

Art in the United States

Group A – Mondays at 16:00-17:30

Group B – Wednesdays at 16:00-17:30

Fall 2026

Professor: Elizabeth Hashimoto

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays by appointment



Dorothea Lange, *Japanese Mother and Daughter*, c. 1937, photograph, Library of Congress

Course Description:

The United States has always been a nation of diverse people, and the growth and development of its arts have been fundamentally shaped by the cultural exchanges it fostered. This course will explore how the artistic traditions of northern and southern Europe, Native America, Asia

and Africa converged in the United States and how circumstances of the country's environment, culture, politics, and materials shaped artistic production from the colonial era through the 1970s. We will examine works by artists such as John Singleton Copley, Winslow Homer, Thomas Eakins, Mary Cassatt, Marcel Duchamp, Georgia O'Keeffe, Jackson Pollock, and Robert Rauschenberg—as well as distinctly American art forms such as pipe tomahawks, ledger book paintings, New Mexican santos, African American decorative arts, middle class “folk” art, and shotgun houses. This course will also touch on notable museums in America, such as various Smithsonian institutions. Students will be expected to develop an understanding of the major artists, art movements, and art historical issues related to the visual arts produced in the United States.

Course Goals:

- Identify key works, artists, and stylistic movements in American art
- Understand American art within the context of American history and culture
- Demonstrate skills in formal and contextual analysis
- Be familiar with current interpretation and methodology in American art

Requirements:

Attendance and Class Participation	10%
In-class museum presentation	10%
Midterm Paper	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Paper	20%
Final Exam	20%

Class Participation and Attendance: Attendance is required; missing classes can lower your attendance grade, except in the case of a documented emergency or illness. Completion of assigned readings before each meeting is essential for active participation in discussions.

Museum Presentation: Ten minute powerpoint presentation on a notable American museum. Sign ups for the presentation topic/schedule will be posted on Teams.

Paper and Exams: Exams consist of unknowns, comparisons and one from a selection of short essays. A slidelist will be available on Teams before the exam listing all the works you are responsible for knowing. The exam will test you primarily on your knowledge of important concepts discussed in class and in the reading. It will also test your ability to synthesize and apply those concepts.

The midterm paper will ask you to interpret your choice of an American artwork based only on your visual observations. In the final paper, you will analyze your choice of an American art work, with both visual observations and additional research.

Specific instructions for all assignments will be posted on Teams.

Grading:

5: 100-88 Points/percent

4: 87-80 Points

3: 77-68 Points

2: 67-55 Points

1: 54-0 Points

Homework and Attendance Policy: Check Teams regularly for the readings and related assignments and keep to the deadlines (deadlines will be enforced). No more than three absences will be tolerated. Coming unprepared will be counted as an absence. Failure to take the end-of-term test as scheduled can only be justified by a medical certificate or a hospital discharge summary.

AI and Plagiarism Policy and the Standards of Ethical Conduct at SEAS: Make sure you are aware of the AI and plagiarism policy of ELTE's Faculty of Humanities and adhere to SEAS's Standards of [Ethical Conduct](#).

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities should inform me of their needs as soon as possible so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

Texts: All course readings will be posted on Teams.

American Encounters: Art, History, and Cultural Identity by Angela L. Miller, Janet C. Berlo, Brian J. Wolf, and Jennifer Roberts (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson, Prentice Hall, 2008).

Primary document texts and articles will be on the Teams as assigned.

Many of these texts are taken from: ***American Art to 1900: A Documentary History***, ed. by Sarah Burns and John Davis; Mary Ann Calo, ***Critical Issues in American Art*** (Icon Editions, 1997) and Marianne Doezema and Elizabeth Milroy, ***Reading American Art*** (Yale UP, 1998).

Course Schedule:

Week 1 (September 7/9)

Introduction and Course Requirements

Early Encounters with New World

AE, 1, 23-28, 32-55

African influences in Colonoware

AE, 73-76

Santos

AE, 90-96

William Wroth, "New Mexican Santos and the Preservation of Religious Traditions," in Calo, ed., 9pp.

Week 2 (September 14/16)

Colonial Painting

AE, 67-73

John Singleton Copley

AE, 120-31, "R. G. Bruce to John Singleton Copley" and "Benjamin West to J. S. Copley," in Burns & Davis, 46-7.

Charles Willson Peale and Family

AE, 133, 139-41, 145-8, 163-7, Jules Prown, "Raphaelle Peale: *Fruit in a Silver Basket*," 215-19

Moses Williams

Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, "Moses Williams, Cutter of Profiles": Silhouettes and African American Identity in the Early Republic, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 149, No. 1 (Mar., 2005), pp. 22-39.

Week 3 (September 21/23)

Sentimental Painting and Sculpture, Middle Class (Folk) Art

AE, 171-5, 184-9, Joy S. Kasson, "Narratives of the Female Body: The Greek Slave" in Doezenia, 163-185, Kirsten Buick, "The Ideal Works of Edmonia Lewis: Invoking and Inverting Autobiography," 190-196.

Shotgun Houses

AE, 95-97

Dave the Potter

Aaron de Groft, Eloquent Vessels/Poetics of Power: The Heroic Stoneware of "Dave the Potter" *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 33, No. 4, 249-260.

Thomas Day

Jonathan Prown, "The Furniture of Thomas Day: A Reevaluation," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 33, 4 (Winter 1998), 215-29.

Week 4 (September 28/30)

Genre Painting

AE, 193-201, 225-7, Gail Husch, "George Caleb Bingham's The County Election," in Calo, ed., pp. 77-88

American West

AE, 209-21, John Ewers, "Three Ornaments Worn on Upper Plains" in *Indian Life on the Upper Missouri* (1988), 91-7, Jennifer Bottomley-O'looney, "The Art of Storytelling: Plains Indian Perspectives" in *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, Autumn 2012, Vol. 62, No. 3 (Autumn 2012), pp. 42-55, 94-95

Ledger Book Paintings

AE, 312-16

Beading

Chelsea M Herr and E. Jane Burns, "From Grandmothers to Daughters to Granddaughters: The Couse Collection of Native Beadwork," *Native American Art Magazine*, June/July 2020, 58-63.

Email me your midterm paper subject by this week!!

Week 5 (October 5/7)

Hudson River School/Church, Luminism

AE, 241-4, 252-9; Thomas Cole, "Essay on American Scenery," (1835), Asher B. Durand, "Letters on Landscape Painting," (1855) in McCoubrey, ed., 98-115; Notices of Recent Pictures," Burns & Davis, 504-5.

The Civil War/Matthew Brady and Early Photography

AE, 266-277; "Brady's Photographs," Burns & Davis, 520-1; Alan Trachtenberg, "Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs," in Calo, ed. 15p.

Week 6 (October 12/14)

Post Civil War Reconstruction

AE, 281-8, 292-3; Judith Wilson, Lifting the "Veil Henry O. Tanner's *The Banjo Lesson* and *The Thankful Poor* in Calo, ed., 13pp.

Thomas Eakins

AE, 371-7, 382-3; Elizabeth Johns, "Thomas Eakins and Pure Art Education," in Calo, ed., 5pp.

Jennifer Doyle, "Sex, Scandal, and Thomas Eakins's *The Gross Clinic*," in *Representations*, Autumn, 1999, No. 68 (Autumn, 1999), pp. 1-5, and from the heading Gender Troubles at the Academy, pp. 8- 21.

Week 7 (October 19/21)

Midterm Exam

Mid term Break (October 26-31)

Week 8 (November 2/4)

Expatriate Artists: Sargent, Beaux, Cassatt, Whistler

AE, 329-35; Sarah Burns, "The Earnest, Untiring Worker and the Magician of the Brush," in Calo, ed., 22p.

American Impressionism

AE, 327-29

Trompe L'Oeil

AE, 361-64

Week 9 (November 9/ 11)**New Negro Movement (Harlem Renaissance)**

AE, 507-15

Robert Farris Thompson, "An Introduction to Black Art History" in *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 9, Issue 3-4, (July 1974), pp. 192-201.

Alain Locke, "The Legacy of Ancestral Arts," from *The New Negro* (1925).

Jeffery Myers, "Pastoral and Anti-Pastoral in Aaron Douglas's Aspects of Negro Life," from *A Keener Perception* (2009), pp. 151-165.

Week 10 (November 16/18)**Social Realism, WPA and New Deal**

AE, 517-18, 523-30, 533, 537-40; Dalia Habib Linssen, "'Imprints of their Being': The Photographs of Hansel Mieth and Otto Hagel," 303-309, 314-347.

Optional: [Elizabeth Hashimoto, "Inescapable Incarceration: Hansel Mieth's Photography at Heart Mountain,"](#) *Inventio*, 2022, 9, no. 1 (April, 2024)

Email me your final paper subject by this week!!

Week 11 (November 23/25)**Armory Show/Marcel Duchamp**

Reading: AE, 421-9; Collection of Readings on the Armory Show, 1913 in McCoubrey, 188-196; Marcel Duchamp, "Painting at the Service of the Mind," in Herschel Chipp, ed., *Theories of Modern Art*.

Steiglitz School/American Modernism

AE, 402-12, 436-9, 485-95

Week 12 (November 30/December 2)**Rauschenberg and Johns/Pop Art**

AE, 566-71, 589-98

Minimalism/Performance/Cannon, Saar, ASCO

AE, 590-2, 598-603, 606-12

Abstract Expressionism

AE: 551-2, 555-66; Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," in McCoubrey, ed., 213-22

Institutional Critique/Land Art/Navajo Cosmoscapes

AE, 613-21, Robert Smithson, "The Spiral Jetty," in *Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam, read only an excerpt from the essay: 143-8; [Sam Wagstaff, "Talking with Tony Smith," *ArtForum*, 1966](#); [Janet Berlo, "Navajo Cosmoscapes," *American Art*, 25:1 \(2011\), 3pp.](#)

Class B, we **will not meet this week** as I am going to a conference in Italy. Do the readings and answer the reading questions posted on Teams.

Week 13 (December 7/9)

Final Exam