

Humanities 1: Art and Music
Shimer College

Fall 2011
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Weekday Program
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Humanities 1 investigates some basic elements of the musical and visual arts. This course is about developing the skills of active listening and viewing. No previous training in music or facility at drawing or musical performance is presumed. Through class discussion and writing assignments we will develop the ability to articulate with greater clarity and precision our responses to works of art and music. We will look at some of the fundamentals of music and painting, such as rhythm, melody, harmony, line, color, and shape. Our experience of these artistic works will be augmented by visits to concert halls, museums, and art galleries. We will also read some works on aesthetics which consider the nature of beauty and its relation to some of the formal properties of art.

Many consider the refining and examination of their artistic preferences a part of the examined life. But clearly given the diversity of people's taste and the diversity of artistic traditions humanity has no agreed standards for beauty. Is there any good reason, is there any positive value in experiencing music one finds unpleasant, or dwelling on works of visual art that one will never enjoy? Specifically, is there any other reason than the dubious value of exposure to spend a semester or more at College on this sort of thing? Or to phrase the problem differently: if taste is a private matter, why do even the best of friends argue with each other about their favorite music, films, or other works of art?

Learning Objectives - Visual Arts

1. Show understanding of the fundamental concepts of form and color.
2. Demonstrate and explain basic principles of single-point perspective.
3. Experience and experiment with color.
4. Distinguish between what the eye can see in a visual work of art and what the mind might imagine about it.
5. Show awareness that mere looking is not a sufficient condition for seeing.
6. Use basic aesthetic vocabulary to describe the expressive content of major works of art from the High Renaissance and the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Learning Objectives - Music

1. Identify and define rhythm, melody, harmony, consonance, dissonance, variation, repetition, and development.
2. Experience and experiment with sound.

3. Describe the basic behavior of sound and explain why different strings and string lengths produce different sounds.
4. Distinguish between what the ear can hear in a piece of music and what the mind might imagine about it.
5. Use basic aesthetic vocabulary to explain expressive content of major works of music.

Assessment Methods

1. Class participation.
2. In-class drawing and experimentation with color.
3. In-class experiments of sound and calculation of consonant and dissonant intervals, with a report on a sound experiment.
4. Two in-class presentations, one on a work of the visual arts and one on a piece of music.
5. Two papers, one on a work of the visual arts and one on a piece of music.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation (60%): Class participation is the primary way in which you will be evaluated in this course. You are expected to come to class prepared to actively participate in the discussion of each day's reading or work of art. Good participation is not just the amount of talking done or arguments won; it is an attitude that combines careful listening to others, being open-minded and respectful towards other points of view, and responding, correcting or elaborating on what you have heard. Asking questions concerning about what you don't understand can frequently be an important contribution to classroom learning. Our common goal is to gain a deeper understanding of a text, and works of art and music.

Presentations and Written Work (40%): The first in-class presentation will treat a short selection from *Porgy and Bess*: the presentation and discussion will be approximately 15 minutes and you will write a short paper to accompany it (15%). These presentations will be part of our class work from September 26 to October 10. The second presentation will be about a piece of visual art that is in currently on display at the Art Institute of Chicago: this presentation and discussion will also be approximately 15 minutes and will be accompanied by a short essay about the work (15%). Each student will be required to do a brief write-up concerning some piece of public art (10%). You will receive detailed guidelines to assist you in preparing your presentations and papers later in the semester.

Absence Policy: Attendance at all classes. It is College policy that a student can be dropped from a class if he/she misses 10% of the classes, in this case, four classes. Further absences will be considered excessive and may result in your being unable to pass the class. Excessive lateness and/or early departures from class will be considered partial absences. If you must miss a class, please let your instructor know in advance if at all possible. You will be given a written warning if your absences or

tardiness is excessive and you are at risk of not being able to successfully complete the course.

Texts:

Albers, Josef, *Interaction of color*
Alberti, *On Painting*
Balzac, "The Unknown Masterpiece" (course packet)
Barnes and Noble Spark Chart Music History and Theory
Beethoven, "Symphony #6 'The Pastoral'"
Gershwin, George, *Porgy and Bess*, Libretto and DVD
ETA Hoffmann "Councillor Krespel" (course packet)
Kafka, "The Hunger Artist" (course packet)
Leonardo da Vinci, *The Notebooks*
Plato, *Ion* (course packet)
Rilke, Rainer Maria, *Letters on Cezanne*
Shimer College, *Selected Readings on Art & Music* (course packet)
Steinberg, Leo, *Leonardo's Incessant Last Supper*
Stravinsky, "The Rite of Spring"
Taylor, *Learning to Look: A Handbook for the Visual Arts*
Tolstoy, Leo, *What is Art?*

Schedule of Readings

Thursday, August 25	Plato, <i>Ion</i> (course packet, Section 2)
Monday, August 29	Monochord experiment, Rameau, <i>Treatise on Harmony</i>
Wednesday, August 31	Continue monochord experiments; Helmholtz "On the physiological causes of Harmony in Music(course packet #3)
Thursday, September 1	Continue with Helmholtz, overtones, dissonance and consonance
Monday, September 5	Labor Day (No class)
Wednesday, September 7	Rhythm and meter, interpretation of music
Thursday, September 8	Mozart: studies in melody and variations; major/minor. Working with a score
Monday, September 12	Beethoven, Symphony 6, <i>Pastoral</i> , studies in repetition
Wednesday, September 14	Melody and Harmony: the case of preludes and fugues, Bach, Chopin, Shostakovich. More score work. Read Rameau, chapters 19-29 in course packet (#4)
Thursday, September 15	Further considerations of melody consonance and dissonance. Reading: Rousseau, "Origin of Languages" (course packet, #6)

Monday, September 19	Musical forms. Bach, Fugue in c minor; Mozart, "Variations"
Wednesday, September 21	Development of musical ideas. Beethoven, Symphony #6 "Pastoral"
Thursday, September 22	Introduction to opera and the purpose of singing. Use Gershwin, <i>Porgy and Bess</i> , and other examples. Read the <i>Porgy</i> Libretto
Monday September 26	Gershwin, <i>Porgy and Bess</i> , Act 1
Wednesday, September 28	Gershwin, <i>Porgy and Bess</i> , Act 1
Thursday, September 29	Gershwin, <i>Porgy and Bess</i> , Act 2
Monday, October 3	Gershwin, <i>Porgy and Bess</i> , Act 2
Wednesday, October 5	Gershwin, <i>Porgy and Bess</i> , Act 3
Thursday, October 6	No Class (Dean's Break)
Monday, October 10	Gershwin, <i>Porgy and Bess</i> , Act 3
Wednesday, October 12	Stravinsky, <i>Rite of Spring</i>
Thursday, October 13	Stravinsky, <i>Rite of Spring</i> ; Schoenberg, "Composition With Twelve Tones" (course packet, #5)
Monday, October 17	Read Tolstoy, <i>What is Art?</i>
Wednesday, October 19	Taylor, <i>Learning to Look</i> , Chapters 1 & 2
Thursday, October 20	Alberti, <i>On Painting</i> , Book 1; Leonardo, vol. 1, chapter 1, 1-24
Monday, October 24	Alberti, <i>On Painting</i> , Book 2, Leonardo, vol. 1, chapter 2, pp. 25-65
Wednesday, October 26	Alberti, <i>On Painting</i> , Book 3; drawing; Leonardo, vol 2
Thursday, October 27	Vasari, <i>The Lives of the Artists</i> , in Course packet); Steinberg, <i>Leonardo's Incessant Last Supper</i> Introduction and Chapter 1
Monday, October 31	Steinberg, <i>Leonardo's Incessant Last Supper</i> , Introduction and Chapters 2-4
Wednesday, November 2	Steinberg, <i>Leonardo's Incessant Last Supper</i> , Chapter 4-7
Thursday, November 3	Taking Taylor to the Museum, <i>Learning to Look</i> , Chapters 3-4
Monday, November 7	Steinberg, <i>Leonardo's Incessant Last Supper</i> , Chapters 8, 9, Leonardo, vol 1. Chap 9, 326-332
Wednesday, November 9	Gather leaves; Albers, <i>Interaction of color</i> , chapters 1-18
Thursday, November 11	Helmholtz, "On the Relation of Optics to Painting" (course packet, #9); Taylor, Chapter 2, Leonard, vol. 1, chap 5, pp.

141-154; introduction to Cezanne

Monday, November 14	Cezanne paintings
Wednesday, November 16	Rilke, <i>Letters on Cezanne</i>
Thursday, November 17	Cezanne
Monday, November 21	Kafka “The Hunger Artist” and Balzac “The Unfinished Masterpiece”
Wednesday, November 23	No Class (Thanksgiving Break)
Thursday, November 24	No Class
Monday, November 28	Art Presentations
Wednesday, November 30	Art Presentations
Thursday, December 1	Art Presentations; Papers due