

## VIS 257: In Pursuit of Modernity – 20<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese Art

### **Brief Course Description:**

The course is a comprehensive study of Chinese art in the twentieth century. It is structured with a thematic emphasis in a chronological order, giving equal attention to technique, stylistic analysis, and interpretation in historical and cultural context. The establishment of the Republic of China in 1911 has turned the history of Chinese art to a new page that is best described as ‘modern’. With the unprecedented political, social and cultural upheavals encompassing China at the beginning of the century, Chinese artists defined ‘art’ in a new light. New forms of art, conceiving syntheses of new ideas and values, fostered a diversified development of Chinese art. Such development was however interrupted, first by the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, then by the Communist Party’s seizure of power in 1949. From 1949 to late 1970s, creativity in mainland China was confined to works of political propaganda, continuous development of Chinese art was scattered in areas outside mainland China by Chinese artists living in Hong Kong, Taiwan and abroad. Approaching the end of the twentieth century, as a result of the reopening policy adopted by the People’s Republic of China, Chinese artists once again started off their explosive search for new forms and styles, much as their predecessors had done in the beginning of the century, but with very different purposes.

### **Aims:**

The course will enable students:

1. to look into the development of Chinese art of the Twentieth century in a larger political, social and cultural context
2. to analyze the relationship between art and politics, and art and commercial markets by examining the works of artists in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan after 1911
3. to think critically about the meaning of modernity in Chinese art
4. to be able to engage in discussion about contemporary Chinese art and its relationship to globalization

### **Learning Outcomes:**

This course is designed to enhance basic knowledge, critical evaluation and analytical appreciation of Chinese art in the Twentieth century.

Completion of the course should grant students:

1. a basic understanding of how Chinese artists after 1911 saw the world anew and how they defined their roles and the function of art
2. knowledge of the main trends of artistic ideals and the styles of Chinese art in the

twentieth century

The knowledge will enable students to:

1. recognize the complexity and problems in defining 'modernity' in Chinese art
2. assess the value, significance and impacts of Chinese art in the twentieth-century

Engage in further, independent learning and reflection on the meaning and value of modern and contemporary Chinese art.

**Indicative Content:**

1. A new page of history: collapse of the Qing Empire
2. Social and cultural transformations in early twentieth century China
3. Social status and roles of Chinese artists in the early twentieth century
4. Visions of Chinese painters in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century
5. New definition of art
6. Main trends of artistic ideals before 1937
7. The 'traditionalists' and the 'reformists'
8. New movement brought forth by the Sino-Japanese War
9. Art and politics: development of Chinese art in China after 1949
10. Art and fame: development of Chinese art in HK and overseas after 1949
11. Art in a global context: new developments in Chinese art after 1970s
12. Problems of defining 'modernity' in Chinese painting

**Teaching Method:**

Lectures and tutorial discussions

**Measurement of Learning Outcomes**

Students' progress towards the learning outcomes outlined above will be measured by continuous assessments focused on the students' successful engagement with the lectures, active participation in tutorial discussions, reading and understanding of critical texts, performance in presentations and written assignments. In addition, students' knowledge of the subject will be assessed by a final examination at the end of the term.

**Assessment:**

65% Continuous Assessment

35% Final Examination

### **Required Readings:**

Sullivan, Michael, *Art and artists of twentieth-century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

Andrews, Julia F. and Kuiyi Shen. *A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-Century China*. NY: Henry N. Abrams, 1998.

### **Supplementary Readings:**

Sullivan, Michael. *The Arts of China*, 4th ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Clarke, David. *Modern Chinese Art*. NY/HK: Oxford UP, 2000.

Kao, Mayching, ed. *Twentieth-Century Chinese Painting*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979. Li, Chutsing. *Trends in Modern Chinese Painting*. Ascona: Artibus Asiae, 1979. Noth, Jochen, et al., eds. *China Avant-garde: Counter-currents in Art and Culture*. HK, NY: Oxford UP, 1994.

Lu, Sheldon H., ed. *China, Transnational Visuality, Global Postmodernity*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002.

Clunas, Craig. *Art in China*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Barnhart, Richard et al. *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.

Laing, Ellen Johnston. *The Winking Owl: Art in the People's Republic of China*. Berkeley:

*Zhongguo xiandai meishu quanji* (A complete collection of modern Chinese fine arts). 10 vols. Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu, 1997. [perhaps the best anthology of works of modern art]

Zhu, Boxiong and Ruilin Chen. *Zhongguo xi hua wu shi nian, 1898-1949*. (Fifty Years of Chinese Western-style Painting 1898-1949) Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1989.

*The Art of the Gao Brothers of the Lingnan School*. HK: Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1995. *The Art of Xu Beihong*. HK: Urban Council, 1988.

Farrer, Anne. *Wu Guanzhong: A Twentieth-Century Chinese Painter*. London: British Museum, 1992. Fu, Shen. *Challenging the Past: The Paintings of Chang Dai-chien*. Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1991. Kearns, Maxwell K. and Judith Smith, eds., *Chinese Art: Modern Expressions*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001, 78-116.

Laing, Ellen Johnston. *Selling Happiness: Calendar Posters and Visual Culture in Early-Twentieth-Century China*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004. Lang,

Shaojun. "The Precursors of Modern Chinese Art." Noth, Jochen, et.al., eds. *China Avant-garde: Counter-currents in Art and Culture*. HK, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, 46-49.

Sherman Cochran, ed. *Inventing Nanjing Road: Commerical Culture in Shanghai, 1900-1945*. Ithaca, NY: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 1999.

Wu, Lawrence. "Kang Youwei and the Westernization of Modern Chinese Art." *Orientalisms* 21, 3 (March 1990): 46-53.

Chang, Tsong-Zung. *China's New Art, Post-1989/With a Retrospective from 1979-1989*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.

Cohen, Joan. *The New Chinese Painting 1949-1986*. NY: Harry N Abrams, 1987.

潘耀昌編 《中國近現代美術教育史》(杭州：中國美術學院出版社，2002)。

林木 《二十世紀中國畫研究－現代部分》(廣西：廣西美術，2000)。

翟墨 《20世紀中國大師畫論系列》(河南：河南人民出版社，1999)。

陳履生編 《近百年中國畫研究》(北京：人民美術，1996)。

曹意強 范景中編 《20世紀中國畫》(浙江：人民美術出版社，1997)。

顧森編 《百年中國美術經典 1－5》(深圳：海天出版社，1998)。

萬青力 《畫家與畫史》(浙江：中國美術學院，1997)。

郎紹君 《論現代中國美術》(江蘇：江蘇美術，1996)。

阮榮春、胡光華 《中國近代美術史》(香港：商務印，1997)。

羅淑敏 《張大千與現代中國畫》(香港：信諾出版社，2007)。

張少俠、李小山 《中國現代繪畫史》(南京：江蘇美術出版社，1986)。

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.