

AHIS 250g Modernity and Difference
Critical Approaches to Modern Art

Spring 2019 Lecture: Mondays & Wednesdays, 3:30–4:50pm (VKC 210)

Prof. Megan R. Luke (mluke@usc.edu)
Emails sent after 5pm will be answered on the following weekday.
Do not expect a reply to email over the weekend.

Office hours: Wednesdays, 9:00-11:00am (THH 326)
Sign-up sheet on office door

Course Description

How can we tell new stories about old art? This is an especially vexing question for the self-consciously “modern” art of the late 19th and 20th centuries. The profound social, technological, and political upheaval of this period prompted a reevaluation of the most fundamental principles of visual expression. How should images be composed? Out of what materials? To what ends? How should they be displayed, and, most importantly, what role did they have in shaping our understanding of the self and the world?

We shall consider the ways in which artists working in Europe and North America in this period challenged existing conventions for the production of images. Our goal, in turn, will be to analyze how interpretations about works of art are established and why these stories change over time. We will explore the “difference” that modern art presented within the context of its initial reception, such as estrangement, originality, or avant-garde (to name just a few). At the same time, we will investigate how scholars have re-framed how we see and understand this art today in light of social forms of difference, such as gender, race, class, or faith.

We will begin each lecture by focusing on a single work of art and the wider contexts of its creation and historical reception. In each session we will consider at a selection of comparative images and texts.

Learning Objectives

Students in this course will cultivate skills in:

- visual analysis and description
- close reading of scholarly texts and literature
- identifying major monuments of art history
- learning how to ask thought-provoking questions
- critical thinking about the history of modern culture
- best practices for visiting museums

Course Materials

All readings will be available as PDFs for download through ARES (<https://reserves.usc.edu>). The catalogue for the *Outliers and American Vanguard Art* exhibition will be placed on a 2-hour reserve at the Architecture and Fine Arts (AFA) Library.

PowerPoint presentations of the slides shown in class will be made available via Blackboard.

Assignments

Participation (10%)

Full credit relies on unbroken attendance, robust discussion and preparation, respect for the professor and peers, and timely completion of all assignments. To get the most out of lecture, you should complete the readings assigned for each lecture beforehand. Come prepared to ask and answer questions!

Class Presentation (15%)

You will partner with another student in this course and prepare an 8-minute oral presentation at the start of a given class session. You and your partner should speak for four minutes each and read directly from prepared (written) remarks. This presentation will review key concepts from the previous session and pose three (3) questions for further discussion. Please email these questions to the professor by 12pm the day of class. We may tackle these questions directly, time permitting. In any event, the professor will draw upon them for the prompts for the Review Papers (see below).

You will be evaluated on keeping to the time limit and on the usefulness and quality of your remarks about the material. You will also be assessed on the value of the questions to inspire discussion and further thought; questions that elicit yes/no answers or answers that are purely informational are strongly discouraged. [written presentation, 2 pages max. per partner]

Museum Paper (25%)

You will visit the exhibition, *Outliers and American Vanguard Art*, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and focus on a single work of your choice. Your task will be to formulate an argument about the theme of the exhibition and the position of your chosen artwork within it. To make this argument, you must support your claim with three kinds of source material: (1) accurate visual description of salient details of your chosen artwork; (2) reference placement of the work in the exhibition; and (3) ideas from the catalogue essay by the exhibition's curator, Lynne Cooke.

This assignment will test the skills we have been practicing in visual description in class, your ability to understand theoretical and historical claims, and your willingness to take a position and defend it with conviction. You will also be assessed on the clarity of your argument and your prose. [5 pages max.]

Review Paper (20%)

You will be asked to respond to a series of questions about key artworks and readings from Weeks 1–9. Your answers should be crafted carefully and remain within the word limit assigned for each in the prompt. This assignment will test your comprehension of major ideas discussed in lecture and in the readings and your ability to express them in clear, straightforward prose. [3 pages max.]

Final Review Paper (30%)

You will be asked to respond to a series of questions about key artworks and readings from the entire term, with an emphasis on your ability to articulate and synthesize the big ideas from the course. Your answers should be crafted carefully and remain within the word limit assigned for each in the prompt. This assignment will not only test your comprehension, but also your critical thinking about the concept of “difference.” [5 pages max.]

Paper Formatting

All your papers must be formatted as follows:

- Font: Times New Roman, 12 point
- 1-inch margins (all sides)
- Submit as a Microsoft Word file or PDF in an email with the subject heading “AHIS 250 Paper”
- (For Paper 1): Please include an image of the artwork you have chosen to write about with a caption that lists the artist’s name, title, date, and medium/materials.

Please note that a page of text formatted this way takes a little over two (2) minutes to read out loud at a comfortable pace. For your Class Presentation, please keep to this limit.

Grading Scale

A	95-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-94	C+	77-79	D	63-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	D-	60-62
B	83-86	C-	70-72	F	59 and below

Course Protocols

Late work will not be accepted. If you miss a deadline, you will receive no credit for that assignment. There will be no make-up exams. Exceptions in cases of medical or family emergency require documentation from your doctor and/or academic advisor.

Laptops, tablets, and phones are not permitted in lecture. These devices must be switched off prior to entering class to keep us all focused on the lecture and the projected images. You will be asked to leave lecture if you distract yourself and the students around you with any of these devices, and your participation grade will be lowered at the discretion of the professor. Students who have a medical reason to use electronic devices must apply to the professor in person. For a helpful explanation of the benefits of this policy, see: www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom.

Come prepared to class. Bring notepaper and pen/pencil to all class meetings and always bring a copy of the week’s assigned readings.

Attendance is your responsibility. If you miss class, you miss out; do not email the professor to “make it up.” Office hours are for help or clarification, not to cover lectures or sections that you missed.

Selling notes/class materials to other students or outside vendors is strictly prohibited. Such behavior is subject to disciplinary action by the College and will result in a failing grade in the class. It is perfectly OK to study with your peers and review lectures together. It is **never** OK to obtain monetary or other material compensation from this exchange.

Academic honesty is a top priority. If you plagiarize your writing, you will receive a failing grade in the class. If you have questions about what qualifies as plagiarism or cheating, consult with the professor prior to completing any assignment.

See p. 9 for:

- Statement for Students with Disabilities
- Statement on Academic Integrity
- Emergency Preparedness / Course Continuity in a Crisis

COURSE PLAN**Week 1**

- Jan 7 Introduction
- Read Fyodor Dostoyevsky, "Chapter One: The Underground [1864]," in *Notes from Underground / The Double*, trans. Jessie Coulson (London: Penguin, 1972), 13–46.
- Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* [1907–11], trans. Roy Harris (London: Duckworth, 1983), 65–78, 110–120 [excerpt].
- Jan 9 Lecture – Joseph Paxton, *Crystal Palace* (1851)
- Read Edward W. Said, "Introduction," *Orientalism* [1978] (New York: Vintage, 1994), 1–28.
- Lara Kriegel, "Narrating the Subcontinent in 1851: India at the Crystal Palace," in *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. Louise Purbrick (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2001), 146–78.

Week 2

- Jan 14 Lecture – Édouard Manet, *Olympia* (1865)
- Read Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, "Still Thinking about Olympia's Maid," *The Art Bulletin* 97, no. 4 (2015): 430–51.
- Jan 16 Lecture – Julia Margaret Cameron, *John Herschel* (1867)
- Read Robin E. Kelsey, "Julia Margaret Cameron Transfigures the Glitch," *Photography and the Art of Chance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2015), 66–101.

Week 3

- Jan 21 Martin Luther King's Birthday (No class)
- Jan 23 Lecture – Adolf Menzel, *Iron Rolling Mill* (1872–75)
- Read Michael Fried, "An Art of Embodiment: I" and "An Art of Embodiment: II," *Menzel's Realism: Art and Embodiment in Nineteenth-Century Berlin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 40–57.
- Werner Busch, "The Iron Rolling Mill: Apotheosis of Labor or Social Critique?" in *Adolph Menzel: The Quest for Reality*, trans. Carola Kleinstück-Schulman (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2017), 231–39.

Week 4

- Jan 28 Lecture – Loïe Fuller, *Serpentine Dance* (1893)
- Read Jacques Rancière, "The Dance of Light: Paris, Folies Bergère," in *Aisthesis: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art* (London: Verso, 2013), 93–109.

- Jan 30 Lecture – Medardo Rosso, *Bambino ebreo* (c. 1892–94)
- Read Sharon Hecker, “The Artist’s Experience of Migration” and “The Shifting Viewpoint of the Outsider,” in *A Moment’s Monument: Medardo Rosso and the International Origins of Modern Sculpture* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2017), 107–44.

Week 5

- Feb 4 Lecture – Max Klinger, *Elsa Asenijeff* (c. 1900)
- Read Friedrich Nietzsche, “The Dionysiac World View [1870],” in *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, trans. Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 119–38.
- Marsha Morton, “Spellbound: Klinger and the Psychology of Hypnosis, Nerves and the Unconscious Self,” in *Max Klinger. Wege zur Neubewertung*, eds. Pavla Langer, Zita Á. Pataki, and Thomas Pöpper (Leipzig: Plöttner, 2008), 182–99.
- Feb 6 Lecture – Hilma af Klint, *Altarpiece Nr. 1* (1907)
- Read Briony Fer, “Hilma af Klint: The Outsider Inside Herself,” in *Hilma af Klint: Seeing is Believing*, eds. Kurt Almqvist and Louise Belfrage (London: Koenig, 2017), 95–104.
- Visit *Outliers and American Vanguard Art*
Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)

Week 6

- Feb 11 CAA conference (No class)
- Feb 13 CAA conference (No class)

Feb 15	Museum Paper due (via email, 5pm)
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Week 7

- Feb 18 President’s Day (No class)
- Read Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, “A Letter [1902],” in *The Lord Chandos Letter and Other Writings*, trans. Joel Rotenberg (New York: New York Review Books, 2005), 117–28.
- Richard Sheppard, “Lord Chandos and His Discontents,” in *Modernism–Dada–Postmodernism* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 89–100.
- Feb 20 Lecture – Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d’Alger (O. J. R. M.)* (1907)
- Read Leo Steinberg, “The Philosophical Brothel,” *October* 44 (Spring 1988): 7–74.

Week 8

- Feb 25 Lecture – Gerrit Rietveld, *Red-Blue Chair* (1917–18)
- Read Yve-Alain Bois, “The De Stijl Idea,” in *Painting as Model* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 101–22.
- Feb 27 Lecture – Sophie Taeuber-Arp, *Dada Head* (1918)
- Read Bibiana Obler, “Taeuber, Arp, and the Politics of Cross-Stitch,” *The Art Bulletin* 91, no. 2 (June 2009): 207–29.

Mar 1	Extra Credit Opportunity – Symposium “Expanding Outliers in American Art,” LACMA
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Mar 1	Write a one-page synopsis of a talk that you attended and submit via email by 5pm on March 3. Completion of this assignment will apply toward improving your final grade on one of your other assignments at the end of the term. No late submissions accepted!
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Week 9

- Mar 4 Lecture – El Lissitzky, *Proun Room* (1923)
- Read Paul Valéry, “The Problem of Museums [1923],” in *Degas Manet Morisot*, trans. David Paul, *The Collected Works of Paul Valéry*, vol. 12 (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1960), 202–6.
- El Lissitzky, “Proun Room, Great Berlin Art Exhibition [1923],” in *El Lissitzky: Life Letters Texts*, ed. Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), 365.
- Éva Forgács, “Definitive Space: The Many Utopias of El Lissitzky’s Proun Room,” in *Situating El Lissitzky: Vitebsk, Berlin, Moscow*, eds. Nancy Perloff and Brian Reed (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2003), 47–78.
- Mar 6 Lecture – Hannah Höch, *Mother (From an Ethnographic Museum)* (1930)
- Read Siegfried Kracauer, “Working Women [1932],” in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, eds. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg (Berkeley: UC Press, 1994), 216–18.
- Maud Lavin, “From an Ethnographic Museum,” in *Cut with the Kitchen Knife: The Weimar Photomontages of Hannah Höch* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1993), 158–83.

Mar 8	Review Paper due (via email, 5pm)
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Week 10 Spring Break

- Mar 11 Spring Break (No class)
- Mar 13 Spring Break (No class)

Week 11

- Mar 18 Lecture – László Moholy-Nagy, *Light-Space Modulator* (1930)
- Read Rosalind E. Krauss, “Forms of Readymade,” in *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977), 69–103.
- Joyce Tsai, “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice: László Moholy-Nagy and His Light Prop for an Electrical Stage,” in *The Aesthetics of the Total Artwork: On Borders and Fragments*, eds. Anke Finger and Danielle Follett (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2011), 277–304.
- Mar 20 Lecture – Katarzyna Kobro, *Spatial Composition (9)* (1933)
- Read Yve-Alain Bois, “Strzemiński and Kobro: In Search of Motivation,” in *Painting as Model*, op. cit., 123–55.

Week 12

- Mar 25 Lecture – Erna Lendvai-Dircksen, *Das deutsche Volksgesicht* (1932)
- Read Paul Schultze-Naumburg, “Art and Race [1928]” and George Grosz, “Among Other Things, a Word for German Tradition [1931],” in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, op. cit., 496–502.
- Daniel H. Magilow, “Photographic Physiognomies: Diagnosing Germanness,” in *The Photography of Crisis: The Photo Essays of Weimar Germany* (University Park: Penn State UP, 2012), 92–146.
- Mar 27 Lecture – Malvina Hoffman, *Races of Mankind* (1930–33)
- Read Linda Nochlin, “Malvina Hoffman: A Life in Sculpture,” *Arts Magazine* 59, no. 3 (1984): 106–10.
- Linda Kim, [Chapter TBD] in *Race Experts: Sculpture, Anthropology, and the American Public in Malvina Hoffman’s Races of Mankind* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), [#].

Week 13

- Apr 1 Lecture – Jackson Pollock, *Number 1A*, 1948 (1948)
- Read Megan R. Luke, “Painting in the Round,” *Getty Research Journal* 9/S1 (2017): 149–82.
- Apr 3 Lecture – Ruth Asawa, *Untitled (S.027, Hanging, Six-and-a-Half Open Hyperbolic Shapes that Penetrate Each Other)* (1954)
- Read Daniell Cornell, “The Art of Space: Ruth Asawa’s Sculptural Installations,” in *The Sculpture of Ruth Asawa: Contours in the Air* (San Francisco and Los Angeles: de Young Museum; Japanese American National Museum, 2006), 138–64.

Week 14

- Apr 8 Lecture – Piero Manzoni, *Living Sculpture* (1961)
- Read Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, “Sculpture: Publicity and the Poverty of Experience [1996],” in *Formalism and Historicity: Models and Methods in Twentieth-Century Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015), 509–28.
- Apr 10 Lecture – Eva Hesse, *Hang Up* (1966)
- Read Cindy Nemser, “A Conversation with Eva Hesse [1970],” in *Art Talk: Conversations with 12 Women Artists* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1975), 200–29.
- Lucy Lippard, “Some Critical Issues,” in *Eva Hesse* (New York: New York UP, 1976), 185–214.

Week 15

- Apr 15 Lecture – Anni Albers, *Camino Real* (1967)
- Read Briony Fer, “Close to the Stuff the World is Made of: Weaving as a Modern Project,” in *Anni Albers*, eds. Ann Coxon, Briony Fer, and Maria Müller-Schareck (London: Tate, 2018), 20–43.
- Apr 17 Lecture – Sam Gilliam, *Green April* (1969)
- Read Jonathan P. Binstock, “Discarding the Frame,” in *Sam Gilliam: A Retrospective* (Washington, DC: Corcoran Gallery of Art, 2005), 43–81.

Week 16

- Apr 23 Final Review
- Apr 25 Extended Office Hours

Apr 26	Final Review Paper due (via email, 5pm)
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STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to your TA no later than your first section (January 18). DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Please visit <http://dsp.usc.edu> for more information.
Contact: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), ability@usc.edu

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook (<http://scampus.usc.edu>), contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/COURSE CONTINUITY IN A CRISIS

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university's site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness (<http://preparedness.usc.edu>).