Art History

Semester 4: Baroque, Rococo, Classicism, Romanticism, Realism Art (1600–1870)

This semester covers the styles and ideologies of 17th–19th century European art, in chronological and thematic order, with an emphasis on the relationship between visuality, intellectual history, and social context.

**Thematic units:**

Baroque in Italy and Spain

Flemish and Dutch Baroque

French Classicizing Baroque

Rococo Painting and Interior Design

Classicism, Romanticism, Realism

**Featured Artists:** Caravaggio, Bernini, Rubens, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Watteau, Boucher, David, Goya, Delacroix, Courbet, Manet

**Featured Artists and Works:**

Caravaggio: The Calling of Saint Matthew

Bernini: The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa

Velázquez: The Ladies of the Court

Watteau: Departure for the Island of Kythera

David: The Oath of the Horatii

Delacroix: Liberty Leading the People

Friedrich: The Wanderer Above the Sea of Mist

Courbet: The Quarries

**Weekly Breakdown (14 Weeks)**

Week 1: Introduction to the 17th–19th Century 19th-century art

Changes in religious and political context

Overview of stylistic concepts: Baroque, Rococo, Classicism, Romanticism, Realism

Evolution of academicism and the art institutional system

Art and power: court cultures in Europe

Week 2: Baroque art in Italy

Caravaggio and the chiaroscuro revolution

Bernini: sculpture, architecture and drama

Counter-Reformation and visuality

The “sacred theater” – Bernini in the ecstasy of Saint Teresa

Week 3: Spanish Baroque painting

El Greco: Mannerism and spirituality

Velázquez: court portrait and illusion

The religious and realistic duality of Spanish painting

Velázquez: Las Meninas as a self-reflexive image

Week 4: Flemish Baroque: Rubens and his followers

Peter Paul Rubens: dynamism, sensuality, historical painting

Van Dyck: portrait art in England

Mythological and religious narratives

Rubens and the aesthetics of the female body

Week 5: Dutch Golden Age painting

Rembrandt: light and shadow, portraits, biblical scenes

Vermeer: the intimacy of everyday life

Genre paintings, still lifes, cityscapes

The visual language of Protestant bourgeois culture

Week 6: French classicist baroque and rationalism

Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain: antique-style painting

The French academic system

The relationship between art and reason

Poussin: The rules of classicist narrative

Week 7: Rococo art in Europe

French Rococo: Watteau, Boucher, Fragonard

The world of lightness, sensuality and theatre

Rococo decorative art and interiors

Rococo as an escape from reality?

Week 8: Classicism and the Art of the Enlightenment

Rediscovering the Ancient Ideal

Jacques-Louis David: Revolution and Virtue

The Classicist Ideal of Architecture

Political Painting – David and Jacobin Aesthetics

Week 9: Romanticism I. Painting and Idea

The Concept of Romantic Art

Géricault: The Raft of the Medusa

Delacroix: Orientalism, Emotion, Revolution

The Role of the Hero, Tragedy and Emotion

Week 10: Romanticism II. Nature, Vision and the Inner World

Caspar David Friedrich: Nature as Spiritual Landscape

Turner and Constable: The Transformation of Landscape Painting

Nature and the Theory of the Sublime

Friedrich: The Solitary Man and Eternity

Week 11: Sculpture and Architecture 1750–1850

Classical Sculpture: Canova, Thorvaldsen

Historical Styles, Eclecticism

Romantic Architecture: Neo-Gothic and Picturesque

Styles of the Past as a Search for National Identity (Neo-Romanesque, Neo-Gothic, Neo-Renaissance, Neo-Baroque)

Week 12: Realism I. The Denial of Romanticism

The Concept and Political Background of Realism

Courbet: The Dramatic Vision of Everyday Life

The Documentary Role of Painting

What is Reality? – Courbet and the Aesthetic Scandal

Week 13: Realism II. The Painter as Social Observer

Millet and the Peasant World

“Academic Realism” – Gérôme and Bouguereau

Critical Realism and the Representation of Urban Life

The Limits of Realism: Sociography or Lyricism?

Week 14: Summary: On the Threshold of Modern Art

The Changing Role of the Artist

The Mixture of Styles at the Turn of the Century

A Transition to Impressionism

The Legacy of the 19th Century: Classicism or Avant-Garde Precursor?

**Recommended Readings:**

Hugh Honour – John Fleming: Art in the Modern Age

Gombrich: The History of Art (Baroque–Realism)

Linda Nochlin: Why Were There No Great Women Artists? (critical addition)

Michael Levey: Baroque and Rococo

**Exam questions (20)**

Baroque art (1600–1700)

1. Characteristics of Italian Baroque painting: Caravaggio and his followers – Chiaroscuro, realism, religious drama

2. Master of Baroque sculpture: Gian Lorenzo Bernini: Ecstasy of Saint Teresa, David, movement and theatricality

3. Spanish Baroque painting: El Greco, Zurbarán, Velázquez – court and mysticism

4. Flemish Baroque: Rubens and Van Dyck – Passion, historical monumentality, portrait painting

5. Dutch Golden Age painting: Rembrandt, Vermeer, genre, still life and landscape – the world of bourgeois commission

6. On the border between French Baroque and Classicism: Poussin and Lorrain – Antiquity, rationalism, historical landscape

Rococo (c. 1715–1780)

7. French Rococo stylistic features of painting: Watteau, Boucher, Fragonard – sensuality, lightness, pastoral scenes

8. Rococo interiors and decorative arts: Furniture, porcelain, ornamentation – the art of everyday life

Classicism (ca. 1750–1820)

9. The development and theoretical foundations of classicism: Johann Winckelmann, the antique role model and “noble simplicity”

10. The art of Jacques-Louis David – Political painting: The Oath of the Horatii, The Death of Marat

11. Antonio Canova and classicist sculpture – Antique ideal of form, sensuality, idealized body

12. Classicist architecture in Europe: Public spaces, churches, museums: Soufflot, Ledoux, Schinkel

Romanticism (ca. 1800–1850)

13. Romantic painting in France: Géricault and Delacroix – Revolution, orientalism, emotional intensity

14. The romantic landscape: Friedrich, Turner, Constable – Nature as an inner world, the concept of the sublime

15. Romantic architecture and historicism – Neo-Gothic, picturesque, search for a national style (e.g. Viollet-le-Duc)

Realism (ca. 1840–1870)

16. The idea of realism in painting – Representation of social reality, choice of subject

17. Gustave Courbet – The radical face of realism – The quarries, burial in Ornans, the spectacle as a document

18. Jean-François Millet and the representation of the peasant world – Simplicity, work, the relationship between man and nature

19. Academic realism and the official style of the Salon: Bouguereau, Gérôme – idealized realism, technical perfection

Thematic item

20. Representation of the body from the Baroque to realism – The body as an aesthetic, sacred, political and social means of expression