



Boston University Study Abroad  
Paris

## CAS AH 356 French Art: Contemporary Art in Paris

Credits: 4

**Professor:** Daniel Lesbaches ([dlesbach@bu.edu](mailto:dlesbach@bu.edu))

**Schedule:** 16 two-and-a-half-hour sessions over 7.5 weeks  
(Monday & Wednesday – 3:30 to 6 pm + 2 additional sessions)

**Office hours:** Monday 3:00-3:30, and by appointment

**Course visits:**

- Musée d'Orsay
- Musée Picasso
- Musée National d'Art Moderne (Centre Pompidou), Modern and Contemporary collections
- Contemporary art galleries (details TBD)

**Course material:**

- A course pack with all required readings (to be purchased by each student).
- Two reference manuals available at the BU Paris Center (excerpts on Blackboard):
  - o DAGEN, Philippe. HAMON, Françoise (dir.). *Histoire de l'art. Epoque Contemporaine (XIXe-XXe siècles)*, Paris, Flammarion, 1995.
  - o LEMOINE, Serge (dir.). *L'Art Moderne et Contemporain*, Paris, Larousse, 2006.

### I. COURSE PRESENTATION AND OUTCOMES

This course has three objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify and understand the main art movements in Paris from 1850 to today, including painting, sculpture, photography, installations, and urbanism. We will give consideration to the historical, economic, and sociocultural contexts of the time period into order to develop a history of “modernity” (in the art historical sense) as Paris defined it, as well as its influence on Western taste. Three points will be emphasized:
  - a. The influence of Parisian architecture and urbanism on modernity.
  - b. The place of female artists in modernity.
  - c. The reception of Parisian modernity.
2. By examining the current presentation “Modernités plurielles” at the Centre Pompidou, we will study how Parisian modernity has been interpreted and translated in other parts of the world.
3. Students will develop an understanding of art historical methodology through different exercises: analytic commentary of a work, essay, and review of an exhibition.

The course, including additional seminars and visits, is conducted entirely in French.

#### Outcomes

##### General knowledge

By the end of the course, students will have acquired

- a precise knowledge of Modern Art timeline from Realism to contemporary developments ;
- the ability to describe and characterize the major movements of Modern and Contemporary Art ;
- a knowledge of the major artists' contributions and key artworks and the ability to recognize those artworks and artists;



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- the ability to define in general terms artistic modernity as it was developed in Paris ;
- an understanding of Paris' function as one of the three global capitals of contemporary art and culture (along with New York and London), due to its institutions (such as Centre Pompidou), the number and quality of its art centers and private galleries, and all the artists, French or not, who come from or live in the city ;
- the capacity to relate Modern Art thematics to others issues raised by social sciences (postmodernism, gender studies, globalization, urbanism...);

### Art History methodological tools

By the end of the course, students will be able to

- formally analyze a specific work following a precise art history method (*commentaire d'oeuvre*) defined during the course and applying it to an oral presentation ;
- understand and analyze theoretical texts about Modern Art written in English or in French, by identifying their main ideas and implications;
- think critically about exhibitions and analyze how museums write art history and how temporary exhibitions develop specific thematic or present an artist's work;
- understand the historical reception of works and how modern art has progressively come to occupy a central place, notably through the creation of museums devoted to it.

## II. ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

### **Visits: 10%**

During the guided visits to museums and exhibitions, students will be asked questions about the displays: both the works themselves and the setup of the work within the museum or gallery. About 30 minutes of each visit will be dedicated to this exercise, during which students provide written answers.

### **Oral presentation: 20%**

Working in groups of two, students will prepare a 10 minute presentation (including a PowerPoint) on a given work of art, highlighting its principal characteristics and its importance of both the career of its artist and the great movements of art history. The grade will take into account the quality of the presentation and the PowerPoint, the knowledge gained on the artist and the work, the analysis of the work, and the ease and clarity of the oral presentation.

### **Essay: 30%**

Students will visit an exhibition chosen by the professor and write a developed, analytic critique of it in a 5-page paper. The essay also allows students to develop their written French in an academic context and to put into practice techniques and terminology of art criticism in a formal register.

### **Slide quiz: 10%**

Students will identify works studied in class and provide essential details (artist, movement, time period, etc).

### **Final exam: 20%**

The two-part final exam will cover the entirety of the course. It will be comprised of two essays: one on a given work of art (analytical commentary) and one on a given movement or period of the history of modern art.



**Participation and preparedness: 10%**

This grade takes into account the quality of a student's presence in class, energy, relevance of comments in class, effort and progress in language proficiency, and attendance and punctuality.

**Attendance Policy**

1 absence (class session or activity) = -1 point on the overall grade

4 or more unexcused absences = grade of F for the course

Missed assignment or test = grade of 0 for the assignment

Plagiarism on an assignment = grade of 0 for the assignment

*NB: Excused absences must be justified by a doctor's note or a scheduled internship interview.*

**Plagiarism (BU Policy)**

All students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on the examinations or for plagiarism may be 'expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the dean.' Read the full Academic Conduct Code online at <http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>.

**III. CALENDAR**

	<i>Topics and Readings</i>	<i>Assignments and Activities</i>
Session 1	- Introduction - Methodology: analytic commentary	
Session 2	- What is modern art? - Baudelaire and the painter of modern life  <u>Readings:</u> Charles Baudelaire, « La modernité », Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne (1859-1860).	
Session 3	- Realism - Impressionism and Neo-impressionism  <u>Readings:</u> Hamon-Dagen, p. 158-161 (Courbet), p. 164-165 (Olympia), p. 168-174 (Impressionnisme), p. 196-197 (Seurat)	
Session 4	- Post-Impressionism - Matisse and Fauvism  <u>Readings :</u> Deux réceptions critiques du Fauvisme (1905) : André Gide et Louis Vauxcelles Henri Matisse, <i>Notes d'un peintre</i> , 1908 (extraits). Hamon-Dagen : p. 200-201 (van Gogh), p. 208-210 et 214-215 (Gauguin), p. 260-271 (Fauvisme). Lemoine : p. 28-31.	



Session 5	<b>Visit:</b> Musée d'Orsay	
Session 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Primitivism in Modern Art</li><li>- Paul Cézanne</li><li>- Cubism</li></ul> <p><u>Readings:</u> Guillaume Apollinaire, <i>Les Peintres cubistes</i>, 1912 Pablo Picasso, <i>Statement to Marius de Zayas</i>, 1923 Hamon-Dagen, p. 270-283. Lemoine, p. 34-41</p>	<b>Oral Presentation n° 1:</b> Pablo Picasso, <i>Portrait of Kahnweiler</i> , 1910
Session 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Abstraction in Paris: the Delaunays, Kandinsky, Mondrian</li></ul> <p><u>Readings:</u> Alfred H. Barr Jr., <i>Le Développement de l'art abstrait</i>, 1936 Lemoine : Pages 42-43, Pages 54-57, Pages 84-87</p>	<b>Oral Presentation n° 2:</b> Piet Mondrian, <i>Broadway Boogie-</i> <i>Woogie</i> , 1942-3
Session 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Surrealism</li><li>- <i>Guernica</i> and the 1937 <i>Exposition Internationale</i></li></ul> <p><u>Required reading:</u> André Breton, « Manifeste du Surréalisme », Paris, 1924 Lemoine, pages 116-123</p>	<b>Oral Presentation n° 3:</b> Pablo PICASSO, <i>Guernica</i> , 1937
Session 9	<b>Visit:</b> Musée Nationale d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Modern Collections	
Session 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Dada in Paris</li><li>- Marcel Duchamp and readymades</li><li>- Yves Klein and New Realism</li></ul> <p><u>Readings:</u> Marcel Duchamp, <i>Apropos of 'Readymades'</i> Lemoine, p. 72-79</p>	<b>Oral Presentation n° 4:</b> Marcel DUCHAMP, <i>Roue de bicyclette</i> , 1913/1964
Session 11	<b>Visit:</b> Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Contemporary Collections	
Session 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Daniel Buren and Institutional Critique</li><li>- "<i>Mythologies individuelles</i>": Christian Boltanski, Annette Messager, Sophie Calle</li></ul> <p><u>Readings:</u> Daniel Buren, « Sur le fonctionnement des expositions » Lemoine : p. 228-229, 288-291</p>	<b>Oral Presentation n° 5:</b> Daniel BUREN, <i>Les Deux Plateaux</i> , 1985-86  <b>ESSAY DUE</b>  <b>SLIDE QUIZ</b>
Session 13	<b>Visit :</b> Contemporary art gallery (TBD)  <u>Readings:</u> Lemoine, pages 228-229, pages 288-291.	



Session 14	Reception of modern art in France and the US - The role of American collectors: The Steins, Albert C. Barnes - The Amory Show, 1913 - Creation of a modern art museum in New York: Société Anonyme, the Gallatin Collection, founding of MoMA in 1929 - Creation of a modern art museum in Paris: the role of the government and the Ministry of Culture - Globalization of museums  <u>Readings:</u> Françoise Cachin, Jean Clair, Roland Recht, « Les musées ne sont pas à vendre ».	
Session 15	Paris as a muse - Gordon Matta-Clark, <i>Conical Intersect</i> (1975). - Christo et Jeanne-Claude, <i>Le Pont-Neuf emballé</i> (1985). - Jan Dibbets, <i>Monument à Arago</i> (1994).  <u>Readings:</u> Lemoine, pages 222-227	<b>Oral Presentation n° 7:</b> CHRISTO and JEANNE-CLAUDE, <i>Le Pont-Neuf emballé</i> , 1985
Session 16	Conclusion - Synthesis and review for Final Exam	
Last Friday		<b>FINAL EXAM</b>

#### IV. REFERENCES

##### Reliable on-line sources

Avoid: Wikipedia, anonymous or tourists' blogs and websites.

- Recommended Museums websites

New York MoMA. The Art Institute of Chicago. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The National Gallery (Londres). National Gallery of Art (D. C.). Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Musée du Louvre, Musée d'Orsay, Musée Picasso, Musée Rodin, Centre Pompidou.

- University resources : [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org).

- Glossaries and general information

[www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie](http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie)

[www.moma.org/explore/collection/](http://www.moma.org/explore/collection/) (click on "Index of art terms")

[www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/glossary/](http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/glossary/)

[www.metmuseum.org/toah/](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/) (« Timeline of Art History »)

[http://arthistory.about.com/od/glossary/Art\\_History\\_Glossary.htm](http://arthistory.about.com/od/glossary/Art_History_Glossary.htm)

- Texts and pictures

[www.artchive.com/](http://www.artchive.com/) (including the link "Theory & Criticism")

[www.googleartproject.com/fr/](http://www.googleartproject.com/fr/)

<http://plato.stanford.edu/>

- Dictionaries :

<http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/>

[www.wordreference.com/](http://www.wordreference.com/)



### **Additional bibliography**

#### General art history

- BOIS, Yve-Alain. BUCHLOCH, Benjamin. FOSTER, Hal. KRAUSS, Rosalind. *Art Since 1900. Modernism. Antimodernism. Postmodernism*, Londres, Thames & Hudson, 2004.
- BLISTÈNE, Bernard. *Une histoire de l'art au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, Beaux-Arts magazine, 2002.
- FER, Briony. BATCHELOR, David. WOOD, Paul. *Realism, Rationalism. Surrealism. Art between the Wars*, New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1993.
- HARRISON, Charles. WOOD, Paul (dir.). *Art en théorie 1900-1990. Une anthologie*, Paris, Hazan, 1997 (éd. anglaise, 1992, augmentée en 2010).
- HARRISON, Charles. FRASCINA, Francis. PERRY, Gill. *Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction. The Early Twentieth Century*, New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1993.

#### Specific artists and movements

- BAUDELAIRE, Charles. *Écrits sur l'art*, Le Livre de Poche Classique, 1992.
- FRIZOT, Michel (dir.). *Nouvelle Histoire de la Photographie*, Paris, Bordas, Adam Biro, 1994.
- Catalogue *Impressionnisme. Les origines, 1859-1869*, Paris, Grand Palais, 1994.
- Catalogue *Cézanne*, Paris, Grand Palais, 1996.
- Catalogue *Le Fauvisme ou l'épreuve du feu. L'éruption de la modernité en Europe*, Paris, Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, 2000.
- WHITFIELD, Sarah. *Le Fauvisme*, Paris, Thames & Hudson, 1997.
- CABANNE, Pierre. *Le Cubisme*, Paris, Saint-André-des-Arts, 2002.
- DAIX, Pierre, *Dictionnaire Picasso*, Robert Laffont, Bouquins, 1995.
- DUCHAMP, Marcel. *Duchamp du signe. Écrits*, réunis et présentés par Michel Sanouillet, Paris, Flammarion, 1975 (édition revue et corrigée, 2008).
- Catalogue *Marcel Duchamp*, Venise, Palazzo Grassi, 1993.
- DACHY, Marc. *Dada & les dadaïsmes : Rapport sur l'anéantissement de l'ancienne beauté*, Paris, Gallimard, Folio, 2011 (édition revue et augmentée).
- Catalogue *Dada*, Paris, Centre Pompidou, 2005.
- Catalogue *La Révolution surréaliste*, Paris, Centre Pompidou, 2002.
- BRETON, André. *Le surréalisme et la peinture*, Paris, Gallimard, Folio essais, 1965.
- BRETON, André. *Manifestes du surréalisme*, Paris, Gallimard, Folio, 1973.
- Catalogue *Aux Origines de l'Abstraction. 1800-1914* (Serge Lemoine, Pascal Rousseau dir.), Paris, Musée d'Orsay, 2003.
- Catalogue *Face à l'Histoire (1933-1996). L'Artiste moderne face à l'évènement historique : engagement, témoignage, vision*, Paris, Centre Pompidou, 1997.
- SCHIPP, Herschel B. *Guernica. Histoire. Élaboration. Signification*, Paris, Cercle d'Art, 1992.
- Catalogue *Le Nouveau Réalisme*, Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, 2007.
- Catalogue *Yves Klein*, Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, 2006.
- BUREN, Daniel, *Mot à mot*, (catalogue), Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, 2002.

#### Critical readings

- GLICENSTEIN, Jérôme. *L'art : une histoire d'expositions*, Paris, PUF, 2009.
- GREENBERG, Reesa. FERGUSON, Bruce W. NAIRNE, Sandy (dir.). *Thinking about Exhibitions*, London and New York, Routledge, 1996.
- KLUSER, Bernd. HEGEWISCH, Katharina (dir.). *L'Art de l'exposition : une documentation sur trente expositions exemplaires du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, éditions du Regard, 1998.
- MONNIER, Gérard. *L'art et ses institutions en France de la Révolution à nos jours*, Paris, Gallimard, Folio, 1995.
- MOULIN, Raymonde. *L'artiste, l'institution et le marché*, Paris, Flammarion, Champs, 2009.
- O'DOHERTY, Brian, *White Cube. L'espace de la galerie et son idéologie*, Paris, La Maison Rouge, 2008.
- de SAINT-PULGENT, Maryvonne. *Culture et communication. Les missions d'un grand ministère*, Paris, Gallimard, Découvertes, 2009 (historique du ministère de la Culture).
- WHITE, Harrison et Cynthia. *La carrière des peintres au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle : du système académique au marché des impressionnistes*, Paris, Flammarion, Champs, 2009.