

University of Arkansas - Fort Smith
5210 Grand Avenue
P. O. Box 3649
Fort Smith, AR 72913-3649
479-788-7000

General Syllabus

AHIS 3523 History of American Art

Credit Hours: 3

Lecture Hours: 3

Laboratory: 0

Prerequisite(s): HUMN 2563 Humanities through the Arts, or AHIS 2873 Art History Survey II, or consent of instructor.

Effective Catalog: 2019-2020

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

Explores the broad expanse of artistic expression in what is now the United States, including the work of indigenous peoples, folk art, and the decorative arts. Emphasizes the cultural and critical interpretation of works of art from the Colonial period through the Armory Show of 1913.

B. Additional Information

This course will both fulfill one of the required upper-level courses in art history for Studio Art and Graphic Design majors, as well as elective upper-level courses. It will also fulfill an upper-level elective for the Art History Minor. Non-majors are welcome; it would be an excellent course, for example, for History majors specializing in American history.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Identify artists, major works of art, and artistic styles associated with American art.
2. Discuss major works of art in terms of “Who, What, Where, How, & Why” in order to fully understand their importance.
3. Discern artist intent(s) and how it manifested itself in the creation of art.
4. Identify and use basic art historical vocabulary in discussing and writing about American works of art (becoming visually literate).
5. Develop analytical and critical thinking skills, as well as research skills.

6. Identify the varied roles played by historical, economic, and cultural forces in shaping artistic creation in America from the Colonial period through the Armory Show of 1913.

B. University Learning Outcomes

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Analytical Skills

Critical Thinking Skills

Students will identify and evaluate works of art, and use this information in tandem with historical, religious, economic, sociological, anthropological, political, and geographical factors in order to interpret and analyze the artwork's meaning and value to its makers/patrons/audiences.

Communication Skills (written and oral)

Students will effectively convey their analysis and interpretation of works of art through a variety of written forms. Students will acquire and use appropriate art historical vocabulary and will be able to successfully articulate their ideas and pertinent information through class discussion and oral presentations.

Ethical Decision Making

Students will model ethical-decision making processes. Students will explore ethical issues in art history, including art acquisition, sale, theft, restoration/conservation and installation, as well as art repatriation.

III. Major Course Topics

- A. European encounters with Native-American artistic traditions
- B. Colonial Art and Architecture
- C. Federal Style Art and Architecture
- D. American tradition of landscape painting, particularly Hudson River School and Luminism
- E. Nineteenth-century Photography
- F. The Civil War and its aftermath
- G. Role of Paris and Dusseldorf in the development of American Art
- H. American Impressionism
- I. Art at the Turn of the Twentieth Century
- J. The Armory Show
- K. Persistence of Naturalism in the American Tradition