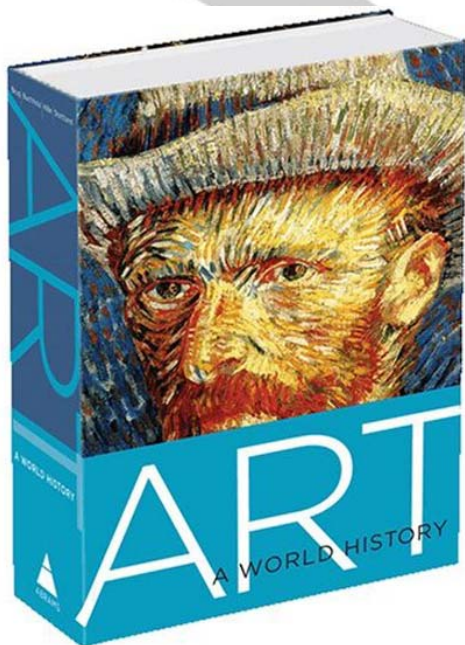


# ART HISTORY COURSE

## How this Course is structured

For over 15,000 years people have created images that we might consider to be art. Obviously we cannot simply start at the beginning and work through this entire period although there may be much to learn from doing so.

For most purposes we cannot begin to discuss works of art without seeing them. We need a source of images and some useful information about them. Today, many people will use the internet for this purpose and it is a brilliant resource with access to images and information from all over the world. However, not all students are able or willing to use this resource so we have to select a printed publication that can serve this purpose.



There are many excellent books on Art History but many assume too much prior knowledge or are written in style that initially deters students. Some cover only a particular period and others are so large and comprehensive that one's bookcase might need extra reinforcement. **Art – A World History** is a small volume, but it is packed with images and information. It is highly readable without 'talking down' to its audience and includes useful timelines and introductions to particular movements, as well as more detailed descriptions of individual artists and works.

We've tried to maintain the same quality throughout the course, using plain understandable language and an approach that challenges without seeking to confuse. You can extend your reading throughout the publication as you feel fit, and use the internet and other sources to expand on the information. There is really nothing that can beat seeing the original artwork so I have indicated the current location, but I recognise that this may not be possible for most students.

## Exercises and assignments

**You will have a series of EXERCISES**

**which you complete on your own without submitting to the tutor**

and

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**for which you send a response to your tutor.**

**You may send a written response, preferably typed but hand written is OK as long as your handwriting is legible. Alternatively you may send an e-mail or upload your response to the Art Room on the college web site\*. It's up to you and you can vary the method if you wish. The minimum turn around time for assignments is one week, but you can take a fortnight, three weeks or a month if you like.**

The first assignment will be a practice one with a model response for you to compare with your own. After that the tutor will respond directly to your assignments as submitted, indicating good points and/or omissions. I prefer not to criticise individual points but provide acknowledgment and further information that will assist you in answering similar assignments for other works of a similar nature. The main objective is to learn a method of thinking about art that can be applied to anything, anywhere, at any time.

Although there may be quite a lot of reading the main intention is to make you LOOK at art with fresh eyes.

You should aim to work through the exercises and complete assignments in order before progressing to the next section. When you have completed the whole course you will receive a diploma to this effect. This will be an acknowledgement of your work on the course but the main benefit that you derive from it will be a greater understanding and knowledge of this fascinating and rewarding subject.

\* When you enrolled for the course you should have been provided with information on different methods available for submitting assignments according to the course you are undertaking, including post, e-mail and website etc.

## AESTHETICS

This term was originally applied by the philosophers in Ancient Greece in an almost parallel sense to the word 'beauty'. It was taken up by later philosophers to extend this beyond a notion of superficial appearance or mere prettiness to include a wider range of experiences. These relate to the way that we regard objects that we enjoy even though they have no direct practical use - i.e. art.

The term now covers a wide range of related activities and issues that surround the philosophy of art - e.g. what is art?, what form does it take?, what is its purpose or function?

It can also be taken to refer to the way that we perceive and respond to art and artefacts (the products or objects of art) both personally and collectively.

It is potentially a huge subject in itself as a branch of philosophy that deals with questions of beauty, taste and meaning. Within this topic we are going to confine ourselves to a few important questions.



**\* Do we look at art in a different way to other things?**

**\* Does Art have to be beautiful or enjoyable?**

**\* What is the difference between Art and Craft and Design etc.?**

## EXERCISE 2

You can do this exercise wherever you are, in your house, outside in the garden, in the countryside - even in your car - but not while you're driving!

It helps if you are in a quiet environment.

### YOU DO NOT NEED TO SUBMIT THIS TO YOUR TUTOR

- \* Look around you and select a number of random objects within easy reach, e.g. a cup and saucer, handbag, mobile phone, bunch of keys etc.
- \* Focus on one object and try to exclude everything else around it.
- \* Try and 'forget' what the object is and look at it as if you are seeing it for the first time.
- \* Look at the overall shape of the object, the silhouette that it makes, then 'zoom in' on one part of it
- \* Examine the way that the light falls on that part of it.  
Where is it darkest? Where is it lightest?  
Half close your eyes to emphasise the 'tones' rather than the colour
- Consider the surface material.  
Does it look hard or soft?  
Is it smooth or rough? What texture is it?
- What is the colour of the area you are looking at?  
Is it one colour or can you detect other colours? Look closely

### REPEAT THE EXERCISE FOR THE SECOND OBJECT THEN AGAIN FOR THE THIRD OBJECT

If you did this successfully you will have looked at these objects in a different way to how you normally look at them.

You will have responded to them **aesthetically**

#### TIP

If you have difficulty in doing this it might help to cut out a square, rectangle or circle in a piece of paper or card and use this to isolate particular areas of the objects as you look at them

## SCULPTURE AND OTHER 3D ART

Although much of what is said about painting can also be held true for sculpture and other three dimensional forms, these also have their own characteristics. It is Inevitable that shape will have a larger role to play in something that may be viewed from more than one direction but most of the other elements of visual language discussed earlier are equally relevant. Texture again may play an increasing role, both in terms of its tactile (touch) qualities and the effect that it may have upon light and shade. Although some sculptural forms may exclude the use of colour in order to concentrate on the form (shape) there are others that will utilise colour as an important element.



Stone and timber have long been carved into shapes, either in one piece or in several pieces assembled together, with or without disguising the joins. There is also a tremendous variety of stone and timber types, all of which will have their special characteristics in terms of hardness or softness, grain or texture etc. In these materials and others the form is generally created by 'reducing' the original block through carving or chipping away at the surface.

Alternatively, completed forms can be created by 'building up' the shape by adding clay or plaster or welding together lengths of metal etc. Shapes formed in this way may then be 'cast' in more resilient materials by forming a mould around the original and filling this mould with molten metal or a resin (liquid plastic) that sets hard. The mould can then be removed and the 'cast' finished by grinding or smoothing etc.

The materials used may be expensive, heavy or involve special processes, all of which would have to be considered by the artist.

Ceramics traditionally used clay as its base material, mixing it with water to create a mouldable material that could then be shaped by hand or 'turned' on a potter's wheel. The clay would then be dried in the air or 'fired' in a kiln to bake the material into a hard and less brittle form. Various 'glazes' can be applied to waterproof and colour the surface and different types of clay can be used to produce thin, translucent material such as porcelain. Glass and other materials may be similarly transformed through melting and reforming processes.

Apart from sculpture, metal has been traditionally worked by hammering, soldering, shaping and casting to form jewellery, tools and weapons and ritual objects. Gold silver, tin copper, lead and other alloys have been used for their particular qualities and availability.

Fabrics have been used to make a variety of objects ranging from clothes and carpets to tapestries and wall hangings. These may be woven, stitched, knitted or embroidered and each process has its own characteristics and qualities

