

ARTH-C1100: SURVEY OF ART FROM PREHISTORY TO THE MEDIEVAL ERA

Effective Term

Fall 2026

CC Approval

10/03/2025

AS Approval

10/09/2025

BOT Approval

10/16/2025

COCI Approval

12/10/2025

SECTION A - Course Data Elements

CB04 Credit Status

Credit - Degree Applicable

Discipline

And/Or
Art History (Master's Degree)

Subject Code

ARTH - Art History

Course Number

C1100

Department

Art History

Division

Arts and Humanities (ARAH)

Full Course Title

Survey of Art from Prehistory to the Medieval Era

Short Title

Survey Art: Prehist to Med

CB03 TOP Code

1002.00 - Art

CB08 Basic Skills Status

NBS - Not Basic Skills

CB09 SAM Code

E - Non-Occupational

Rationale

Changes per CCN template updates.

SECTION B - Course Description

Catalog Course Description

This course introduces students to visual art and architecture from prehistory to the medieval era with a focus on art from Europe, North Africa, and the near East. The course will further consider global interactions involving these regions.

SECTION C - Conditions on Enrollment

Open Entry/Open Exit

No

Repeatability

Not Repeatable

Grading Options

Letter Grade or Pass/No Pass

Allow Audit

Yes

Requisites

Advisory Prerequisite(s)

Completion of ENGL-C1000 or ENGL-120B with a minimum grade of C or appropriate placement.

SECTION D - Course Standards

Is this course variable unit?

No

Units

3.00

Lecture Hours

54.00

Outside of Class Hours

108

Total Contact Hours

54

Total Student Hours

162

Distance Education Approval

Is this course offered through Distance Education?

Yes

Online Delivery Methods

DE Modalities	Permanent or Emergency Only?
Hybrid	Permanent
Entirely Online	Permanent
Online with Proctored Exams	Permanent

SECTION E - Course Content

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Examine and analyze art works in terms of materials, processes, and visual characteristics.
2. Recognize the ways in which specific historical, political, religious and philosophical contexts shape works of art.

Course Objectives

1. Identify, examine, and assess representative works of art and architecture from prehistory to the medieval era employing appropriate art historical terminology.
2. Analyze works of art and architecture in terms of aesthetic, socio-political, religious, historical, technological, and cultural contexts in which they were created.
3. Develop critical thinking, information literacy, and problem solving through an engagement with art, architecture, artists, and patrons from prehistory to the medieval era.

Course Content

This course critically examines the art and architecture of the following periods with an integration of history, theory, aesthetics, and cross-cultural connections:

1. Prehistory, visual analysis before writing
2. Mesopotamia
3. Ancient Egypt
4. Ancient Aegean cultures
5. Ancient Greece
6. Etruria
7. Ancient Rome
8. Contextualizing Monotheism
 - a. Judaism
 - b. Early Christianity
 - c. Early Islam
9. Byzantine
10. Medieval

Course Content Part II

1. Paleolithic Era
 - a. Cave images
 - b. Carved Effigies
 - c. Interpretations of first images
2. Neolithic Era
 - a. Megalithic Structures
 - b. Earliest Living spaces
 - c. Metal technology
 - d. Context of agriculture and lifeways on building
3. Ancient Near East
 - a. Development of cities and writing
 - b. Large-scale state architecture
 - c. Propaganda and empire building
4. Ancient Egypt (Old Kingdom, New Kingdom, Amarna Period)
 - a. Funerary rituals and art
 - b. Emergence of monumental building and sculpture
 - c. Intersection of statecraft and religion
5. Bronze Age Aegean
 - a. Cycladic effigies
 - b. Role of archaeology in understanding Minoan and Mycenaean cultures
 - c. Palace construction, frescoes, ceramics of Crete
 - d. Mycenae and citadel construction
6. Ancient Greece

7. Geometric and Oriental Periods in sculpture and ceramics
8. Archaic marbles, temples, vases
9. Early & Classical Periods
 - a. Figural sculpture in bronze and marble
 - b. Temple architecture
 - c. Vase Painting
10. Late Classical and Hellenistic Periods
 - a. Marble sculpture
 - b. Theater architecture
11. Etruria and Ancient Rome
12. From kingship to Republic
 - a. Architecture and portraiture
13. Imperial Art and Architecture
 - a. Augustan portraiture and propaganda
 - b. Pompeii and the domestic realm
 - c. Cities in the empire
 - d. Portraits of the Late Empire
 - e. Power of the state in architecture
14. Art and the Divine-Early Christian
 - a. Jewish images in Syria
 - b. Catacomb images
 - c. Early Christian architecture and ritual in Rome
15. Byzantine Empire
 - a. Christian authority and the state in architecture, mosaics
 - b. The icon and the Iconoclastic Controversy
 - c. Early illustrated books
16. Islam
 - a. Religion and trade
 - b. Architecture
 - c. Portable Arts
17. European Middle Ages
 - a. British Isles and manuscript painting
 - b. Carolingian and Ottonian art/architecture
 - c. Pilgrimage in Romanesque art
 - d. Illuminated manuscripts
 - e. Gothic architecture and its decoration
 - f. Cult of the Virgin

Impact of Art History's history as a discipline: Eurocentrism, civilization as concept, classification of objects and monuments. Intersection of colonialism, archaeology, and the institution of museums in the collection and preservation of objects and monuments.

Methods of Instruction

Methods of Instruction

Types	
Discussion	Students are expected to describe the formal characteristics of a work and link them to the specific historic context during class. This may be done individually or in small groups.
Field Trips	Class trip to view important, relevant exhibition of art works at a local San Francisco museum.
Lecture	Image-based lectures which promote all-class and small group discussion of content.

Other In addition to online lectures with images and voiceover, students will be assigned "field trips" in which they choose local art work and use tools we cover in class to analyze public art, murals, local studios, museums, galleries. Additionally, discussion boards will be set up and weekly art works posted so that students can together analyze the work and build on one another's comments. Finally, projects will be assigned that direct students out into their local neighborhoods to find intersections of art and local identity.

Online Adaptation

Types	
Lecture	Image-base lectures (6-10 minutes) with voiceover provides context for Ancient Egyptian culture, including diagrams and maps that connect notions of hierarchy and balance with the geography of upper/lower Nile valley. Study questions are provided to help direct students to larger themes introduced that week.
Discussion	A Smarthistory article linked in a Canvas Discussion addresses discovery of pigment on ancient Classical statuary and historic bias towards sculpture as white marble. Prompt asks students to post how this idea applies to specific works discussed that week and comment on peers' posts.
Activity	Using Canvas Studio, a series of questions are embedded in TEDtalk video on the geometry of Islamic art. Students answer the embedded objective questions.
Critique	Youtube links to excerpts from feature films with references to archaeology are provided; in Canvas assignments students are asked to cite what they believe to be accurate (or not) in the depictions.
Journal	After covering syncretism in monotheism, students are asked to write an entry (as a Canvas Assignment) that applies this concept to forms of religious art they are familiar with or see in their daily lives.
Individualized Instruction	Schedule one-on-one discussions about creative final projects.
Other	Students assigned to photograph examples of religious structures in their neighborhoods/towns and link architecture/imagery to faiths we've covered in class.

Instructor-Initiated Online Contact Types

- Announcements/Bulletin Boards
- Chat Rooms
- Discussion Boards
- E-mail Communication
- Telephone Conversations
- Video or Teleconferencing

Student-Initiated Online Contact Types

- Chat Rooms
- Discussions
- Group Work

Course design is accessible

Yes

Methods of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation

Types

- | | |
|-------|--|
| Other | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Written essays and/or research projects 2. Exam with essay component |
|-------|--|

Methods of evaluation may also include:

1. Discussions
2. Objective exams
3. Projects and presentations
4. Quizzes
5. Group Assignments
6. Museum Assignments

Methods of evaluation are at the discretion of faculty.

Assignments

Reading Assignments

Selected readings from Smarthistory, Met Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, Khan Academy with relevance to current events.

For example:

1. Read and answer the study questions from Smarthistory article: Early Cycladic Figurines and be prepared to discuss the impact of 20th-century art collecting on the destructive archaeological excavations.
2. Read the supplemental handout regarding repatriation of art works from European museums to countries of origin. Pay particular attention to the demands that the British Museum return Benin bronzes, seized during British colonial control. Apply to course discussion on 19th century seizure of Assyrian relief sculpture.

Writing Assignments

1. Reflection writings (short and long form) connecting course content to contemporary issues.

For example:

In 250 words, connect the role of Ancient Egypt in the larger narrative of Western art history and the emergence of Afrofuturism in the late 20th century. Where are there similarities in interpretation of the ancient culture? In what specific ways does Afrofuturism provide a counter-narrative to conventional interpretations?

2. Comparative analysis of cultures covered in the course with other, non-European cultures.

For example:

Based on the videos/articles from Smarthistory on Mesoamerica, write a 3-page paper outlining the similarities and differences between the architecture and urban planning of Ancient Rome and that of the Mesoamerican site of Teotihuacán.

Outside-of-Class Assignments

In 150-200 words, describe your understanding of Europe in the Middle Ages, as shaped by the media/entertainment you consume. For example: video games, Disney movies, TV shows like Game of Thrones, etc.

SECTION F - Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Material Type

Textbook

Author

Janson, H.W.

Title

History of Art

Edition/Version

8th ed

Publisher

Pearson

Year

2021

Rationale

per CCN template

ISBN #

9780135569573

Material Type

Textbook

Author

Kleiner, Fred S

Title

Gardner's Art Through the Ages: The Western Perspective Vol 1

Edition/Version

16th ed

Publisher

Thomson Wadsworth

Year

2020

Rationale

per CCN Template

ISBN #

9780357702154

Material Type

Textbook

Author

Kleiner, Fred S.

Title

Gardner's Art Through the Ages: A Global History, Volume 1

Edition/Version

16th ed

Publisher

Thomson Wadsworth

Year

2020

Rationale

Per CCN Template

ISBN #

9798214584737

Material Type

Textbook

Author

Stokstad, Marilyn

Title

Art History, Volume 1

Edition/Version

6th

Publisher

Pearson

Year

2022

Rationale

Per CCN template

ISBN #

9780137500383

Material Type

Open Educational Resource (OER)

Title

Smarthistory's (Khan Academy) materials/books (available online and to print out for free)

Material Type

Open Educational Resource (OER)

Title

Smarthistory OER Commons

Material Type

Open Educational Resource (OER)

Title

Smarthistory Reframing Art History (global perspectives) open access

Material Type

Open Educational Resource (OER)

Title

Gustlin and Gustlin. Libretxts, Introduction to Art History, A World Perspective of Art History

Material Type

Open Educational Resource (OER)

Title

Met Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

SECTION G - Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity

How does your course and/or course outline of record reflect strategies for accommodating and engaging diverse student populations, advancing equitable outcomes, and fostering inclusion for all students?

The is a ZTC (Zero-text cost) class, part of a larger degree that is also ZTC. As a result a student can participate in the class or pursue the degree without the encumbrance of textbook purchase or rental prices. Instead of textbooks, websites used are vetted, rigorous and written by individual scholars in the field of academia and museums.

The course is introduced as the output of an 18c European/white academic discipline, which continues to shape the objects under review and the way in which we study them.

On a regular basis, students are presented the canonical narrative and opportunities to disrupt and provide counter-narratives through the study of other types of material and the creative work of non-European cultures.

To make relevant the content, assignments regularly connect ancient material with current political and cultural practices including repatriation of objects, use of classicism in the context of alt-right identity, and the ongoing destruction of monuments due to military conflict.

Among assessments, are low-stakes written reflections which invite students to connect aspects of ancient cultures with their own experiences/stories. Creative options for the final enable different learners to demonstrate their understanding of the course content.

Course Codes (Admin Only)

CB00 State ID

CCC000511774

CB10 Cooperative Work Experience Status

N - Is Not Part of a Cooperative Work Experience Education Program

CB11 Course Classification Status

Y - Credit Course

CB13 Special Class Status

N - The Course is Not an Approved Special Class

CB23 Funding Agency Category

Y - Not Applicable (Funding Not Used)

CB24 Program Course Status

Program Applicable

Allow Pass/No Pass

Yes

Only Pass/No Pass

No