

General Information

Course name	Arts and Culture in Great Britain	ECTS Credits	4
		Semester	summer

Aims

The course builds upon the students' prior knowledge of British history and literature and tries not only to revise this knowledge but also to put it into a broader cultural context. Proceeding chronologically from the period of English Renaissance, we shall focus on how the political and social situation of the time has been reflected in (not only) visual art and in cultural production of the time, taking British literature as a starting point. The students shall therefore be asked to revise selected chapters of British history and literature for each seminar. This revision will be followed by reading materials that deal specifically with mostly visual art and culture of the time. This theoretical knowledge will then be applied to specific examples art and culture that may serve as a source of information not only about the artistic values of the society of the time but also about its norms, values and institutions.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, student will be able to:

- Identify some of the most significant works of British art
- Understand the connections between historical background and cultural development of the respective periods. Identify main ideas and arguments in the texts assigned for home preparation
- Apply this theoretical knowledge to the analysis of works of art and culture and make their own analysis of a selected work of art based on the theories studied throughout the semester. Students would also improve the transferable skills of summarising texts they have read, understanding knowledge gained in the classroom, understanding and applying it in the form of a presentation

Contents

WEEK 1: Course Introduction. Content: defining culture and art, the concept of national culture, British culture and stereotypes, cultural literacy. We will discuss our understanding of the terms 'art' and 'culture' and try to come up with our own definitions. Then we will think about the term 'national' culture and British culture in particular and see how we each understand these notions and what concepts and stereotypes we associate with being British. Our next task will be to try to clarify the term 'art' and how we understand it in relation to culture. Throughout this course, we will also be working on improving certain skills that may be useful in broader context. This lesson will focus on summarising texts and presenting these summaries to others, which will later be applied in individual presentations.

Reading (in class): Arnold, D.: Art History. A Very Short Introduction. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Chapter 1.

WEEK 2: English Renaissance. Content: Renaissance, Reformation, portrait painting, Tudors and the Golden Age. In this class, we will compare the understanding of arts and the role of artists in ancient, medieval and Renaissance society and discuss how and why Renaissance came to be a defining turning point for European culture and how our awareness of this period has been shaped by its presentation in the media.

Revision: Tudor England (history), Elizabethan and Tudor Literature (literature)

Reading: <http://www.arthistory.sbc.edu/artartists/anamed.html>

<http://www.arthistory.sbc.edu/artartists/renaissance.html> Presentation(s): compare the position of art and artist in ancient, medieval and Renaissance society.

WEEK 3: Commonwealth and Restoration Content: Charles I and Baroque portrait, art and culture of the Commonwealth, Restoration This class will focus on the reflection of the changing social and political situation in the period art, particularly the portrait painting. We will discuss how portraits of monarchs and other influential figures reflected their ambitions and served as a message for the others. Applying our theoretical knowledge to analysing specific works of art, we will move on to discuss the form of the final presentation and its evaluation criteria. Revision: Stuarts (history), 17th century and Restoration literature (literature)

Reading: Sharpe, K. 'Portrait of an Age'. In *History Today*, March 2009, pp. 6-7.
Skeaping, L. 'All singing, all dancing'. In *History Today*, February 2010, pp. 18-24.

WEEK 4: Neo-Classicism, English School of Art Content: The Age of Reason, Enlightenment, the rise of middle classes, satire, journalism Neo-Classical art and culture in general marked a shift in topics, styles and target audience for writers and visual artists alike. Using our knowledge of neo-classical literature as a starting point, we will analyse several paintings of the so called English School to see how similar principles were applied in visual arts. Since this period also marked the birth of journalism and regular newspapers, we will compare some of those with our current notions of what a newspaper is. Revision: Neoclassical prose and poetry (literature) Reading:

• <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2176-h/2176-h.htm> (Introduction and the first of the discourses)
http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22500/22500-h/22500-h.htm#Page_113

Presentation(s): compare Hogarth's and Reynolds' attitudes to art (themes and genres they preferred) and the education and training of young artists

WEEK 5: Georgian Era Content: architecture, domestic life, Regency This period in British art history will give us an opportunity to pay more attention to architecture. We will look back on how architectural styles evolved but will also discuss the less visible aspects of this topic, including the notion of domesticity and the organisation of domestic life. Revision: Jane Austen (literature), Hanoverians (history) Reading: Vickery, A. 'Open House Georgian Style'. In *History Today*, November 2009, pp. 42-44. Bryson, B. *At Home. A Short History of Private Life*. London: Transworld Publishers, 2010. Chapter 5.

WEEK 6: Romanticism, Landscape Content: changing perception of nature, topography, history painting Our discussion of Romantic painting will focus on the development of this genre and primarily on comparing 2 most significant English landscape painters, trying to identify their different aims and understanding of their work. We will also cover the genre of history painting, its connection to landscape in the works of Turner and discuss the reasons for its prominent status in this particular period in history. Revision: the Age of Romanticism (literature) Reading: Wilton, A.: *Five Centuries of British Painting. From Holbein to Hodgkin*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2002. Chapter 5.

Constable: <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/john-constable-the-hay-wain>
<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/john-constable-salisbury-cathedral-from-the-meadows>
Turner: http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/learn-about-art/paintings-in-depth/heroine-of-traffic-the-fighting-temeraire/*/#viewPage/1
<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/joseph-mallord-william-turner-rain-steam-and-speed-the-great-western-railway>
Presentation(s): compare Constable and Turner's different approaches to the genre of landscape painting.

WEEK 7: Victorian Britain Content: Empire, industrialisation, old vs. new, Arts and Crafts movement We will start this lesson by discussing last week's reading and then move on to other aspects of Victorian Britain. We will discuss its conservatism as opposed to major innovations in technology, science and thinking, major advances and modernisation as opposed to pseudo-styles and attempts at reviving ancient arts and crafts. Revision: Industrial Revolution, Victorian Britain (history) Reading: Wilton, A.: *Five Centuries of British Painting. From Holbein to Hodgkin*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2002. Chapter 6 – Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Bryson, B. *At Home. A Short History of Private Life*. London:

Transworld Publishers, 2010. Chapter 1: Presentation(s): old vs. new in Victorian Britain in terms of visual art, architecture and way of thinking

WEEK 8: Contemporary Art and Culture: Content: Young British Artists, conceptual art, new media

During this class, we will return to our initial definitions of what art means and will compare these with the theories discussed in the reading that try to respond to current styles and trends. Specific examples will include paintings, installations and other forms of art by contemporary British artists. Again, we will see how the understanding of art, artist and their role has been evolving.

Reading: Pooke, G. and Whitman, G. 2008. Teach Yourself Art History. Chapter 4: <http://www.london.gov.uk/fourthplinth/content/about-programme> <http://www.london.gov.uk/fourthplinth/content/marc-quinn> <http://www.london.gov.uk/fourthplinth/content/what-people-are-saying>

www.london.gov.uk/fourthplinth/ Presentation(s): Fourth Plinth project, its ambition, main idea and the inspiration common to most of the exhibited works; approaches to defining and understanding art and their applicability to contemporary visual art.

Written Exam will also be a part of this seminar!

WEEK 9: Final Presentations

WEEK 10: Tutorials - no class

WEEK 11: Final Presentations

WEEK 12: May 1 - no class

WEEK 13 /14: TUTORIALS

Evaluation

Continuous Assessment:

- **Regular Class Attendance:** Students are allowed to miss no more than 2 seminars for whatever reason, in order to be able to complete the course. Should anyone come unprepared, he or she will be asked to leave and considered absent from the seminar. There are no re-takes for presentations. Please keep this in mind and make sure you are always present in class when your presentation is due.
- **Active Participation in Class - 10+ points (1 for each class = a chance to earn some additional points):** At the beginning of each seminar, students will be asked to provide a brief revision of the given historical period and of the English/British literature of the time. All you have to do is go through your notes from British History 1 and British Literature 1 and 2 and provide a concise overview, focusing on what you consider important. Another way of earning points for active participation is by contributing your knowledge and opinions to the discussion and interacting with your colleagues. These opinions should be based on your home preparation and reading. Do not expect to earn points for active presentation if all you do is say a word or two occasionally or when asked. You are expected to interact with your colleagues, answer their questions as well as those asked by the teacher and ask relevant questions yourself.
- **Reading presentation and leading discussion - 10 points (reading comprehension, summarizing and paraphrasing, manner of delivery, language, questions and discussion - each worth 2 points)** This presentation will focus on the reading assigned for home preparation to all the students. One person will, however, summarise the arguments of the article, chapter etc., present the main points, terminology, compare if there is anything to compare. Another part of this presentation will be leading the class debate, which means preparing some questions for your colleagues to discuss. This means avoiding simple yes/no questions or asking about trivia. Please remember that this is not a 'presentation' that requires you to stand in front of the classroom and run a power point presentation. You are expected to explain the text, to check your colleagues' understanding by asking them

relevant questions and to engage them in a discussion. All the reading materials will be available online at [http://ffweb.ff.upjs.sk/vyuka/Katedra Anglistiky a Amerikanistiky/Sabovikova/Art and Culture/](http://ffweb.ff.upjs.sk/vyuka/Katedra_Anglistiky_a_Amerikanistiky/Sabovikova/Art_and_Culture/) or, in case of online sources, links are provided directly in the syllabus. Written exam - 15 points Before final presentations are due, students will revise the material studied throughout the semester and sit an exam that will check their understanding of the material discussed in classes and assigned for home study and revision. Hopefully, this will also help you organize your thoughts and prepare a better final presentation. You are all advised to take notes of your home readings and of whatever is said in class.

- Final Presentation - 15 points (see the document entitled "Final presentation and evaluation" for detailed instructions) Each student will choose their own topic from the very broad area of British art and culture – a painting, statue, installation, building, monument, street art, photography etc. Please, make sure you choose something you like, find interesting and would like your colleagues to know about. Do not choose the works discussed in our seminars! You will be asked to apply the historical background and the theoretical information you have studied during the semester to the analysis of your chosen work of art and present it to your colleagues in a 10-15 minute presentation. All the topics must be approved by the teacher and submitted no later than during our seminar in week 7. A specific set of rules to follow and a list of criteria for presentation evaluation is available on ffweb for you to be able to prepare a successful presentation and to evaluate your colleagues. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask them in class or during my office hours.

Final Assessment: Active participation 20% Reading presentation 20% Written exam 30% Final presentation 30%

Grading policy: 100-93% 92-86% 85-78% 77-72% 71-65% X 64 and less

Bibliography

Recommended Reading:

- ARNOLD, D. 2004. Art History. A Very Short Introduction. Oxford: OUP, 2004.
- BRYSON, B. 2010. At Home. A Short History of Private Life. London: Transworld Publishers, 2010.
- GAUNT, W. 1967. A Concise History of English Painting. London: Thames and Hudson, 1967.
- GUY, J. 2000. The Tudors. A Very Short Introduction. Oxford: OUP, 2000.
- HOWARD, M. 2002. The First World War. A Very Short Introduction, 2002.
- Mill, J. S.: On the Subjection of Women. Available at:
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/27083>
- POOKE, G. and WHITMAN, G. 2008. Teach Yourself Art History. London: McGraw-Hill, 2008.
- ROTHENSTEIN, J. 2001. An Introduction to English Painting. London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2001.
- WILTON, A. 2002. Five Centuries of British Painting. From Holbein to Hodgkin. London: Thames and Hudson, 2002.
- Websites of selected British museums and galleries:
<http://www.tate.org.uk/>
<http://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern/>
<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/>
<http://www.npg.org.uk/>
<http://www.nationalgalleries.org/>
<http://www.ashmolean.org/>
<http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/our-museums/goma/Pages/home.aspx>