

northwestern university
DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY

Quarter/Year

Spring 2017

Course Number

ART-HIST 250

Day/Time

MW 12:30-1:50 PM

Instructor

Swan

Course Title

Introduction to European Art: Early Modern



This course studies major works of European art of the “Renaissance” and “Baroque” eras—also known as the “early modern” era. Our primary geographic focus is Italy and northern Europe—Germany and the Netherlands, and we will also study the place of art in the context of global developments.

In order to maximize its relevance for non-majors, AH 250 focuses as much on European art and artists active between 1400-1700 as on themes relevant to art history and the practice of art making more generally. Our themes include: Naturalism; Materials and Media; Perspective; The Period Eye; Iconography; Religion; Popular Culture; The Representation of Women; Art and Science; The Cult of the Artist; Global Encounters.

Through reading and examination of works of art, students will learn responses to questions such as: What did it take and what did it mean to produce a painting—or to work in other media such as fresco, engraving, drawing, sculpture, and architecture in Europe during the early modern period? How do such works convey meaning? In what ways have they remained significant over the course of the intervening centuries? What is the relationship between art and society? Students may expect to become familiar with works by artists such as Giotto, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo Buonarroti; Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio and Gianlorenzo Bernini and Diego Velázquez; Martin Schongauer, Albrecht Dürer; Hieronymus Bosch, Pieter Bruegel, Rembrandt van Rijn, and Johannes Vermeer—among others.

No prior art history coursework is required.

Required Textbooks

Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art through the Ages: Backpack Edition, Book D: Renaissance and Baroque*, 15th ed. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*. Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*.

Assessments

Attendance and participation in section; Midterm; Final exam; occasional brief written assignments, including a visual analysis of a work on display at the Art Institute of Chicago