

**Department of Art and Art History  
University of Texas at Austin**

***INTRODUCTION TO THE VISUAL ARTS  
ARH 301 – Summer 2010***

Unique Numbers: 78482

Lectures: M-F 11:00-12:30

Room for Lectures: ART 1.120

Instructor: Glenn Peers

Office: DFA 1.112

Office Hours: F 8-10, or contact me by e-mail (gpeers@mail.utexas.edu)  
or by telephone (232-2594) for appointments

**Description:**

This introductory course aims to provide students with a basic understanding of why art and architecture are constants of human experience. The course takes a thematic view of the history of how and why we have always been making and re-making our environment. It spans pre-historic to modern, and it attempts to provide an overview of the history of visual experience.

**Objectives:**

1. To gain a basic understanding of some key concepts concerning the history of art and architecture. To do so, learning about styles and formal elements of art and architecture will be key, but further extracting meaning from those styles and elements will be the ultimate skill learned.
2. To learn to look at art works carefully and to articulate meaning from looking.

**TEXT:**

Janet Marquardt and Stephen Eskilson, *Frames of Reference: Art, History, and the World*, New York, 2003 [= **ME**].

The text is available at the Co-op. It will also be on reserve in the Fine Arts Library (FAL): N 5300 M28 2003.

**EVALUATION:**

1. Three in-class lecture tests worth 15% each (dates: June 14<sup>th</sup>, June 25<sup>th</sup>, July 8<sup>th</sup>). These tests will include slide identification (the images will be selected only from those found in your text **and** discussed in class) and multiple-choice questions.

2. Three assignments each worth 15%. These assignments are due June 10<sup>th</sup>, June 18<sup>th</sup>, July 2<sup>nd</sup>. All papers should be given to me personally or handed in at the Art-History office (DFA 2.124) before 4:30 p.m. on the due date. Grades for late assignments will drop ten points for each day that the assignment is late (that is, from a perfect 15 marks to 5 for one day's late submission, and so on—marks will continue to be deducted after the participation grade is zero).
3. Attendance and Participation: 10%.
4. +/- grades will be assigned according to the system in effect since the fall of 2009.

Attendance policy: Every student is responsible for attending class because material will be presented and images seen that are not in the assigned text. Even getting a colleague's notes will not recreate the lectures. Attendance will be taken in class and in tutorials. Students are permitted 1 unexcused absence in total. Otherwise, absences must be explained to me or five points will be taken from the attendance grade, at the rate of five points per class missed from the **final grade**.

Participation: Classes will have a lot of discussion based on the text readings, and so student participation in discussion will also be factored into that 10% component of the final grade.

Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information please visit the Student Judicial Services Web site: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>.

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259 or via <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

### **EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS:**

Confine your discussion in each of these three assignments to 500 words only! If you exceed this limit, you will be penalized. All papers should be given to me personally or handed into the Art History office (DFA 2.124) before 4:30 p.m. of the due date. Grades for late assignments will drop ten points for each day that the assignment is late (that is, from a perfect 15 marks to 5 for one day's late submission, and so on). Choose a medium covered in the class (painting, sculpture, photography, architecture), so no cinematic representations (film, video, television). Include illustration(s) of the art discussed.

### **Assignment 1: REPRESENTING DIVINITY (Due June 10<sup>th</sup>)**

One of the themes we will be exploring in this class has been the deep desire of human societies to seek God and/or divine beings through art. This desire appears to be a constant of human experience. Following on that idea, this assignment asks you to look at images of God in the society you live in. This assignment is not necessarily concerned with faith but rather with how art works, or does not work, to make the divine present and real. Look around you (in the media, Internet, churches, synagogues, mosques, your doctor's office, etc.) and choose an example of a representation of divinity. Examine the representation from the point of view of medium, style and iconography, as well as its context: how and why was divinity represented in the case you have chosen?

### **Assignment 2: MUSEUMS (Due June 18<sup>th</sup>)**

We often assume that the exhibitions we see in museums and galleries are presented in an objective manner, but is that so? Every exhibition is a product of its time and place, and nothing is natural, necessary or inevitable about the way art is presented to us. For this assignment, visit a collection on campus, and write a critical evaluation about its contents and presentation. Why these objects? Why are they presented in a glass case, on the wall, on the floor, etc? why is the lighting done that way? What do the explanatory texts (if they are there) tell us and what do they not tell us?

### **Assignment 3: WORD AND IMAGE (Due July 2<sup>nd</sup>)**

We often make the mistake of thinking that images simply illustrate a text or words, but the work images do is much more complex than we might think at first glance. This assignment asks you to examine the relationship between a particular image and the text it accompanies. Choose one of the images from the list below, and discuss it in terms of how it relates to its text: does the image literally render the text, or does it select elements from the text, or does it even introduce new elements not in the text at all? How does the medium and function of the image alter its relationship to the text?

Using the web, find an illustrated text of Classical Antiquity, Hebrew or Christian Scripture, and choose one illustrated passage as the subject of this assignment.

**N.B.** Check the blackboard site for this syllabus and any other announcements for the classes or tutorials. Go to <http://courses.utexas.edu> and log in.

### **SUMMARY OF COURSE EVALUATION:**

ASSIGNMENT #1	June 10 <sup>th</sup>	15%
TEST #1	June 14 <sup>th</sup>	15%
ASSIGNMENT #2	June 18 <sup>th</sup>	15%
TEST #2	June 25 <sup>th</sup>	15%
ASSIGNMENT #3	July 2 <sup>nd</sup>	15%
TEST #3	July 8 <sup>th</sup>	15%
ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION		10

## SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, READINGS, TESTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

### JUNE

3

Introduction

4-7

Earth as Art (ME 3-23)

8-9

Representations of the Gods (ME 25-49)

#### **First Assignment Due on June 10<sup>th</sup> by 4:30 p.m.**

10

Art of Rulers (ME 51-91)

11

Blanton Museum

14

Art of Rulers Continued

15

Review

16

**TEST #1**

#### **Second Assignment Due on the 18<sup>th</sup> by 4:30 p.m.**

17-18

Pilgrimage (ME 93-125)

21-22

Patrons and the Role of the Artist  
(ME 127-67)

23-24

Art and Collecting (ME 169-205)

24

Art and Revolution (ME 207-39)

24

Review

25

**TEST**

28-29

Utopia and Dystopia (ME 241-69)

30

Collections

1-2

Art, the Spirit World, and the Inner Mind  
(ME 271-309)

#### **Third Assignment Due on the 5<sup>th</sup> by 4:30 p.m.**

5-6

Identity in Contemporary Art  
(ME 311-49)

7

Review

8

**TEST #3**