

Western Art History

Introduction and Course Outline

PACE High School
An Ohio Community School

Welcome to the Western Art History course. During these two semesters you will learn about art and artists who helped form our predominately European heritage and our American culture. I look forward to discussions with you about art and artists and your thoughts about art and how this course can become the best in Cincinnati and maybe the nation.

Purpose: You will be able to identify themes and traditions of the visual arts in Western civilization. You will be able to identify artists, techniques, and the cultures in which artworks were created. You will be able to analyze artworks from structural, historical and cultural perspectives.

Assignments: The course outline describes each of the research and writing assignments and the museum visits required to pass this course. You are required to complete three assignments per week. You may go faster. All written assignments must be completed using a word processor. Your first draft will be returned with corrections, suggestions for revisions and requests for more details for your finished essay. Completed assignments must be kept in a three-ring binder. There is a tracking document so that you will know your progress in the course.

Website: <http://www.helenrindsberg.com>
This website contains links to the PowerPoint presentations for each semester and museum websites to help you with your research. As other good sites and resources are found, they are added. I welcome your suggestions.

Standards: You must read all handouts and view each PowerPoint presentation then follow the guidelines for each assignment. Your essays must follow the conventions of English composition and grammar and meet the standards for research in art and historical research. That means that you must identify all sources of information and put quote marks (“ ”) around information directly copied. You must choose works of art that are not used in the course’s PowerPoint presentations.

Western Art History

Semester One Course Outline

I. Unit One – Introduction: What Is Art?

- A. Explore definitions of art
- B. Explore the major themes in art
 - 1. The human form
 - a) Portraiture
 - b) The human figure
 - c) Narratives
 - 2. The natural world
 - a) Plants
 - b) Animals
 - c) Landscape
 - 3. The spiritual world
 - a) Images of religious figures
 - b) Ritual objects
 - c) Places of worship
- C. Explore the different types of visual arts
 - 1. Paintings
 - 2. Drawings
 - 3. Prints
 - 4. Sculpture
 - 5. Architecture
 - 6. Decorative Arts
- D. Introduction to the tools of the artists
 - 1. Colors
 - 2. Lines
 - 3. Shapes
 - 4. Space
 - 5. Details
 - 6. Composition

Assignment #1: Read Handout #1 “What is Art?” View the PowerPoint (PPT) presentation #1 “What is Art?” Earn a passing grade on the “What Is Art?” quiz. Organize a three-ring binder to hold the course outline and handouts. Turn in your completed Student Profile.

Assignment #2: Use museum websites to find nine examples of visual arts that appeal to you. There should be three from each theme – Human Form, Natural World and Spiritual World. There should be variety in the type of artwork. Print out the web page for each artwork. On each printout, identify three things: the theme, the type of artwork, and the tools of the artist that appeal to you. (The artworks cannot be from the PPT presentation #1.)

Assignment #3: Review your notes on your nine artworks. Write a one-paragraph essay – double-spaced – that answers these questions:

- 1) What **theme** appeals to you most? **Why** does it appeal to you?
- 2) What **type** of visual art appeals to you the most? **Why** does it appeal to you?
- 3) What **tools** of the artist appeal to you the most? **Why** do they appeal to you?

This is a **persuasive** essay; express your opinion. Ms. Rindsberg will use Checklist #1-3 to see that you have met the standards for the assignment.

Assignment #4: From your nine works, now choose three works of art, one from each of the three major themes. Write a draft – double-spaced – of a three-paragraph essay – one paragraph for each artwork. For each artwork, describe in detail:

- 1) What is the **theme** and **why** does it appeal to you?
- 2) What is the **type** of art and **why** does it appeal to you?
- 3) What **tools** of the artist in that artwork appeal to you and **why**.

This is an **explanatory** essay, be specific about what you like. Paste a copy of each artwork into your word document and identify each by title, artist, date, culture, size, medium and museum.

Assignment #5: Ms. Rindsberg will use Checklist #1-4 to see that you have met the standards for the assignment. Make any corrections, improvements and/or provide additional information if requested. Turn in your finished essay.

II. Unit Two - Why Study Art?

- A. To learn about the values and beliefs of other cultures
 - 1. Values – *social* standards or qualities people consider worthwhile or desirable: equality, justice, courage, wisdom, individual freedom
 - 2. Beliefs – *spiritual* ideas that people accept as true, such as who created the world and why, there is life after death.
- B. To connect to other people and cultures
 - 1. How are you the same as people from other times and places?
 - 2. How are you different from people from other times and places?
- C. To learn more about yourself
 - 1. What are your values – what is most worthwhile to you?
 - 2. What are your beliefs – what are your religious or spiritual beliefs?
- D. To enjoy beautiful, thought-provoking images
 - 1. What makes an artwork beautiful to you?
 - 2. What appeals to your beliefs and values?

Assignment #6: Read Handout #6 “Why Study Art?” View the PowerPoint (PPT) presentation #6 “Why Study Art?” Earn a passing grade on the “Why Study Art?” quiz.

Assignment #7: Use museum websites to find nine examples of artworks that are beautiful to you. There should be three from each theme and there should be variety in the type of artwork. Print out the web page for each artwork. On each printout, write what you like about each work – the theme, how the artwork appeals to your heart, eyes and/or mind and what values or beliefs appeal to you in the artwork. (The artworks cannot be from the PPT presentation #6).

Assignment #8: Review your notes on the nine artworks and look for ideas that repeat. Write a one-paragraph essay – double-spaced – describing what makes a work of visual art beautiful to you:

- 1) What appeals to your **heart**, your **eyes** and your **mind**? **Why** do those things appeal to you?
- 2) What **values** and **beliefs** appeal to you? **Why** do they appeal to you?

This is **persuasive** essay; express your own opinion. Ms. Rindsberg will use Checklist #1-8 to see that you have met the standards for the assignment

Assignment #9: From your nine works, now choose three works of art, one from each of the three major themes– human form, natural world and spiritual world. Write a draft – double-spaced – of a three-paragraph essay and tell how the three works of art you enjoy are beautiful (one paragraph per artwork). For each artwork, describe in detail:

- 1) What appeals to your **heart** and/or your **mind** and **why**.
- 2) What appeals to your **eyes** and **why**.
- 2) What **values** and **beliefs** in the artwork appeal to you and **why**.

This is an **explanatory** essay; be specific about what you like. Paste a copy of each artwork into your word processing document and identify each by title, artist, date, culture, size, medium and museum.

Assignment #10: Ms. Rindsberg will use Checklist #1-9 to see that you have met the standards for the assignment. Make any corrections, improvements and/or provide additional information if requested. Turn in your finished essay.

III. Unit Three – Museum Visit

Assignment #11: Sign up and participate in a tour of the Cincinnati Art Museum led by Ms. Rindsberg. Ask questions as you view the artworks, about the artist, materials, and/or culture; your grade is based on your discussions. Take notes about the 24 artworks discussed on the handout provided. You need your notes for assignment #12.

Assignment #12: Write a three-paragraph essay – double-spaced – (one paragraph for each item below) that describes:

- 1) The artwork that you liked the **most** and **why** the artwork appeals to you.
- 2) The artwork that you liked the **least** and **why** it didn't appeal to you.
- 3) Something that **surprised** you about an artwork, an artist or the museum itself.

In each paragraph above, identify:

- 1) The title, artist, date, material, and culture
- 2) The theme – human form, natural world, spiritual world
- 3) The type of artwork – painting, sculpture, drawing, etc.
- 4) The tools of the artist that appealed or didn't appeal to you
- 5) What ideas and feelings did the artist communicate to you?

IV. Unit Four - How to Look at Art: Part A

A. Describe the physical characteristics of the work

1. Elements of Design
 - a) line
 - b) color
 - c) texture
 - d) space
2. Principles of Design
 - a) repetition
 - b) emphasis
 - c) balance
 - d) unity
 - e) contrast
3. Elements of Content
 - a) subject matter
 - b) ideas
 - c) intention
 - d) symbols

B. Describe the emotional impact (appeal to your heart) of the work on you

1. Feelings of happiness, excitement, pleasure, anger, love
2. Memories of people, places or events
3. Hopes for the future for yourself or others

Assignment #13: Read Handout #13 “Tools of the Artists: Part A.” View the PowerPoint (PPT) presentation #13 “How To Look At Art: Part A.” Study your glossary of art terms to understand the vocabulary of this “Tools” handout. Earn a passing grade on the quiz “How To Look At Art: Part A.”

Assignment #14: Use museum websites to find three possible artworks to analyze (they cannot be from the PPT presentation #13). Use checklist #14 to check that you can find examples of ten elements or principles in each artwork. Meet with Ms. Rindsberg to see if you have correctly identified ten terms for each artwork; make any changes needed.

Assignment #15: From the three artworks in assignment #14, choose one work of art to do for your formal analysis. Write a draft – double-spaced – of a five-paragraph essay using at least ten of the terms in your paper:

- 1) Identify and describe the **Elements of Design** in the work (1 paragraph).
- 2) Identify and describe the **Principles of Design** in the work (1 paragraph).
- 3) Identify and describe the **Elements of Content** in the work (1 paragraph).
- 4) Write about the emotional impact (appeal to your **heart**) of the artwork on you. What **ideas** and **feelings** does the artist communicate to you (1 paragraph)?
- 5) Give **information** about the artist, his/her life, artistic achievements and the time in which the artwork was created (1 paragraph).

Paste a copy of the artwork into your word processing document; identify title, artist, date, size, medium and museum. If you copy any information from a website, remember to put it in quotes (“ ”).

Assignment #16: Ms. Rindsberg will use Checklist #1-15 to see that you have met the standards for the assignment. Make any corrections, improvements and/or provide additional information if requested. Turn in your finished essay.

V. Unit Five – How To Look At Art: Part B

- A. Composition: how the subject is presented
 - 1. Focus
 - 2. Placement
 - 3. Background
 - 4. Lighting
 - 5. Shapes
- B. Style: distinctive use of the elements and principles of design
 - 1. Use of Color
 - 2. Manipulation of Surfaces
 - 3. Amount of Detail
 - 4. Use of Perspective

Assignment #17: Read Handout #17 “Composition and Style.” View the Power Point (PPT) presentation #17 “How To Look At Art: Part B.” Earn a passing grade on the quiz “How To Look At Art: Part B.”

Assignment #18: Use museum websites to find three possible artworks to analyze (they cannot be from the PPT presentation #17). Use checklist #18 to check that you can identify 10 examples of composition and style in each artwork. Meet with Ms. Rindsberg to see if you have correctly identified ten terms for each artwork; make any changes needed.

Assignment #19: From the three artworks in assignment #18, choose one work of art to do for your formal analysis. Write a draft – double-spaced – of a four-paragraph essay, using at least ten of the terms in your paper:

- 1) Identify and describe tools of **composition** used by the artist (1 paragraph).
- 2) Identify and describe the tools of **style** used by the artist (1 paragraph).
- 3) Write about the emotional impact (appeal to your **heart**) of the artwork on you. What **ideas** and **feelings** does the artist communicate to you (1 paragraph)?
- 4) Give **information** about the artist, the style of artwork he/she created (give general characteristics of the style) and the time in which the artwork was created (1 paragraph).

Paste a copy of the artwork into your word processing document; identify title, artist, date, size, medium and museum. If you copy any information from a website, remember to put it in quotes (“ ”).

Assignment #20: Ms. Rindsberg will use Checklist #1-19 to see that you have met the standards for the assignment. Make any corrections, improvements and/or provide additional information if requested. Turn in your finished essay.

Unit Six – Art In A Cultural Context

- C. Belief system, religion
 1. Is religion a major or minor part of people’s lives?
 2. Is artwork an important part of religious ceremonies?
 3. Does religion encourage or discourage certain activities?
- D. Organization of the community and the government
 1. Who runs the government: a hereditary ruler, appointed ruler or elected ruler?
 2. Is the culture organized locally, regionally or nationally?
 3. Do traders come from near or far with their goods?
 4. Is it hard or easy to travel?
- E. Peace or war; prosperity or poverty
 1. Do wars interrupt people’s lives and how badly?
 2. Who buys art – only royalty and the very wealthy or ordinary people?
- F. Patronage or free market
 1. Must an artist have a patron before they can create their artworks?
 2. Can artists create the art they want then sell it in a free market?
- G. Significance to other artists and the culture
 1. Does the artist follow the artistic traditions of his/her culture?
 2. Does the artist experiment and break with traditions?

Assignment #21: Read Handout #21 “Art In A Cultural Context.” View the PowerPoint (PPT) presentation #21 “Art In A Cultural Context.” Earn a passing grade on the “Art In A Cultural Context” quiz.

Assignment #22: Use the list of artists from Handout #21 and research three artists. For each artist, print out two of their works of art from different time periods or using different media. Use checklist #22 to make notes about the artworks and the artist. Ms. Rindsberg will meet with you to see that you have correctly identified everything in the checklist. (The artists cannot be from the PPT #21).

Assignment #23: From the three artists in assignment #22, choose one artist whose work you enjoy the most. Write a draft – double-spaced – of a four-paragraph essay:

- 1) Describe the **artist's life** and interesting facts about his/her training, style, common subjects, compositions, fellow artists and/or personal life (1 paragraph).
- 2) Describe the **culture** in which the artist lived, covering all five topics in Art in a Cultural Context (1 paragraph):
 - a) **belief** system or religion
 - b) organization of **community** or government
 - c) **peace** or **war**
 - d) **patronage** or **free market**
 - e) **significance** to other artists and culture
- 3) For artwork #1 discuss how this example of the artist's work illustrates the artist **in his/her culture** (1 paragraph).
- 4) For artwork #2 discuss how this example of the artist's work illustrates the artist **in his/her culture** (1 paragraph).

Paste a copy of each artwork into your word processing document and identify each by title, date, culture, size, medium and museum. If you copy any information from a website, remember to put it in quotes (“ ”).

Assignment #24: Ms. Rindsberg will use Checklist #1-23 to see that you have met the standards for the assignment. Make any corrections, improvements and/or provide additional information if requested. Turn in your finished essay.

Unit Seven – Reflective Essay

Assignment #25: Reread each of your final essays (assignments #3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 16, 20 and 24). Write a draft – double-spaced – of a three-paragraph reflective essay, being specific about what you have learned:

1. What is **art** to you, how have your ideas changed after taking this course (one paragraph)?
2. What is **beautiful** to you, how have your ideas changed after taking this course (one paragraph)?
3. What have you learned about **analyzing** an artwork (one paragraph)?
4. What have you learned about **artists and their cultures** (one paragraph)?

Please tell me of other significant ideas that you learned from this first semester of the course.

Assignment #26: Ms. Rindsberg will use Checklist #1-25 to see that you have met the standards for the assignment. Make any corrections, improvements and/or provide additional information if requested. Turn in your finished essay. Thank you for choosing to take our Western Art History course.