

Art 180: Understanding Art

Instructor: Alyssa Reiser Prince, Associate Professor of Art

aprince@coker.edu

Text & Tools

Students will use:

Textbook: [Art For Everyone](#). Chemeketa Community College Art Faculty. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780190903411

Google Arts & Culture: <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/>

Be sure to check your email frequently. Students must have reliable access to the Internet.

Classes will be asynchronous. Coursework will release each week using the learning management system.

Purpose

Discussion of the formal elements of art and how they communicate the meaning of an artwork. Artworks are examined in relation to history, culture, materials, techniques and purposes. Active participation in analysis of artwork is encouraged. Does not count toward the art major.

Procedure

Class time includes:

Google Arts & Culture “galleries” (“curated” by students), tests, videos of contemporary and historical artists/artworks, discussion boards, and a trip (in-person or virtual) to a museum/gallery.

Students explore artworks through active participation in visual analysis. Students will utilize our textbook and Google Arts & Culture to express their understanding of vocabulary and terms used in visual analysis. Students will reflect upon themes, formal art elements, and textbook vocabulary.

Course material explores artworks, vocabulary terms used in understanding artworks, and historical contexts. In addition, we will study art & artists that explore contemporary themes. In addition, students will learn to think and write critically.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will learn the formal elements and principles of Art and Design.
- Students will visually analyze works of Art through the formal elements and principles of Art and Design.
- Students will engage with the history of Art from antiquity through contemporary times.
- Students will develop their writing skills through visual analysis and similar assignments.
- Students will learn to think critically about Art and the world around them.

Grading and Attendance

1000 total points

550 points: Tests (7)

350 points: Discussion posts

100 points: Formal Analysis

900-1000 points = A

800- 899 points = B

700-799 points = C

600- 699 points = D

0- 599 points = F

Make-up policy/Late work

There are no make-up exams unless in extreme circumstances (religious holiday, illness with a doctor’s note). I will not grade work that is late. Contact me immediately regarding emergencies in which you will miss coursework.

Schedule

All due dates are included on our course site, under each “week”. Each “week” includes every assignment due date. Please read the first post in each week. That post will tell you what is due this week.

The majority of work is due on Sundays at 11:59pm. Please allot 7-10 hours for classwork per week.

Formal Analysis Essay & Visit to a Museum or Gallery

You have a Formal Analysis Essay due in Week 6. This paper is called a Formal Analysis. You will need to visit an art museum or gallery during the first six weeks of class, on your own time. While you are there, you will choose one artwork that you enjoy. You will then write a Formal Analysis on that artwork.

Please see the guide at the end of the syllabus for writing the Formal Analysis. This guide is also included in the Week 6 materials.

Disability Assistance

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for qualified students with documented physical, sensory, learning or psychiatric disabilities that require assistance to fully participate in this class. If a student has a disability that will likely need some accommodation by the instructor, the student should contact Robin Richardson in the Learning Support Services Office (ext. 8021, rrichardson@coker.edu) to provide the necessary documentation. No accommodations can be made without documentation from LSS.

Academic Dishonesty, Cheating or Plagiarism

Students engaging in academic dishonesty will receive a zero on the assignment or test if it is their first offence. A subsequent offence results in an automatic F for the course.

Academic dishonesty includes turning in work that you have copied or work that was completed by someone else (even partially). Cheating includes copying answers from the internet (such as “study websites” or other links) and copying someone else’s answers. Plagiarism includes using sources in papers and written assignments without correctly citing the source. This includes paraphrasing.

Always cite your source (MLA or Chicago style format) if it is not your own words, err on the side of caution.

When in doubt, give credit where credit is due.

Behavior:

It is expected that you will be respectful of your peers and instructor. Any student participating in threatening, disrespectful language will receive a failing grade. Especially in an online community we need to be aware of our writing, as language can be misconstrued.

Differing opinions are welcome – and encouraged. Be sure to use the proper “netiquette”

Core Rules of Netiquette * <https://learning.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=4>

- 1) Remember the Human
- 2) Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life
- 3) Know where you are in cyberspace
- 4) Respect other people’s time and bandwidth
- 5) Make yourself look good online (Spelling! Grammar!)
- 6) Share expert knowledge
- 7) Help keep flame wars under control
- 8) Respect other’s privacy
- 9) Don’t abuse your power
- 10) Be forgiving of other people’s mistakes

Helpful Websites for understanding the sequence of Art History and Ideas:

Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, Metropolitan Museum of Art: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cnat/hd_cnat.htm

Getty Research Institute art/architecture dictionaries: <http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/index.htm>

FORMAL ANALYSIS Essay
Guide

Step One: Visit and Find an artwork in a Museum or Gallery that you enjoy.

Choose one artwork that will be the topic of your Formal Analysis paper. Spend time in front of your artwork. Take notes. Take a photo if it is allowed. After spending time with your artwork, you should now be able to move onto the Analysis portion. Most of this can be written while viewing the artwork.

Step Two: The Analysis

- a. Include the title of the artwork, the medium or material used to create it, the name of the artist, and the year it was completed.
- b. Now look at the work. What is the subject matter? Write down your feelings and impressions. What do you think the artist is trying to communicate?
- c. Now go through your list of vocabulary terms, making observations and showing how they relate to the feelings and impressions you wrote down. You may even discover some new ideas or impressions as you observe the work.

lines	illusion of depth
actual	overlapping
implied	positioning
outline	linear perspective
directional	foreshortening
formed by edges	atmospheric perspective
curved	isometric perspective
straight	illusion of motion
shapes	composition
organic	emphasis/focal point
geometric	unity and variety
space	visual weight
positive	symmetrical balance
negative	asymmetrical balance
light	radial balance
chiaroscuro	proportion
high key/low key	scale
color	visual rhythm
texture	
visual	
actual	

- e. Examine each of the terms carefully in order to discover how they relate to the artwork you have chosen. **Some may not apply in which case you should not discuss them.**
- f. In concluding your analysis you might say:
Through an examination of the elements of art, as they apply to this painting,
I have shown that the artist was communicating a feeling of...
(Fill in the meaning you have defended.)