

Humanities 1 Art and Music

Shimer College

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Instructor: Harold Stone

Email: h.stone@shimer.edu

Humanities One investigates the elements and forms of the musical and visual arts. This course is about developing the skills of active listening and viewing. The course presupposes no previous training in music, or facility at drawing—to be sure such experiences should contribute to our class discussions. Class discussions and your written work should allow the student to develop the ability to articulate their responses to works of art and music. We will look at some of the fundamentals of music and painting, such as line, color, shape, and rhythm, melody and harmony. Our experience of these works will be augmented by trips to concert halls, museums, 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 regard it as useful to refine and to examine their own artistic preferences, and it can be asked is there any genuine, positive value in experiencing music and approaches to the visual arts that one will never enjoy? Or to phrase the problem more clearly, 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?

Requirements: Attendance at all classes. It is College policy that a student can be dropped from a class if a student misses 10% of the classes, in this case, 4 classes. Class participation is the primary way in which you will be evaluated in this course. Good participation is not just the amount of talking done or arguments won; it is an attitude that combines careful listening to others, responding, correcting or developing what you have heard. Asking questions concerning what you don't understand can frequently be an important contribution to classroom learning.

Grading: 60% class participation; 40% on presentations and written work. You will write a short review of a live performance of a type of music you are not familiar with or don't listen to often; you will make an in-class presentation about a piece of music of your choice: the presentation and discussion will be approximately 15 minutes and you will write a short paper to accompany it. You will write a review of about a work of visual art, perhaps gallery opening, a piece of outdoor sculpture, or about a building that interests you. You will also do a class presentation about a piece of visual art that is in a Chicago Museum: the presentation and discussion will be approximately 15 minutes and you will write a short essay about the work. To summarize, you will do 2 in-class presentations and write 4 short essays. I will provide more detailed guidelines later.

Book List:

Albers, Josef, *Interaction of color*

Alberti, *On Painting*

Balzac, "The Unknown Masterpiece"
Beethoven, *The Emperor, Piano Concerto 5*
Cooper, Helen, *The Basic Guide to Read Music*
Fry, Roger, *Cezanne, A Study of His Development*
Kafka, "The Hunger Artist"
Levitin, Daniel, *This is your Brain on Music*
Mozart, *The Marriage of Figaro (Le nozze di Figaro)*
Plato, *Ion*
Rilke, Rainer Maria, *Letters on Cezanne*
Steinberg, Leo, *Leonardo's Incessant Last Supper*
Taylor, *Learning to Look: A Handbook for the Visual Arts*
Tolstoy, Leo, *What is Art?*

Schedule of Readings

August 22(F) Plato, *Ion*

August 25(M) monochords, look at Cooper

August 27 Listening for melodies, rhythms read Levitin, Chapter 1

August 29 Listening for interpretation, major minor

September 3(W) Basic listening Levitin, Appendix B, Cooper

September 5 Rhythms, meters, Levitin, Chapter 2

September 8(M) Mozart 'Overture' to *Figaro*

September 10 Mozart, *Figaro*, Act 1, Levitin ,chapters 3-4

September 12 Mozart, *Figaro*, Act 1

September 15(M) Mozart, *Figaro*, Act 2, Levitin, chapters 5-6

September 17 Mozart, *Figaro*, Act 2

September 19 Mozart, *Figaro*, Act 3

September 22(M) Mozart, *Figaro*, Act 3

September 24 Mozart, *Figaro*, Act 4

September 26 Mozart, *Figaro*, Act 4

September 29(M) Beethoven, *Emperor*, Levitin, chapter 7

October 1 Beethoven, *Emperor*

October 3 Is music an instinct? Levitin, chapters 8,9 and selections from Darwin

October 6(M) Projects

October 8 Projects

October 10 Color, Albers

October 13(M) Color; Music project papers due

October 15 More color

Fall Break

October 20(M) Tolstoy, *What is Art?*

October 22 Cezanne

October 24 Cezanne and Frye

October 27(M) Cezanne and Rilke

October 29 Alberti, *On Painting*, Book 1

October 31 Alberti, *On Painting* Book 2

November 3(M) Alberti, *On Painting Book 3 Drawing*; Music review due

November 5 Taylor, *Learning to Look*

November 7 Taking Taylor to the Museum

November 10(M) Steinberg, Introduction and chapters 1-3. Review of a show or a work of visual arts due.

November 12 Steinberg, chapter 4

November 14 Steinberg, chapters 5-7

November 17(M) Steinberg, Introduction and chapters 8,9

November 19 Projects

November 21 Projects

November 24 (M) Read Balzac and Kafka. Art project papers due