

## European Art Appreciation

### Outline

Introduction: Presuming that there will be roughly twelve weeks of classes I have outlined the segments by weeks, realizing, of course, that this will have to be adapted to real time. I am basing the course on a course I have developed over a lifetime of teaching called “The Creative Process” and a book I have written but not quite finished called “Mimesis,” which is the Greek word for Imitation. It indicates that how men think about art has determined and continues to determine the art of any people in any age and is a record of the evolution of human consciousness itself.

1. Art as Imitation. I will start with Greek Art as the beginning of the kind of art which attempts to represent given objects in the real world. The Greek Artists developed this over centuries, of course, but it took Plato to give it theoretical explanation which he does in many works but especially “The Republic.” We will look at examples of Greek Art and read and discuss some of Plato’s ideas. If possible, a visit to the Louvre, at least on the internet.
2. Art as discovery. We will then see how Aristotle differs from Plato, even though he adapts the definition. Show how Greek Art reached its golden age in architecture and sculpture and then morphs into Roman Art. Visit the Roman Ruins at Thesee. Show slides. Etc.
3. Art as emanation. See how Classical Greek and Roman Art morphs into Romanesque and Christian Art with the rise of Christianity and a view of art, not longer as the imitation of nature but an illustration of the “supernatural” as written in the bible. Close look at the Abbey of Pontlevoy itself, some other Romanesque Churches in the area and a sit visit to the Fontevrault.
4. Art as Sacrament. St. Thomas Aquinas writing in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, at the height of the Middle Ages defines art as “a habit of the practical intellect.” Names are unknown because art became craft in the service of Throne and Altar and, like the sacraments themselves, “visible signs of invisible grace.” We will make a day trip to Chartres and visit craft shops as well as the incredible temple itself.
5. Christian Humanism and the Exaltation of the Artist. We will zero in on the Renaissance, first in Italy and then in France, and see how it was not just a rediscovery of the classic art of Greece and Rome but also a novelty, exalting the humanity of Christ and the value of individual style. A visit to the Louvre will be critical at this time and also a pointer towards a visit to Florence and Rome. We will also see local examples of the French Renaissance such as Chambord and one wing of the Chateau at Blois.

6. Art as propaganda. We will study the evolution of the style of the high renaissance into mannerism and the absolutization of style. Then see how it was used as propaganda for the Throne and the Altar, especially in the baroque style as patronized by the Jesuit Order. We will study how the chapel itself at the Abbey attempts to incorporate the baroque into the basically medieval structure. Also etch the different between the Catholic greats such as Rubens who continue to imagine biblical themes as opposed to Protestant artists such as Rembrandt who expresses the inner man, especially in his self portraits.
7. Art as original form. As baroque became rococo and the age of the Enlightenment dawns, art pretty much continue to use academic form but uses more and more secular themes. France becomes the center of European Art and Paris the center of France with Versailles as the then and always prime example. Discussion of the role of Voltaire not only as dramatist but as a revolutionary thinker who along with Rousseau and others instigate the revolutionary thinking that leads to the French revolution. A visit to Versailles will be in order. Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgement will be discussed as leading to the new forms in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
8. Art as an expression of Mind. The Kantian revolution leads to the Phenomenology of Hegel who sees art as up there with religion and philosophy as one of the three highest expressions of mind, which, altogether comprise culture. Art begins to be seen as evolving like mind itself. The neo-classicism in France after Napoleon is a brief attempt at a renaissance of the renaissance but soon gives way to a break away from academic art to an art of originality and revolution as an ongoing artistic mandate in which the artist creates his own rules. A visit to the Musee d'Orsay would be the perfect complement to this.
9. Art as a symbol system. Trace the history of modern art from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century into the 20<sup>th</sup> concentrating on France where most of it happened. This will be the place to discuss the impressionist, the expressionists, and the great 20<sup>th</sup> Century giants such as Picasso and Matisse.
10. Art in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Trace the movement of the Center of Art from Paris to New York and thereby its globalization and the emergence of an International Style. Visit to the Beauborg and some avant garde galleries in Tours and Paris.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement**

If a student has a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act and requires accommodations, he/she should contact the Office of Disability Accommodations (ODA) for information on appropriate policies and procedures.

Disabilities covered by the ADA may include learning, psychiatric, physical disabilities, or chronic health disorders. Students can contact ODA if they are not certain whether a medical condition/disability qualifies.

The contact information is:

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118 College Drive # 8586  
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Individuals with hearing impairments can contact ODA using the Mississippi Relay Service at 1-800-582-2233 (TTY) or email Suzy Hebert at [Suzanne.Hebert@usm.edu](mailto:Suzanne.Hebert@usm.edu).