

Art History: Aim and Basic Ideas

Code: 100540
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Art History	FB	2

Contact

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

Interest in knowing the historian of art's research strategies.

Objectives and Contextualisation

This course aims to familiarize students with a broad range of aspects related to the study of art history, that is, with study strategies, fundamental concepts, history, and current debates within the discipline. The program is divided into three thematic sections. The first introduces a series of general issues related to the concept of art, the historian's profession, and the nature and scope of art history as a humanistic discipline. The second section provides a comprehensive theoretical and methodological overview of the history of the discipline, while the third addresses its contemporary renewal and critical contributions from the late 20th to the early 21st centuries.

Competences

- Applying the mastery of the basic critical and methodological tools in order to understand and narrate Art History and reflect on the profession of art historian.
- Applying the specific scientific methodologies of the discipline of Art History.
- Demonstrating they know the history of the artistic ideas and the main theoretical currents that inspired the reflection about art, cinema, its creators and its audience through history.
- Expressing specific knowledge about the origin, evolution and various fields of study of Art History, as well as the classic and actual subjects, vocabulary and debates of the discipline.
- Recognising the fundamental problems, vocabulary and concepts of the Theory of Art and Cinema.
- Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
- Students must develop the necessary learning skills in order to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.

Learning Outcomes

1. Analysing classical and current debates of the History of Art.

2. Analysing ideas about an artistic phenomenon, and its creators and recipients in a given cultural context.
3. Analysing ideas about an artistic phenomenon in a given cultural context.
4. Analysing the creators of an artistic phenomenon in a specific cultural context.
5. Analysing the recipients of an artistic phenomenon in a specific cultural context.
6. Applying the knowledge about aesthetic ideas and Art Theory to the analysis of the artistic imagery.
7. Critically analysing basic concepts of artistic and cinematographic theory and its evolution through history.
8. Demonstrating the knowledge of scientific methodology, sources and Art Theory in the reading, criticism and formal, iconographic and symbolic interpretation of any artistic or cinematographic imagery.
9. Differentiating artistic theories about an artistic phenomenon, its creators and recipients in a given cultural context.
10. Interpreting and communicating the contents of a text about theory of art and cinema.
11. Interpreting the fundamental concepts of Theory of Art with a critical eye.
12. Recognising the methodological, iconographic and Art Theory-related knowledge in order to read an artistic imagery.
13. Summarising acquired knowledge about the origin and transformations experienced by the general Theory of Art and the various fields of study of the discipline.
14. Using the knowledge of general Art Theory in the criticism of the artistic imagery.
15. Working in teams, respecting the other's points of view and designing collaboration strategies.

Content

Part One: Definitions

1. Art as an Object of Study
2. Art History as a Humanistic Discipline

Part Two: Approaches

3. Background: Ancient and Medieval sources on art
4. Origins: Vasari's biographical model, and its legacy
5. Between science and metaphysics: origin and development of a discipline
6. Form and Style as objects of study
7. A cultural History of Art: premises of Iconology
8. Ideology and Contexts: Marxism and social History of Art
9. Collateral perspectives: psychoanalysis, semiotics, structuralism

Part Three: Innovations

10. The "New History of Art": definition and scope of the concept
11. Alternatives to the canon: feminism and queer theory, postcolonialism
12. Visual studies: considerations on a new paradigm

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
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Type: Directed			
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Lectures	50	2	7, 4, 1, 5, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 10, 12, 13, 15, 14
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Type: Supervised			
Individual work: writing a critical essay	25	1	7, 4, 1, 5, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 10, 12,

Text analysis of the readings assigned to the topics covered in the course	25	1	7, 4, 1, 5, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 10, 12, 13, 15, 14
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Type: Autonomous

Documents search and writing exercises	50	2	7, 4, 1, 5, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 10, 12, 13, 15, 14
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Explanatory and dialogic lectures. This will include the analysis and commentary of selected texts, as well as the presentation of case studies linked to the different sections of the syllabus, that is, to the different methodologies and focuses of historical-artistic analysis that will be studied throughout the course.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Essay 1 (theoretical reflection)	10 %	0	0	7, 3, 9, 11, 13
Essay 2 (workf of art analysis)	10 %	0	0	6, 8, 10, 12, 15
Partial exam 1	40 %	0	0	4, 1, 5, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14
Partial exam 2	40%	0	0	4, 1, 5, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

The evaluation will consist of two written exams on the course syllabus, and two essay exercises that will be carried out in class, according to the calendar agreed at the beginning of the course. The final grade for the subject will be the average of the grades obtained, according to the following weighting: each exam will be worth 40%; each exercise, 10%. Unjustified non-attendance at any assessment activity will count, for the purposes of the average, as a 0.

Class attendance is not mandatory, and non-attendance will not be penalized. However, it will be counted and, in the event that the student attends more than 75% of the course sessions, they will obtain a significant bonus for the final grade.

Second chance assesment

In the event that they are unable to attend one of the assessment activities for a justified reason (i.e. medical), this activity may be recovered at the end of the semester. Unjustified non-appearance in an exam will not entitle you to retake it. Students who have failed with a final grade between 3.5 and 4.9 may take a conditional retake, also at the end of the semester. The maximum grade for this retake will be 5 (passed).

Not assessable

The student will receive the grade of "Not assessable" provided that they have not submitted more than 1/3 of the assessment activities.

SINGLE ASSESSMENT

The student may take the single assessment, to pass which they will need to pass a final exam on the entire course syllabus (80%), and submit two exercises similar to those prepared in class (10% + 10%). The same retake system will be applied as for continuous assessment.

USE OF AI

In this subject, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is not allowed in any of its phases. Any work that includes fragments generated with AI will be considered a lack of academic honesty and may lead to a partial or total penalty in the grade of the activity, or greater sanctions in serious cases.

Bibliography

Bibliografia bàsica

*Papers and publications of a more specific nature will be proposed during the semester via Moodle.

ARNOLDD, Dana. *Art history: A very short introduction*. Nova York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

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BREA, José Luis (coord.). *Estudios visuales : la epistemología de la visualidad en la era de la globalización*, Madrid: Akal, 2005.

CHEETHAM, Mark A. & Michel Ann HOLLY & Keith MOXEY. *The subjects of art history: Historical objects in contemporary perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

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MARÍAS, Fernando. *Teoría del arte II*, Madrid: Historia 16, 1996.

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PÄCHT, Otto. *Historia del arte y metodología*. Madrid: Alianza, 1986 (1977)

PODRO, Michel. *Los historiadores del arte críticos*. Madrid: A. Machado Libros, 2001 (1982).

POMMIER, Édouard (ed.). *Histoire de l'histoire de l'art, Cycles de conférences organisés au Musée du Louvre*, París: Klincksieck, 1995.

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RAMÍREZ, Juan Antonio. *Cómo escribir sobre arte y arquitectura*, Barcelona: Ediciones del Serbal, 1999.

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ROSSI PINELLI, Orietta (cur.). *La storia delle storie dell'arte*. Torí: Einaudi, 2014.

SETA, Cesare de. *Perché insegnare la storia dell'arte*, Roma: Donzelli, 2008.

WOOD, Christopher. *A history of art history*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019.

Software

If a specific software is necessary we will inform the student

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed