are completed with care and on time, you'll have three assignments, each with detailed guidelines.

- Assignment 1 takes you into the Blanton Museum for a formal analysis of a landscape painting
- Assignment 2 requires you to grapple with two pieces of 19th-century art criticism, one of which is by Henry James (the soon-to-be famous novelist)
- Assignment 3 involves analysis of different scholarly essays about the same painting

SHORT PAPER (20%)

This assignment, designed to tap your creativity as well as exercise your analytical skill, asks you to take the point of view of one 19th-century painter commenting on the work of a fellow painter, whose work you already know. You'll be using a famously vivid primary source to gain a sense of the artist-critic and you'll also be able to study his work in DASE.

TEAMWORK (15%)

In fulfillment of university requirements, we'll have several occasions for structured teamwork.

- Teamwork 1 is designed to help you recognize how well you understand what you hear
- Teamwork 2 asks you to pose questions about a painting you haven't seen, by an artist you know, and develop a thesis about it (in-class only)
- Teamwork 3 addresses issues of gender, with talking points developed around pairs of slides and founded on readings from a pair of secondary sources.

LATE WORK

If you miss an assignment due date, it is imperative that you contact me as soon as possible with a clear reason. I accept late work at my discretion and reserve the right to deduct points depending on circumstances.

EXAMS (35%)

You'll have two prompt-driven essay exams, on Thursday, March 14 and Thursday, May 9. Success depends on synthesizing what you've learned, not on regurgitation of memorized facts.

All visual material on the exams will be drawn from the DASE image databank I've put together. You'll need to identify the slides by artist, title, and date; but, really, that is the least of it. I strongly advise you to regularly review your notes from class and readings while studying the images.

I do not intend to give make-up exams. If you are ill or have a genuine emergency at the last minute, you must contact me by email **before** the exam to be missed if you expect any concession (to be determined). Leave a phone number where I can reach you. An unexcused or insufficiently explained absence will result in a **0** grade on a missed exam.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPEAKING IN CLASS

You'll have many opportunities to speak in class. I realize that some students do so more easily than others (though not necessarily better), so I don't want to quantify participation. However, at the end of the semester, students who stand out for obvious resistance to participating in class may receive a deduction of 5 points on their final grade, *regardless of other grades*. If you speak a lot, I may ask you to hold back to let others contribute, which won't happen if the same people talk (if you are on my radar as a participant, don't worry). **And note:** quality of participation counts more than quantity. "Quality" does not mean being "right"; it means being thoughtful and willing to stretch your thinking, especially when asked to do so. In other words, we are going to engage in dialogue.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS CONDUCT

Arrive on time! I take attendance starting the second week, at least initially by giving you a notecard and a short prompt (this could happen at any point in the class, so be on time and don't leave early). These cards help me gauge your understanding of class discussions and readings.

If you reach 4 absences (15% of class meetings) during the semester, you'll lose five points on your final grade; at 6 (more than 20%), you'll sacrifice 10. With 8 absences, you fail the class, regardless of grades posted. This policy is more generous than some because I don't want to have to make distinctions between "excused" and unexcused absences.

If you have ongoing personal or family emergencies, do yourself a favor and consult Student Services in your College—who will notify all of your instructors of any legitimate extenuating circumstances. A considerable amount of flexibility is authorized and warranted in such cases.

Laptop or tablet use during class is for note-taking purposes only, unless I give you permission to investigate a matter under discussion for the benefit of the class. Students who use their computers for non-class purposes will be asked to leave the room and such occurrences will be recorded as absences from class.

DIGITAL IMAGE ACCESSIBILITY

Class discussion will center on works of art. Key images are available online, though DASE (Digital Archive Services). DASE is a UT-generated resource accessible through the Databases heading on the UT Library home page. You can also access DASE at <https://dase.laits.utexas.edu>. In either case, you'll need to provide your UT EID and password. I suggest you bookmark the site.

To access the image reserve for this class from the DASE homepage, click on "Public/Shared Sets" from the menu at the side. Select the **set** labeled "**Rather-ARH 339P (to midterm)**" (or "to final") to find the images for this class with their data (artist, title, date, collection, size, medium, etc.). You can see them all together or click on the first image to isolate it and data on your screen (from there you can click "next" to go through the group). Alternately, especially when testing yourself on the works, click on **slideshow** from the layout options at the top of the set; in that case, you'll get only the work, large and isolated against a black background.

You can also search DASE yourself. You might want to do this if you wish to see other works by the same artist or to gain more information about a work for our class than I have provided in the caption (e.g., dimensions, collection, etc.). Your search will yield the best quality images if you limit it to the "Art & Art History Visual Resources Collection" or the "Classics Collection," which are also two of the largest.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The ready availability of online information has contributed to an epidemic of plagiarism on college campuses and elsewhere, some of it possibly unintended—which is not the same as "innocent" (ignorance is no excuse). The University of Texas has clear policies on Academic Integrity, including a concise statement of what constitutes plagiarism (http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_plagiarism.php). For a more detailed characterization, see http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/cwgs/_files/pdf-4/ai2012.pdf

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Students may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities: 512-471-6259

<http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>

GRADING

Assignments (3 @ 10%): 30%

Short paper = 20%

Teamwork exercises: 15%

Exams (2 @ 20%) = 35%

Failure to contribute: -5%

Be sure to keep all your graded coursework until your final, official grades are confirmed by the university. Recording errors are rare, but do sometimes happen; in such cases, the only firm evidence is your marked papers and exams.

Final letter grades for the course follow this rubric:

A = 93-100; A- = 90-92 (UT does not recognize A+)

B+ = 87-89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82

C+ = 77-79; C = 73-76; C- = 70-72

D+ = 67-69; D = 63-66; D- = 60-62

F = 0-59

I have no hesitation in giving C-range grades, which may be assigned even to work that shows evidence of effort if riddled with grammatical and typographical errors. (Failure to meet even this minimum standard will result in grades of D or lower.) Students who receive a C or below on their first assignment are strongly urged to seek assistance at the Undergraduate Writing Center in UGL but even those receiving higher grades (including As) will benefit from such assistance.

For a B-range grade, your work must (1) demonstrate that that you have applied yourself seriously to assignments and exams and have a good understanding of the material; (2) compose clearly written and argued papers, with minimal grammatical or typographical errors (the more of those I see, the lower the grade); (3) participate in class discussions.

To merit an A, you must be more intellectually adventurous and academically rigorous, performing beyond the level required for B. Thus, (1) demonstrate that that you have applied yourself seriously to assignments and exams and have a very good understanding of the material; (2) write with conviction and flair; (3) contribute substantially to class discussions.