

Artistic Diversity in Central Europe – Exploring Art in Germany from 1900 to the Present

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FU-BEST Course Number:	FU-BEST Online 1
Live Sessions:	Thursday, 6 – 7.30 p.m. CET (Berlin time)
Duration:	Feb. 11 – May 13, 2021
Language of Instruction:	English
Contact Hours:	30
ECTS Credits:	4

Course Description

This course will survey the visual arts in Germany from the rise of modernism around 1900 to the present after postmodernism. The aim is to closely study the individual works and interpret them critically by analyzing their formal structure, style and technique, iconography etc. We will investigate the concerns of the artists who created them, and place the works within their wider historical, philosophical, political, social and cultural contexts as well as within the international development of the visual arts in Western Europe and – in the second half of the 20th century – the US.

To understand 20th-century art and its role in society, it is paramount to take into account theoretical thinking and the philosophical climate shaped by Sigmund Freud, Charles Sanders Peirce and others. Hence, the course will also acquaint students with major philosophical ideas of this period and their implications for visual artworks. This will include reflections by art historians on the methods deemed appropriate for studying the objects and ideas which constitute their discipline.

Learning Objectives

In addition to establishing the basic chronological and stylistic evolution of art/painting during the 20th century, the course will also be examining the variety of factors that influenced key artworks and art movements such as Expressionism, Dada and Postmodern Art. Throughout the course, we should keep asking ourselves, "why did this artwork look the way it did?", thus discovering that there are a multitude of factors that explain the creation and the historical and philosophical evolution of an artwork.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify the hallmarks of and rationales behind a variety of artworks.
- Make educated deductions why, when or how the paintings/artworks were designed that way.
- Identify and explain the different developments of styles, movements and theories related to the artworks.

Student Prerequisites

Students should have completed at least three semesters of higher education when the course starts and need to possess English language abilities in speaking and writing on the Upper Intermediate Level (at least B2, preferably above).

General Requirements

Attendance of the weekly live sessions is mandatory (for the specific time slot, see above). These live sessions will be combined with recorded video lessons and intensive work through the online course platform, both individually and in groups. Please see course requirements for the various formats and weight of the course assignments as well as forms of assessment.

This course features a certain amount of independent coursework and thus expects you to be able to set up a self-disciplined study routine. We recommend that you make sure to have a quiet and appropriate working space. To ensure a comfortable learning environment for all, please adhere to our [Code of Online Conduct](#).

Technical Requirements

Stable Internet connection.

Fully functional device, such as computer, laptop or tablet (use of smart phones is not recommended) with camera and microphone, headset recommended.

Recommended operating systems: Windows 7 or higher or MacOS 10.13 or higher. Avoid using a VPN.

Software: Webex Meetings.

Course Requirements

Live Online Attendance (min. 75% required) & Participation: 200 Points (20%)

Presentation and Handout: 150 Points (15%)

Midterm slides: 100 Points (10%)

Midterm questions: 100 Points (10%)

Midterm essay: 100 Points (10%)

Final slides: 100 Points (10%)

Final questions: 100 Points (10%)

Term-Paper: 150 Points (15%)

Grading

FU Grade	Points of 500	Points of 1,000
1.0	490-500	980-1,000
1.3	475-489	950-979
1.7	450-474	900-949
2.0	425-449	850-899
2.3	400-424	800-849
2.7	375-399	750-799
3.0	350-374	700-749
3.3	325-349	650-699
3.7	300-324	600-649
4.0	250-299	500-599
5.0	< 250	< 500

Literature

Provided online.

Readings provide a general outline of the theoretical and formal characteristics of the art in the 20th century, leaving specific problems and issues for class discussion and independent work.

Course Schedule

Calendar	Topics, Reading, etc.
Week 1	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course overview and assignments • Case study around 1800: The romantic heritage in German Art • A special case: Arthur Schopenhauer and his philosophical aesthetics
Week 2	Vienna 1900 – Dream and Reality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art Nouveau (Vienna Secession) • Sigmund Freud: Reality and Dream • Austrian Expressionism
Week 3	Expressionism and the Birth of Abstract Art <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Die Brücke (The Bridge) • Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider) • Ways of Abstraction – Cubism, Piet Mondrian
Week 4	Art, Emotion and the Language of Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suprematism in Russia - Malevich • The Bauhaus in Germany • Charles Sanders Peirce - Visuality and Art
Week 5	Against Expressionism: Between Superior and Unsentimental Reality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dada Movement in Central Europe • New Objectivity
Week 6	MIDTERM EXAM

Week 7	The Liberation of the Mind: Beyond Realism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surrealism • Max Beckmann • Paul Klee
Week 8	Eye-witnessing History <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film, Photography and the Shaping of History
Week 9	Art and Propaganda in Nazi-Germany and Art in Post-War Central Europe: From Figurative to Abstract Art again <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Degenerate art” and Nazi Ideology • Art Informel
Week 10	New Perceptions of Reality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joseph Beuys • Performance and Happening • Body art (Video) • Fluxus
Week 11	Ideas and Methods: Critical Theory and Image Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frankfurt School (Adorno & Horkheimer) • Erwin Panofsky • Ernst H. Gombrich
Week 12	Postmodernism and Deconstruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postmodernism • Rosemarie Trockel • Gerhard Richter
Week 13	FINAL EXAM