

Lingnan University

Department of Visual Studies

B.A. (Honors) in Visual Studies

Course Title	:	The origin and functions of art
Course Code	:	CLB9009
No. of Credits/Term	:	3
Mode of Tuition	:	Lecture and tutorial
Class Contact Hours	:	3 hours per week
Category in Major Programme	:	Core Curriculum - Humanities and the Arts Cluster

Brief Course description:

The course aims to introduce students to the origin and functions of art in human history. It intends to arouse student interest in using an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the meaning of art to man and society. It begins with the question of where art comes from. By studying the artifacts of Neolithic times and primitive cultures, it investigates the behaviour and theory of human creativity from a bio-behavioural perspective. It then proceeds to see how 'art' began and has become an important component in different civilizations. By scrutinizing a large spectrum of artifacts and art works of different times and places, it will examine the social and cultural contexts of art.

Aims

The course aims to develop in students the ability to think critically about art and creativity in their broadest sense, and articulate their understanding in a variety of ways. Through this course, students will examine art from a wide range of perspectives, including biological, cultural, social and psychological points of view. The course is also intended to enhance students' research abilities, enabling them to bring a critical and informed view to discussions of various issues related to art

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. identify and lucidly discuss the meanings and functions of art;
2. compare and contrast the impact of religion, cultural norms, and forms of artistic expression, presenting their argument in a coherent and scholarly manner;
3. demonstrate the breadth of their knowledge and understanding of the relationship between art and human by their ability to develop and present compelling arguments supporting a view regarding art in human civilization.

Indicative content:

1. Creativity: a biological impulse
2. Making special: the beginning of art
3. The aesthetic function of art
4. Art as a means of reaching the unknown
5. Art as narrative and representation
6. Art as emotional expression
7. Art as a means of enhancement
8. Art as symbol
9. Art as medicine
10. Definitions of 'art'

Teaching Methods

The course will be taught by lectures and follow-up tutorials. The lectures provide background knowledge and information, introduce students to various functions and meanings of art in history. The tutorials will involve small group discussions on the lectures, weekly readings and relevant issues arising from students' interest.

Measurement of learning outcomes

Students' progress will be assessed by their performance in class participation, presentation, essay writing and examination at the end of the term on the students' ability in articulation of their knowledge and understanding of the functions of art and relevant issues concerning art and civilization. For the 2 presentations, a rubric has been designed to evaluate 5 aspects of the students' performance including i) clarity and summary of key concepts and ideas, ii) usefulness and relevance of points, iii) structure of the presentation, iv) evidence of critical thinking, v) time management. The distribution of marks for the assessments is:

Assessment

Class participation 10% - to assess students' articulation in discussions of the meanings and functions of art.

2 Presentations 40% - to assess students' argument in comparing and contrasting the impact of religion, cultural norms, and forms of artist expression on art.

Term essay 20% - to assess students' breadth and depth of their knowledge of the relationship between art and humanity by developing compelling arguments in a topic of their choice.

Final Examination 30% - to assess students' breadth of knowledge and understanding of the subjects and key concepts related to art and human civilization.

Required Reading:

Benton, Janetta R. and DiYanni, Robert, *Arts and Culture* (Prentice Hall, 2007).

Dissanayake, Ellen, *What is Art For?* (Seattle: University of Washington, 1990).

Database resources:

Grove Art Online (http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/book/oao_gao)

Art Throughout the Ages

(<http://lingnan.lunaimaging.com:8082/BrowserInsight/BrowserInsight?un=viewer&pw=readonly>)

References:

Boardman, John. *The World of Ancient Art* (Thames and Hudson, 2006).

Budd, Malcolm (1995) *Values of Art: Pictures, Poetry and Music*. London: Penguin.

Currie, Gregory (2009) 'Art of the Paleolithic', in S. Davies, K. Higgins, R. Hopkins, R. Stecker., D. Cooper (eds.) *A Companion to Aesthetics*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Dutton, Denis (2009) *The Art Instinct: Beauty, Pleasure, and Human Evolution*. New York: Bloomsbury Press.

Davies, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Art* (Blackwell, 2006).

Gombrich, E.H. *The Story of Art* (Phaidon Press, 1995).

Iseminger, Gary (2004) *The Aesthetic Function of Art*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Jung, Carl. *Man and His Symbols* (Arkana. 1990).

Lucie-Smith, Edward. *Art and Civilization* (Harry N Abrams, 1993).

Martin, David, Jacobus, Lee. *Humanities through the Arts* (McGraw-Hill Humanities, 2003)

Murowchick, Robert ed., *China: Ancient Culture, Modern Land (Cradle of Civilization)* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

Sherman, Dennis. *Western Civilization: Sources, Images, and Interpretations, from the Renaissance to the Present* (McGraw-Hill Humanities, 2006).

Spitz, Ellen Handler. *Art and Psyche: A Study in Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics* (Yale University Press, 1989).

Spivey, Nigel. *How Art Made the World: A Journey to the Origins of Human Creativity* (Basic Books, 2006).

Stecker, Robert. *Artworks: Definition, Meaning, Value* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

Thorp, Robert and Vinoqr, Richard Ellis. *Chinese Art and Culture* (Prentice Hall, 2003).

Vialou, Denis. *Discoveries: Prehistoric Art and Civilization* (Harry N Abrams, 1998).

Waley, A. *Oriental Art and Culture* (Cosmo Publications, 2003).

Wilkins, David, Schultz, Bernie and Linduff, Katheryn. *Art Past, Art Present* (Prentice Hall, 2004).

Walton, Kendall L. (1990) *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press,

Zangwill, Nick (2007) *Aesthetic Creation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3* hours of class contact and 6* hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.

* Numbers of hours are subject to adjustment for individual courses.