

# ART 2J: AMERICAN ART

## Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
<b>Effective Term:</b>	Summer 2025
<b>Units:</b>	4.5
<b>Hours:</b>	4 lecture, 1.5 laboratory per week (66 total per quarter)
<b>Advisory:</b>	Not open to students with credit in ART 14.
<b>Degree &amp; Credit Status:</b>	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
<b>Foothill GE:</b>	Area 3: Arts & Humanities
<b>Transferable:</b>	CSU/UC
<b>Grade Type:</b>	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
<b>Repeatability:</b>	Not Repeatable

## Student Learning Outcomes

- Utilizing "social history" as a methodological approach to the study of American art, successful students will identify and assess the significant artistic contributions of a variety of culturally distinct groups (e.g., Native American, European American, African American, Chicano/Latino, and Asian American) in the development of American art from prehistory to the present.
- A successful student will be able to identify and discuss a variety of defining art historical (and cultural) movements (e.g., Harlem Renaissance, Photo-Secession, etc.) and styles (e.g., Postmodern, Abstract Expressionist, etc.) in the formation and development of American art.

## Description

History of the culturally diverse arts produced in North America (specifically the United States) from prehistory to the present. American art is considered thematically and chronologically, focusing on the important influences on art of nature, landscape, urbanization, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic and political reforms, and civil and international wars.

## Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

- Systematically analyze, examine, and evaluate the overall development of American art, including Native American, European American, Latin American, and other non-Western (e.g., African, Asian, Pacific Island) contributions to the diversity of American art
- Acquire and deepen knowledge of the development of American art as it relates to the diverse social, political, and cultural history of the United States
- Recognize, analyze, and reflect in writing significant aspects of the style, content, and historical context of works of art produced by a broad range of American artists
- Develop an appreciation for and make reasoned judgments regarding the ways that American art may be viewed as an essentially multi-cultural phenomenon, one which reflects human values, ideas, and ideals

- Recognize the ways that social values impact the production of art in historical and contemporary America

## Course Content

- European Conquest in North America and related artworks
  - Tenochtitlan (architecture, sculpture, codices)
- Colonization, conversion, cultural exchange, and warfare in 16th-18th century American art
  - Pueblo cultures and colonization
  - California missions
  - Trade and its impact on Native American life and art
  - Mississippian culture and its monuments
  - The exploration of the Mississippi and Native America in Europe
  - Art and politics in 17th century England and their impact on American art
  - Dutch influence in early American architecture
- 17th-19th century American portraiture
  - Portraiture in 17th century New England
  - Dutch influence in early American portraits
  - Southern aristocratic portraiture and early depictions of African Americans (and slavery)
  - Heroic history painting; Benjamin West; John Trumbull; John Singleton Copley
  - Images of George Washington (painting and sculpture)
  - Images of Native Americans; Catlin; photography
- Landscape imagery and what it reveals about American conceptions of nature and culture
  - Nature and spirit in Native American art
  - Conceptions of tourism and landscape painting; images of Niagara Falls
  - Westward expansion: Bierstadt; Church; Cole; Luminism
  - Genre paintings: landscape and farmer
  - Conceptions of gender: woman as nature
- American images out of despair: slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction
  - Images from the war between the U.S. and Mexico; Leutze
  - Santeros of New Mexico; New Mexico textiles and furniture
  - Civil War representations of African Americans and slavery; paintings and photographs
  - Images of Reconstruction: Homer, Nast
  - Representations of freed slaves and Civil War soldiers
  - Popular press images of Native Americans; Harper's Weekly; the Washita River Massacre
  - Native American ledger art; the Battle of Little Bighorn
  - Hampton Institute
- Class pictures in America: workers, professionals, and ladies of leisure
  - 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition
  - Images of workers: Anshutz, Koehler
  - Images of professionals: Eakins
  - Rights for women: Powers
  - Images of domestic servants
  - Aestheticism and images of the feminine ideal
  - Public space, interior design, and revivalist architecture
  - World's Columbian Exhibition; women artists

7. Modernist America: Ashcan School, Armory Show, and avant-garde art
  - a. Ashcan School and socialism in art: Sloan
  - b. Stieglitz and photo-secession at 291
  - c. The Armory Show; European art in America
  - d. Avant-garde artists and reproduction: Duchamp
  - e. Representations regarding gender and sexuality in Modernist America
8. Multicultural American art: Mexico, the Southwest, and the Harlem Renaissance
  - a. Mexican muralists and the impact of the Mexican Revolution; American artists in Mexico (Modotti, Weston)
  - b. Images of the American Southwest; Hopi pottery, Washoe basketry and tourism; the impact of the Ste. Fe Railway
  - c. Harlem and Locke's "New Negro"; images of African American life (Douglas)
9. Prescriptions for the Great Depression: New Deal, WPA, FSA, planned communities, and political art
  - a. Mexican muralists in America (Rivera)
  - b. Federal programs in the arts: New Deal, FSA
  - c. Images of injustice (Evergood, Shahn, Benton)
  - d. Images of urban working women and poverty in rural America
  - e. Arts against fascism; American Artists' Congress; social surrealism
  - f. Representations of patriotism and the impact of Japanese American Internment
10. Abstract Expressionism and the Cold War and beyond
  - a. Abstract Expressionism (Pollock, etc.) and related issues of race and gender
  - b. Minimalism and conceptual arts
  - c. Popular art and consumerism
11. Civil Rights, Feminism, and the new public arts
  - a. Images of the Civil Rights Movement
  - b. Vietnam War protest art
  - c. Feminist art of the 1970s
  - d. Public art: Chicano murals; public controversy in public arts (Serra; Maya Yin Lin)
  - e. Postmodern art and architecture
  - f. Artists as activists; art and AIDS; border crossings; video arts

## Lab Content

Lab hours consist of one or more of the following options:

1. Online students must (and traditional classroom students may) participate in one and one half hours per week of online discussions based on questions posed in weekly lessons. This participation consists of students' postings in answer to written questions provided by the instructor and/or postings in response to other student comments in an online discussion forum
2. Traditional classroom/online students will visit local museums and view actual works of art in preparation for a written museum report assignment. Time spent on museum visits and the related essay assignment must be at least one and one half hours per week

## Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. When taught on campus: a slide collection and/or access to digital images and projection equipment (e.g., slide projector, VCR/DVD player, screen, etc.)
2. When taught via Foothill Global Access: ongoing access to a computer with email software and capabilities; email address; JavaScript enabled internet browsing software

## Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Discussions based on required readings in text and related online weekly lesson modules. Questions posed in lessons to be discussed in online (written) discussion forums or in traditional classroom

Weekly essay assignments based on readings of text and lesson modules online to evaluate ongoing student learning; research paper/ museum report essay assignment project may be assigned

Two midterm examinations and a final exam, each of which may consist of any or all of the following: essay, short answer, and objective questions. Tests may cover individual artists, historical traditions, and issues related to gender and ethnicity, etc. Examination format may be constructed as follows: slide identification, term definition, short-answer questions, multiple choice questions, and slide comparison essay(s). A research paper or museum report essay may be assigned in lieu of the tests or as extra credit

## Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture  
 Discussion  
 Electronic discussions/chat  
 Laboratory  
 Field trips

## Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Pohl, Frances K.. Framing America: A Social History of American Art Vol. 1 and 2, 4th ed.. 2017.

Although this text is older than 5 years, it remains a seminal text in this area of study.

## Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Reading of one or more textbook chapters for each of the lesson modules (e.g., Chapter 1: European Conquest in America; Chapter 2: Colonization in 16th-18th century America, etc.) plus a related online lesson and summary on the subject. Additional reading and research required for museum report assignment project/paper
2. Weekly essay assignments based on readings in text and lesson modules. Two questions provided for each weekly assignment. For example:
  - a. Frances Pohl, the author of your text, utilizes "social history" as a methodological approach (or a systematic way) to study the

subject of American art history. In the preface of your textbook, Pohl describes some of the differences between a social history and other art historical methodologies.

- i. Using your own words and your understanding of Pohl's explanation of social history, describe why such an approach is valuable and valid in the study of American art.
  - ii. What does the method of social history offer us in our study of American art?
  - iii. Why is social history important to our understanding of American art?
  - iv. How and when did social history develop?
  - v. Describe what components a social history might include.
- b. Chapter 1 of Framing America introduces the reader to a variety of early cultural influences contributing to the eventual formation of American society, including Spanish and Aztec traditions, as well as effects of the French, British, and Dutch colonization of Native North Americans. Describe some of the most significant aspects of early Native North American Pueblo and Mississippian cultures.
- i. What 2-3 components of Anasazi and traditional Pueblo culture do you find most fascinating? Describe these.
  - ii. In what ways did Pueblo culture differ from that of their European colonizers?
  - iii. What do you consider the most impressive Mississippian form of artistic production? Be specific in selecting objects to support your descriptions of Native American art and culture.

## Discipline(s)

Art History