

# AR2105: Early Twentieth Century Art

Fall 25 A2 Mon, 13:00 to 14:20 and Fri, 14:30 to 15:50 (3-0-0)

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land. We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

**Instructor:** Kaveh Rafie

**Contact:** KRafie@nwpolytech.ca

**Office Hours:** Wednesday at 2:30pm to 4:00pm (via Zoom) or by appointment

## Description

The course explores major developments in art from the turn of the twentieth century, a period marked by the excitement and despair of industrial modernity, to the mid-twentieth century. Focusing on a global context of avant-garde movements, we will study how painting, sculpture, photography, and architecture reflected and shaped contemporary debates on politics, revolution, and culture, all while forging a new visual language of modernism.

**Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite:** None

## Learning Outcomes

**Course Objectives**

This course provides a survey of global modern art from the late 19th century to the end of 1950s. By the end of the term, you will be able to:

- **Knowledge & Identification:** Recognize a wide range of modern art forms and movements and define critical terms like modernism, modernity, and the avant-garde.
- **Formal & Contextual Analysis:** Critically analyze artworks by examining their formal qualities and connecting them to their specific historical, political, and cultural circumstances.

## Art Historical Analysis

There are many approaches to art historical understanding but for our purposes we will focus on the following fourfold:

- **Formal analysis** (color, shape, texture, scale, line, shadow, space, composition and other physical properties of the work itself)
- **Iconographic analysis** (story, theme or subject presented by the work including any symbolism or veiled meanings that would be legible to people part of the artist's culture)
- **Sociohistorical analysis** (social, political, economic and cultural context in which the work is produced)
- **Aesthetic analysis** (sensuous and psychological impact that the work has on you and others)

## Transferability important

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page

<http://www.transferalberta.alberta.ca>.

Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions.

Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability

## Required Readings & Materials

This course does NOT require a purchased textbook. All readings and videos are provided digitally.

Read the text assigned for each class before that class. Take notes on each reading, jot down impressions, insights, key passages, and questions, and bring these to class.

## Recommended Readings:

- [Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics](#)
- [Art & Visual Culture 1850–2010: Modernity to Globalisation](#)

## Delivery

Synchronous on Zoom.

## Evaluation

Your grade in this course will be based on the following components:

**Participation & Attendance: 20%**

**Weekly Discussion Posts: 20%**

**Presentation: 10%**

**Museum Report: 10%**

**Proposal and Annotated Bibliography: 10%**

**Final Paper: 30%**

### **Weekly Discussion Posts**

Each week, a new discussion topic will be posted. Please create your initial post by the end of Sunday the following week. You are also required to reply to at least two of your peers' threads for the full grade.

Detailed guidelines for each component will be provided in myClass.

### **Museum Report**

The objective of this assignment is to evaluate engagement with artistic institutions. Students must visit an approved art gallery or museum. Those residing on campus are expected to visit the [Art Gallery of Grande Prairie](#), while commuter students may select an accredited institution proximate to their residence.

The initial requirement is to document your visit by providing a photograph of yourself alongside the exhibition's statement.

## Participation & Attendance

Active participation is crucial for this course. Your grade is based on the following components:

- **Consistent Engagement:** You are expected to keep your camera on during live Zoom sessions to foster a collaborative learning environment.
- **Camera Policy:** Turning your camera off will result in not receiving participation credit (10%) unless it is during a break or you have communicated with me in advance for accommodations.
- **Discussion Contribution:** Actively contribute to class discussions by asking questions, responding to prompts, and engaging with your peers' ideas.
- **In-Class Activities:** Complete all micro-activities, such as polls and short collaborative tasks, announced during the session.

### Attendance Policy

Attendance for our live Zoom sessions is mandatory. More than two unexcused absences will require a meeting with me to discuss your standing in the course. Failure to address chronic absenteeism may result in failing the course.

If you have high levels of social anxiety or find it challenging to read social cues in a group discussion, and find yourself unable but eager to participate, please email me at [KRafie@nwpolytech.ca](mailto:KRafie@nwpolytech.ca). We can discuss alternatives or how to manage anxiety around participation.

**Note on Recordings:** Sessions will be recorded for educational purposes. By participating, you consent to being recorded. If you miss a session, please email me to receive the link of the missed session.

## Presentation

Check the link: [Presentation Sign-up](#)

## Final Project

For this assignment, you will choose one work of art from the provided list and conduct an in-depth analysis. Your analysis must also incorporate a discussion of at least two works of art that were covered in this course. For examples of eligible works, please refer to my presentation slides.

**Part 1: Proposal (10%)**

**Length:** 200-250 words for the body (5%)

**Citations:** Two cited sources (5%)

**Part 2: Final Paper (30%)**

Length: 1000-1250 words

## Grading Scale

<b>Alpha Grade</b>	<b>4-point Equivalent</b>	<b>Percentage Guidelines</b>
A+	4.0	95-100
A	4.0	85-94
A-	3.7	80-84
B+	3.3	77-79
B	3.0	73-76
B-	2.7	70-72
C+	2.3	67-69
C	2.0	63-66
C-	1.7	60-62
D+	1.3	55-59
D	1.0	50-54
F	0.0	00-49

### Important

Grades for this course will be assigned as a percentage.

## Student Responsibilities

- **Online Communication & Professionalism:** Students are expected to maintain a high level of professionalism in all course-related communications. Conduct yourself as you would in any professional setting, treating instructors and peers with respect.
- **Attendance and Participation:** Join lectures on time and remain for the full duration of class and related activities.
- **Time Commitment:** Students should expect to dedicate a minimum of 4 hours per week to out-of-class work. Assignments must be submitted by the required dates.

## Academic Integrity

All students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. This means that you must complete your own work and give proper credit to the ideas and work of others. Any form of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/administration/policies/index.html>.

Note: All Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

## Regulations Regarding the Use of AI

The use of Generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Copilot) in this course is restricted to specific, approved purposes. All other uses are strictly prohibited without explicit authorization.

### Permitted Use

You may use AI tools for low-level editing tasks, such as:

- Correcting grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Improving sentence clarity and readability.
- Rephrasing sentences for better flow.

### Prohibited Use

You may **not** use AI tools to:

- Generate ideas, arguments, or thesis statements.
- Write sentences, paragraphs, or entire papers.
- Paraphrase or summarize course readings or concepts.

**Mandatory Acknowledgement**

Any permitted use of AI must be formally declared. For every assignment, you must submit a completed **AI Use Declaration Statement** detailing the tool used and the specific ways in which it was employed. An assignment will not be graded without this form.

# Working Weekly Schedule

Reading must be done before the assigned date.

*Theories of Modern Art (TMA)*, *Art in Modern Culture (AMC)*, Modern Art And Modernism (MAaM)

PART I: FOUNDATIONS OF MODERNISM

## Week 1

### **Fri, Sep 5: Intro**

Course overview and the requirements. The two pillars of modernity, liberal state & capitalism. Courbet was the first avant-garde.

**No Reading**

## Week 2

### **Mon, Sep 8: The location of Modernity**

Industry, urban life, and new subjectivities. Manet, the painter of modern life.

#### **Readings:**

- TJ Clarke, *The Painting of Modern Life* (excerpt, Part I)
- Paul Wood, "Japonisme" in *Art & Visual Culture 1850–2010*

### **Fri, Sep 12: Instantaneous Impression of Modernity**

Capturing the ephemeral moment. Optics, leisure, and the modern city. Monet, Renoir, Degas. The Arts and Crafts movement.

#### Reading:

- TJ Clarke, *The Painting of Modern Life* (excerpt, Part II)
- Elizabeth Cumming & Wendy Kaplan, from *The Arts and Crafts Movement*

PART II: REVOLUTION IN FORM

## Week 3

### Mon, Sep 15: Ways of Seeing


What is Post-Impressionism? Primitivism? Fauvism? Roger Fry and the Bloomsbury Group.

#### **Readings:**

- Paul Wood, "Gauguin and Primitivism" in *Art & Visual Culture 1850--2010*
- Maurice Denis, "From Gauguin and Van Gogh to Classicism" & "Cezanne" in *MAaM*
- [Lifestyle and Legacy of the Bloomsbury Group](#)
- Clive Bell, "Aesthetic Hypothesis"

### Fri, Sep 19: De-(Re-)Construction of the Reality

On the Cubist revolution; Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*; Analytic and Synthetic Cubism; and African Masks.

 Museum Report – Assignment Opens

#### **Readings:**

- Paul Wood, "Cubism and Abstract Art (Revisited)" in *Art & Visual Culture 1850–2010*
- John Berger, "The Moment of Cubism" (1967)

## Week 4

### Mon, Sep 22: Machine, Speed & Steele

Italian Futurism; a bizarre spectacle of speed, technology and violence.

#### **Reading:**

- H.H. Arnason, "Futurism" in *History of Modern Art*
- Carlo Carro, "From Cezanne to Us, the Futurists," TMA

### Fri, Sep 26: Toward Non-Objective Abstraction

Kandinsky, Malevich, and the total abandonment of the subject. Neo-Plasticism.

#### **Readings:**

- Excerpts from H.H. Arnason in *History of Modern Art*
- Boris Groys, from *The Total Art of Stalinism*

## Week 5

### Mon, Sep 29: From the Studio to Factory Floors

Russian Constructivism. Tatlin, Rodchenko, Lissitzky, and Varvara Stepanova turned from pure abstraction to applied art, design, and propaganda.

#### **Reading:**

- Christina Lodder, 1983, from *Tatlin in Russian Constructivism*

PART III: GLOBAL MODERNISM & THE CRISIS OF ORDER

### Fri, Oct 3: Modernism at the Margins

The "first wave" of Latin American modernism, Tarsila do Amaral. Mexican Muralism: Rivera, Orozco, Siqueiros.

#### **Reading:**

- Edward Lucie-Smith, "The First Modern Movements" and "Mexican Muralism" in *Latin American Art Since 1900*

NO DISCUSSION BOARD

## Week 6

### Mon, Oct 6: Neoplasticism, De Stijl, and Modernist Sculpture

#### **Reading:**

- "Neoplasticism" and "De Stijl" from *Art Since 1900*

### Fri, Oct 10: The Return to Order and the Anti-Art of Dada

An overview of postwar tendencies, Dada from Zurich to New York, Purism in France (Ozenfant, Le Corbusier)

#### **Reading:**

- Leah Dickerman, 2005/6, an excerpt from *Dada*
- H.H. Arnason, "Postwar Clacissm" in *History of Modern Art*

## Week 7

**Mon, Oct 13, No Class (Thanksgiving)**

**Fri, Oct 17: Berlin Dada & New Objectivity**

Dada and Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity) in Germany

**Reading:**

- H. H. Arnason, "Idealism and New Objectivity" in History of Modern Art

**Museum Report Due**

## Week 8

**Mon, Oct 20: Making the Style of New Life**

Bauhaus, art, craft, and technology (Gropius, Moholy-Nagy, Ann Albers).

**Reading:**

- Barry Bergdoll and Leah Dickerman, *Bauhaus*

**Fri, Oct 24: A Review of Modern Architecture**

Modernist Architecture: Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe. The International Style and other Movements in the first half of the 20th century

**Reading:**

- Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*

## Week 9

**Mon, Oct 27: A Review of Modern Sculpture**

**Reading:**

- Penelope Curtis, from *Sculpture 1900–1945*

**Fri, Oct 31: The World Divided**

Art and propaganda. Nazi Germany's "Entartete Kunst" exhibition, Socialist Realism (USSR) and The New Deal (American WPA murals).

**Reading:**

- From *Art Since 1900*

## **Week 10**

### **Mon, Nov 3: Modernism in Canada**

The Group of Seven in Canada. National identity, landscape, and appropriation. Settler Colonialism and Painting

Readings:

- Gerta Moray, "Emily Carr and the Traffic in Native Images"

### **Fri, Nov 7: Presentations**

## **Week 11**

**No Class: Mon, Nov 10 - Fri, Nov 14 (Fall Break)**

PART IV: WAR, DISPLACEMENT, AND NEW BEGINNINGS

## **Week 12**

### **Mon, Nov 17: Surrealism in Paris**

Surrealism forming in Paris. Breton's manifestos.

Reading:

- David Hopkins, from *Dada and Surrealism: A Very Short Introduction*

### **Fri, Nov 21: Surrealism Beyond Paris**

Art et Liberté (Egypt): The surrealist fight against fascism and nationalism. Wifredo Lam in Cuba.

**Reading:**

- Kamal Telmisany "Long Live Degenerate Art!"
- From *Surrealism Beyond Borders* (exh. catalog)

## Week 13

### Mon, Nov 24: The Atlantic Bridge

European artists (Mondrian, Léger, Ernst, Duchamp) in NYC during WWII. Their influence.

Reading:

- From H. H. Arnason, Elizabeth C. Mansfield, *History of Modern Art*, 365–382

### Fri, Nov 28: Modernism International

Amrita Sher-Gil (India/Hungary), and wartime painting in East Asia.

Reading:

- Partha Mitter, "Decentering Modernism," *Art History and Avant-Garde*
- Amrita Sher-Gil, *Self-Portrait as a Tahitian* ([link](#))

## Week 14

### Mon, Dec 1: The New York School

Abstract expressionism in New York

*Reading:*

- Excerpts from *Art Since 1900*

### Fri, Dec 5: Recap : no readings

## Week 15

### Mon, Dec 8: Presentations (2)

**Final Project Due : Dec 11**