

northwestern university  
DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY

Quarter/Year

Winter 2018

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 produced in what are conventionally called the “Renaissance” and “Baroque” eras (and/or the “early modern” era). Our geographic focus is Italy and the north—Germany and the Netherlands—with some side trips to France and Spain, as time allows. This course is intended as an introduction; we will focus as much on the historical data relevant to 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.

What did it take and what did it mean to produce a painting--or to work in such other media as fresco, engraving, drawing, sculpture, and architecture in

Europe during the early modern period? What is perspective? What and how do such works convey meaning and 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 Renaissance artists such as Giotto, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo Buonarroti, Albrecht Dürer, Hieronymus Bosch, Pieter Bruegel; and Baroque artists such as Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Gianlorenzo Bernini, Diego Velázquez, Rembrandt van Rijn, and Johannes Vermeer. 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, 15<sup>th</sup> ed. ISBN: 1285837843. John Berger, Ways of Seeing, ISBN: 0140135154. Michael Baxandall, Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy. A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style, ISBN: 0935737537.

#### Assessments

Attendance and participation in section; Midterm; Final paper or in-class exam (student's choice); occasional brief written assignments, including a visual analysis of a work on display at the Art Institute of Chicago