



## ITALIAN ART IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Art 410, Spring Semester 2019

Prof. Marco Cianchi (mcianchi1@gmail.com)

Monday 9.30-12.15 Aula Magna Office Hours: Monday 12.30-13.30 (by appointment)

### Syllabus

#### **Course Goals:**

Throughout the past decade, my aim in the course *20th Century Italian Art* has been to successfully present the structure of 20th century Italian art to American students in the fields of humanities, architecture, and studio-art. Particularly, this course addresses the information-gap that exists in English/American modern and contemporary art publications where only Futurism, Metaphysical art, Arte Povera, and a few other Italian movements or makers receive attention. Through this course, students appreciate the powerful synthesis between our overwhelming tradition of historical art and the changes of the past century reflected in Italian modern and post-modern art and culture.

#### **Course Description:**

This course will examine the history of Italian painting and sculpture in Italy from the early 20th century to the present against the background of Italy's cultural-political heritage and in comparison with parallel art developments in Europe and America. It will begin around 1910 with Futurism and the Metaphysical School. The speed, dynamism and technological innovation in the work of Balla and Boccioni versus the silence, memory and tradition in Giorgio De Chirico's painting characterize these two different options offered by Italian art. Then it will consider the general climate of "ritorno all'ordine" (call to the order) that evolved into a Fascist art under the regime of Mussolini (1922-45). For this period, focus will be on artists Mario Sironi, Arturo Martini, and Giorgio Morandi.

#### **CSU GE Category: C3, C4 or C Elective**

After the war and the fall of Fascism, Italy became a Republic. It was a new beginning for the country and for the arts. Masters such as Alberto Burri (his "burlap sacks" were a scandal) and Lucio Fontana (known for his "slashes" and space-time concepts) contributed to the success of Arte Informale. This "formless art" movement became a worldwide phenomenon during the 1950s that had Abstract Expressionism (or Action Painting) as its American counterpart. These new artists will be compared with "figurative" masters active in Italy at the same time, especially leftist painter Renato Guttuso who developed a politically and socially motivated art. The "fabulous" sixties, Italy's time of the industrial boom, introduced a local version of English/American Pop Art but also generated examples of "anti-art" such as Piero Manzoni's "artist's breathe" inspired by Dadaist Marcel Duchamp. The attitudes that emerged out of the 1960's and the Italy modern art tradition, like Futurism, were seminal to the rise of Arte Povera (poor art) in 1968. Its principal artists (Kounellis, Merz, Pistoletto, Penone) will be thoroughly studied in the context of Process-art in order to grasp their individual contribution to the internationally recognized new-avant-garde.

Finally, in the 1980s, a new wave of Expressionist art named “Transvanguardia”, again brought a generation of Italy’s artists to the postmodern stage. Protagonists such as Clemente, Chia, Cucchi, Paladino will be discussed along with young contemporary artists like Cattelan and Beecroft that emerged in the last decade of the 20th century.

**CSU GE category:** C3, C4 or C Elective

### **General Course Requirements**

You are responsible for the weekly readings, the information given to you in class, on handouts and via email. Part of your grade will be determined by regular attendance, participation in class discussions and active engagement in all activities of this course. Make sure to check your email on a regular basis for updates and additional information.

### **Text book**

E. Braun (ed), *Italian Art in the 20th Century. Painting and Sculpture 1900-1988* (Munich and London: Prestel Verlag, 1989).

NB: This book is out of print. There are several copies on reserve. It must be used in the library to study the pictures and for Italian history readings. ABOUT XEROX AND OTHER FORMS OF REPRODUCTION PLEASE READ COPYRIGHT AND PRIVACY LAWS (HERE BELOW)

**Class Site Visits:** Visits to museums and other institutions and sites are included in this course and you are required to attend all of them.

**Learning Objectives** Students will learn names, biographies, dates, works of the most important artists listed in the course syllabus. The style of the art works and their cultural background will be duly explained.

**Learning Outcomes** At the end of the semester students will be able to place artists and art works in their historical context. They will also be able to use appropriate vocabulary to define and describe the class material.

### **EXAMS**

**Mid-term:** a) Identify 3 slides out of a set of 30-40 pictures that the teacher will provide. Artist’s name, title, date of the work and a comment, are required; b) Answer 2 questions about artists and/or art movements.

**Final-exam:** like the mid-term, on the second half of the course.

### **GRADES**

Your grade will be determined by the following tests

**Midterm 50%** (of which part a=40%; part b=60%)

**Final-exam 50%** (same)

NOTE: Given the scarcity of English literature on some of the discussed topics attendance is of utmost importance for this class.

**Percentage:** 100-94 A 93-90 A 89-88 B+ 87-83 B 82-80 B 79-77 C+ 76-73 C 72-69 C 68-67 D+ 66-

63 D 62-60 D59 and below F.

The + and - symbols will be used for grading (except for A+). Specific information about the paper, exams and other projects will be given to you during the semester.

**Late work** will be accepted only for serious and justified reasons. Depending on the circumstances, the instructor will propose a new and later deadline.

**A** student performance has been outstanding and indicates an exceptional degree of academic achievement in meeting learning outcomes and course requirements

**B** Student performance has been at a high level and indicates solid academic achievement in meeting learning outcomes and course requirements

**C** Student performance has been adequate and indicates satisfactory academic achievement in meeting learning outcomes and course requirements

**D** Student performance has been less than adequate and indicates deficiencies in meeting the learning outcomes and/or course requirement

**F** Student performance has been unacceptable and indicates a failure to meet the learning outcomes and or course requirements.

### **Academic Dishonesty Will Not Be Tolerated.**

Any form of plagiarism or cheating may result in a failing final grade in the course and might be reported to IP and your campus. You are better off spending your time studying for the class. If you have questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please refer to the student handbook and catalog of your campus and also ask me and/ or the Resident Director for more information.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **“3 – Hour” Attendance Policy 2018-2019 (for classes that meet once a week for 3 hours)**

Attendance to all CSU courses is mandatory. One unexcused absence is allowed during the semester but more than one unexcused absence will lower your grade as follows (excused absences will be accepted for serious medical reasons or emergencies): **TWO** unexcused absences, lowers by 1.5 letter grades (i.e., B to C-); **THREE** unexcused absences, lowers by 3 letter grades (i.e., A to D). More than **THREE unexcused absences could result in failure of the course.**

In order not to disrupt the class, punctuality is required. Students are expected to be in class at the beginning of the class hour; any delay exceeding **five** minutes will be considered an absence.

Dates of mid-term and final exams **can not** be changed for individual travel plans or personal needs. Students should take note of the dates and hours of the midterm and final exams and plan their trips after the last exam. It is important to inform friends and relatives about these exam dates so that no tickets are purchased for you that will interfere with these exam dates. **Missing the midterm or the final exam could result in failure of the course.**

During the academic year photocopies and other material may be distributed in class by the instructors. Students who were not in class are responsible for getting the material from their classmates and making their own photocopies.

### **Other class policies:**

Use of computer in class is restricted to oral presentations, unless previously approved by the professor.

**Eating** is **NOT** allowed in class.

Cellular phones must be **turned off** or placed on **silent mode** during class.

### **Class Code of Conduct**

Activities unrelated to the course (including private conversations, emailing, text messaging, reading, web surfing, etc.) are not permitted during class time. Please turn off or put all electronic devices on silent mode prior to the beginning of the class.

### **Important: Exams**

You must attend all exams and quizzes as scheduled. Make-up exams are given only for valid reasons. Please check your academic calendar BEFORE you book trips, flights and hotels.

### **Copyright and Privacy Laws**

No portion of the texts, films, videos, and other material used in this course can be reproduced in any format including scanning, electronic downloading or sharing of files.

In addition, no portion of class lectures, discussions, and activities can be reproduced and used in any format, including electronic, without the written consent of the instructor and/or guest speakers.

### **Changes- Important**

Information contained in this syllabus, including the class calendar, other than that mandated by the University, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

## **CLASS CALENDAR**

**Mon February 25 - Introduction to the course. 1<sup>st</sup> lecture on Futurism:** F. T. Marinetti and Futurist Manifestos. Development of Futurist painting and sculpture styles compared with French Cubism. Focus on the work of Boccioni, Balla, Severini.

**Mon. March 4 - 2<sup>nd</sup> lecture on Futurism-** “Futurist reconstruction of the Universe”: its expansion to all media and arts after 1915.

**Mon. March 11 - Lecture on Metaphysical Art:** Giorgio De Chirico’s life and work. Subjects, themes, interpretation of his paintings. The influence of Metaphysical art on Surrealism.

**Mon. March 18 - Lecture on “Independent Artists” Amedeo Modigliani and Giorgio Morandi. “Ritorno all’ordine” (call to order):** Carlo Carrà from Futurism to “Valori Plastici” (plastic values). Novecento group and a Fascist art. Focus on painter Mario Sironi and sculptor Arturo Martini.

**Mon. March 25- Special lecture** on POST ZANG TUMB TUUUM. ART LIFE POLITICS: ITALY 1918-43 (2018 Art Show at the Fondazione Prada, Milan)

### **Mon. April 1 – MID TERM EXAM**

**Mon. April 8 - Lecture on postwar figurative art:** From the expressionism of the late thirties to Renato Guttuso’s political issue. The influence of Picasso’s Guernica. Giacomo Manzù and Marino Marini: two different ways to sculpture.

**Mon. April 15 - Lecture on Arte Informale:** Alberto Burri’s “burlap sacks”. Lucio Fontana’s “holes and slashes”. Comparison with American Abstract Expressionism (Jackson Pollock’s “drip painting”, Bill de Kooning’s “Women”) and French *Informel* (Jean Fautrier, Jean Dubuffet).

**Spring Break: April 19 – 28. CSU closed. No classes.**

**Mon. April 29 – On site lecture: Museo del Novecento, piazza Santa Maria Novella and Museo Marino Marini (time tba)**

**Mon. May 6 – Lecture on “Art of the Sixties”:** The “richness” of Italian Pop Art. Piero Manzoni’s anti-art. “Poor gestures and materials” in the work of Jannis Kounellis, Mario Merz, Michelangelo Pistoletto and other masters of Arte Povera. Comparison with European and US art in the sixties and seventies.

**Mon. May 13- introduction to Post-modern art:** Theory and practice of Postmodernism. German Neo-expressionism (Anselm Kiefer, Georg Baselitz, others). American “Bad painting” (David Salle, Julian Schnabel). The artists (Chia, Clemente, Cucchi, Paladino) and the “creative” critic (Achille Bonito Oliva) of the Italian Transavantgarde. Maurizio Cattelan and Vanessa Beecroft, two examples of internationally recognized young Italian artists.

**Mon. May 20 – Videos show and Final Exam Review**

**MAY 27 – MAY 30: FINAL EXAM. Date and time TBA**

#### **COST PER STUDENT**

No text-book to buy. To the above please add the ticket price to visit Museo Novecento and Museo Marini, approx. 10-12 euro or less with student discount.