

Exploring the Arts



Henri Matisse, *The Joy of Life*. Oil on canvas, 1906

Course Description:

NECC ART 106 is an interdisciplinary and multi-media approach to the arts. This course will consider criteria that are common to all the arts as well as those that apply to particular arts: visual arts, dance, theater, music, architecture and/or film. This course is designed to give students an overview of all the arts by providing guidelines that will sharpen their appreciation and perception of the ways in which the arts are a reflection of particular time periods as well as of timeless issues pertaining to the human condition.

The course focuses on American and European painting, photography and dance, but will also examine works of art from non-western cultures and occasionally in other media such as music or architecture.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- Analyze the composition of visual artworks using the vocabulary of form
- Identify some different periods and trends in the arts, particularly American modern arts
- Know some commonalities between different art forms and be able to use this knowledge to better understand and appreciate each of the arts (painting, photography and dance)
- Learn to evaluate art by applying criteria specific to each art form
- Develop better judgment of the arts through analysis
- Know some of the chronology and trends that apply to a particular art form

Blackboard:

This course uses the Northern Essex Community College Blackboard. Blackboard is an online tool for students to access the syllabus, readings, assignments, Power Point presentations, and announcements. It is essential that you become familiar with the site, and check our page regularly. To access Blackboard:

1. Go to www.necc.mass.edu
2. Click on the MyNECC emblem on the top right of the screen.
3. Under "Students," click on the link for Blackboard Login
4. Type in your username and password (initial password is usually your birth date)

Contact with Instructor:

Contact information for the instructor can be found at the top of the syllabus. Please contact me immediately if you encounter any problems with the lecture material, the readings, or the assignments. If you begin an assignment but are unsure of how to proceed, contact me so that I can clarify the material. It's better to ask than to guess! I will communicate with you via email. Please get in the habit of checking your email regularly - once daily is best.

Required Reading:

Readings will be given as handouts in class or posted as PDF documents to Blackboard. We will read writings by artists, art critics, photographers, dancers and art historians, as well as excerpts from these textbooks:

- Getlein, Living with Art, 10th Edition
- Janson's History of Art, various editions

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is critical in a college-level class. I will honor the Haverhill High School attendance policy, with the following differences:

- 1) **A student is allowed FIVE excused absences per term**, after which one of two things will happen, depending on circumstances:
 - a) You will be required to take an "Incomplete" and do extra credit work after the term to complete the course (in cases of serious illness or personal emergency).
 - OR b) You will fail the course.
- 2) **Students are allowed no more than FOUR UNEXCUSED absences per term**. After four, any further unexcused absences will result in automatic failure of the course.
- 3) Three unexcused late arrivals in class will be counted as one absence.

The expectation is that you will come to class each day, on time and ready to work. You are expected to be in class each day. If you are absent for any reason, you are expected to email me the day before you miss class or that day to get the assignments. Work is due the day you return to school. **NO EMAIL SUBMISSION OF WORK IS ALLOWED AT ANY TIME.** If you are not attending class regularly, you will be marked "NP" - non participating - with NECC and be administratively withdrawn from the course.

Progress Reports:

Progress reports will be issued on the high school schedule. Instructors will follow student progress closely and assignments will be returned with grades and feedback on a regular basis. Students and their parents/guardians will be updated concerning grades, work completed or not completed, and classroom behavior as needed.

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty is an essential component in our learning community at the high school and Northern Essex Community College. Please read the NECC handbook concerning academic policy and honesty. Submitting another person's work, whether from a fellow student, a sibling, a book, a magazine, or from the Internet, is plagiarism and you will fail the assignment. In addition, you will meet with all instructors and the principal to review your status in the Integrated Learning Community. When in doubt, ASK if something is plagiarism.

Homework and Class Participation

Homework will be due as announced in class. Every student is expected to actively participate in class through discussion, readings and homework. Anticipate two to four hours of outside work per week, including reading, writing and research. Class participation necessitates all homework is done completely and on time. Late work will be accepted but will be marked one grade lower for each class day it is late. Homework is due at the start of class.

Readings:

Most weeks you will be assigned homework readings. Come to class prepared to discuss the readings on the day specified in class. Often, students will be required to take notes on the readings and/or the readings will correspond to the bi-weekly 2-page paper due for homework.

Bi-Weekly 2-page Paper:

Every other Tuesday a 2-page paper (double spaced, 12 point font) will be due in response to a prompt or question assigned in class the previous week. Papers must be submitted in hard copy; ***email submissions will not be accepted***. The paper prompts will relate to in-class lectures, discussions, and assigned readings. Occasionally a small amount of research will be required using online sources and databases. **The first paper is due Tuesday, Sept 6th.**

MFA Papers (Two)

You will be assigned a 2D artwork from the MFA Boston to write two longer papers about, each 4-5 pages in length. One will be a formal analysis paper and will use the concepts introduced in Unit 1. The second will be a research paper for which you will use NECC library resources. MFA Paper 1 will be assigned in mid October, and MFA Paper 2 in late November.

*MFA field trip: we will visit the MFA Boston as a class in early November. Date TBA.

MFA PAPER 1 Due: Thursday, NOV 17 in class.

MFA PAPER 2 Due: Thursday, JAN 12 in class.

Note about writing: *SPELLING AND GRAMMAR COUNT in all written assignments. Proof read your work thoroughly before turning it in. I also strongly recommend reading your work out loud to catch any awkward sentences. If a paper has excessive errors, it will not be graded and will be handed back for rewriting.

Unit Tests:

At the end of each unit there will be a test. Test will reflect material covered in the unit and will include a variety of question formats: multiple choice, short answer, slide IDs and longer written answer. They are designed to assess students' understanding of artists and concepts covered in each unit. Tests will be announced at least 1 week in advance.

Research Presentation Project:

Each student will choose a well-known artist or artwork to research and present on. Presentations will take place in the final weeks of the term. Detailed instructions and rubric will be provided. DUE DATE: Jan 5, 2017.

Grading and Evaluation:

Attendance and Class Participation	15%
Bi-Weekly papers	30%
Unit Tests	20%
MFA Papers (2)	25%
Research Presentation Project	10%

Cell phone policy: If it becomes apparent you are using your phone for anything not related to what we are doing that moment in class, you will be asked to put your phone away. Repeated offenses will result in the lowering of your participation grade.

Schedule of Topics (subject to change)**Unit 1: What is Art? Introducing Visual Art (Weeks 1-5) (a range of time periods)**

- Art vs. 'not art' - what makes something art?
- Why Look at Art? What Do Artists Do?
- Subject, Form and Content. Tools for formal analysis: The Elements and Principles of Art. The relationship of form to meaning. Criteria for evaluating artworks.
- Art vs. 'Craft': Examining hierarchies of media

Unit 2: Photography (Weeks 6-9) - (early 1800's to 1940's)

- History: the *camera obscura*, early photography, Civil War photography.
- The "truth value" of photography vs. other media.
- Pictorialism: Julia Margaret Cameron, Alfred Stieglitz
- "Ethnographic" photography: Edward S. Curtis' portraits of Native Americans
- American photojournalism: Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine
- Photojournalism of the Great Depression: Dorothea Lange, the WPA artists (and possibly... Vietnam War photography)

Unit 3: Dance (Weeks 10-15) (c. 1600's to the present)

- Context: cross-cultural approaches to dance and the body: who dances, when, how, and why? How do culture and religion shape our relationships to our bodies and movement?
- History of ballet - European ballet, American ballet
- Modern Dance in America: Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham. Relationship to modernism in visual art.

Research presentations: Weeks 17, 18, 19 (beginning January 10th)

"To be an artist is to believe in life."

-Henry Moore

"You can see that you will have to have time to yourself to find out what appeals to your mind. While you go along with others, you are not really living your life. To rebel against others is just as futile. You must find your way. Happiness is being on the beam with life - to feel the pull of life. "

-Agnes Martin

“Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.” -Thomas Merton

“The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls.” -Pablo Picasso

“Art is a harmony parallel with nature.” -Paul Cezanne

“The essence of all beautiful art, all great art, is gratitude.” -Friedrich Nietzsche

“Painting is very easy when you don’t know how, but very difficult when you do.”
-Edgar Degas

“When I am finishing a picture, I hold some God-made object up to it - a rock, a flower, the branch of a tree or my hand - as a final test. If the painting stands up beside a thing man cannot make, the painting is authentic. If there’s a clash between the two, it’s bad art.”

-Marc Chagall

“The artist is nothing without the gift, but the gift is nothing without the work.”
-Emile Zola

“Fruits ... like having their portrait painted. They seem to sit there and ask your forgiveness for fading. Their thought is given off with their perfumes. They come with all their scents, they speak of the fields they have left, the rain which has nourished them, the daybreaks they have seen.”
-Paul Cezanne

“Art is selective, and its truthfulness is the truthfulness of the essential that creates movement.”

-Flannery O’Connor

“If only we try to live sincerely, it will go well with us, even though we are **certain** to **experience** real **sorrow**, and great disappointments, and also will probably commit great faults and do **wrong** things, but it certainly is true, that it is better to be high-spirited, even though one makes more mistakes, than to be narrow-minded and all too prudent. It is **good** to **love** many things, for therein lies the true **strength**, and whosoever loves much performs much, and can accomplish much, and what is done in love, is well done.”

-Vincent Van Gogh

“The essential thing is to spring forth, to express the bolt of lightning one senses upon contact with a thing. The function of the artist is not to translate an observation but to express the shock of the object on his nature; the shock, with the original reaction.” -Henri Matisse

“Nobody sees a flower - really - it is so small it takes time - we haven't time - and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time.”
— Georgia O’Keeffe

“It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child.”
- Pablo Picasso

“The emotion of art is impersonal.”
-T.S. Eliot (From “Tradition and the Individual Talent”)