

Art Appreciation | ART 1301

Sul Ross State University, Fall 2026

Instructor:

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Tuesday & Thursday, 2pm-3:15pm
MAB 302

Office Hours: Thursday, 11am-1pm or by appointment.

Course Overview

This is an introductory course designed to help students to answer the following questions:

What is art?
What does a work of art mean?
What drives an artist to create?
What makes art valuable?
Why is art important?

This course will examine the vocabulary utilized to describe art, discuss the process and practice of making art. This is an introductory art history survey course. By the end of the semester, students will come away with a greater appreciation of artists and their work, an enthusiasm, and a greater understanding of the visual arts that will enrich their lives.

What to Expect

In this course, you will explore the value, functions, elements, and principles of art, and gain a general knowledge of art history. Classes will be discussion-oriented; participation is required.

Homework will consist of readings and short videos (posted on Blackboard), Artist Spotlight projects and presentations, and an Artist Journal project.

Course Structure

This class meets twice a week. Classes will consist of lectures, discussions, writing exercises, group activities, workshops, and visiting artist presentations/demos. All course materials, including lectures, readings, and assignments will be available on Blackboard.

Participation and Engagement

Active participation in class discussions is an essential component of this course. Your participation will count towards a significant portion of your final grade, so be sure to contribute

thoughtfully and regularly.

I understand some students don't feel comfortable speaking up in front of large groups. If you struggle with this, please reach out to me. We can find solutions together! I am to cultivate an classroom environment that feels safe and encouraging, and eases the anxieties that can come from public speaking.

Communication

My role is to support your learning journey, and I encourage you to reach out with any questions or concerns. I am available via email and will respond to inquiries as quickly as possible. I am also available to meet in person during my office hours or by appointment, where we can discuss any challenges you might be facing or provide further clarification on assignments.

Class Environment & Student Support

This class is structured to be accessible to everyone. I am more than happy to work with you on your individual needs. My commitment is to help you meet the learning objectives of this course and support your academic journey. If you feel that your performance in class is being impacted by outside experiences, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me.

I aim to foster an environment that feels supportive, collaborative, and safe for all. There will be an emphasis on free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. We must all help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. There will be zero tolerance for harassment, belittlement, or discrimination against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference.

Required Course Materials

- 2 Notebooks: one for taking notes in class, and one for your Artist Journal.
- Scissors, glue, access to a printer for Artist Journal
- Writing utensil

There is no textbook required for this course. Required readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Assessment & Grading Criteria

Participation (class discussions, in-class assignments & activities): 20%
Formal Analysis Papers: 20% (2 Formal Analysis Papers; each 10%)
Artist Spotlight Presentations 20% (Midterm (solo) & Final (in groups); each 10%)
Artist Journal, pt. 1: 20%
Artist Journal pt. 2: 20%

There will be several opportunities for extra credit throughout the semester.

Formal Analysis Essays

The rubric for Formal Analysis Essays will be utilized for the Core Assessment—skill objective: Critical Thinking.

Formal Analysis 1 & 2: Critique employing Elements, Principles, and Functions Art. A concise formal essay written in the third person, comprising of five paragraphs: Introduction/Thesis, and three body paragraphs focusing on the Elements, Principles and Functions of Art.

- Introduction: Purpose/thesis, art information, and description (20 points)
- Body Paragraph (Elements): Main ideas, supporting details, and analysis (20 points)
- Body Paragraph (Principles): Main ideas, supporting details, and analysis (20 points)
- Body paragraph (Functions/Social Responsibility): Main ideas, supporting details, and analysis (20 points)
- Conclusion: Summary statement, critique/judgement (20 points)

Artist Spotlight Presentations

The rubric for the Artist Spotlight Presentations will be utilized for the Core Assessment—skill objective: Communication.

Create a Powerpoint presentation on the work of an artist of your group's choosing. Presentations should address the following:

- Biographical information (20 points)
- The artist's working medium or mediums using an artistic vocabulary (20 points)
- How the artist uses the elements and principles of art in their practice (20 points)
- The social and cultural relevance of the artists' work (20 points)
- Your personal analysis on the impact of the chosen artists' practice (20 points)

Artist Journals

Throughout the semester, you will keep a notebook dedicated to art and artists that interest you, responses to readings and videos, and reflections on your progress throughout the course. 1-2 new entries should be added every week. Creativity is encouraged – make the journal your own.

Artist Journals will be collected twice a semester for a grade; at midterm and on the last day of class. Artist journals make up a total of 40% of your final grade. Artist Journals should provide evidence of your progress throughout the course and meaningful engagement with course materials and artists' work.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory for this course. If you must miss a class for a school-related activity, the absence must be discussed (and arrangements made regarding coursework) prior to the absence. If you must miss a class for an emergency or illness, please contact me by email or phone as soon as possible. Late work will not be accepted unless you have contacted me about extenuating circumstances before the due date. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Any student that has 7 or more unexcused absences will be dropped from the course and receive an "F".

Academic Integrity

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the temptation to engage in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

Generative AI Tools (ChatGPT)

In this course, every element of class assignments must be fully prepared by the student. The use of generative AI tools for any part of your work will be treated as plagiarism. If you have questions, please contact me.

ADA Statement:

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartz Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartz@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to expressively communicate an original idea or concept visually through an original artwork.
- Students will demonstrate proficiency in writing within the art discipline.

- Students will demonstrate knowledge of professional practices pertaining to their area of specialization.

Core SLOs

- Critical Thinking. Students will develop critical thinking skills to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
- Communication. Students will develop communication skills to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.

The Core Skill Objectives facilitated by Art Appreciation are:

1. Teamwork
2. Communication
3. Critical thinking
4. Social responsibility
5. Personal responsibility

Student Learning Outcomes facilitated by Art Appreciation are:

1. Students will become aware of the vocabulary utilized to discuss and describe art.
2. Students will be introduced to the elements, principles, theories, and styles of art.
3. Students will be introduced to the tools and techniques of making art.
4. Students will utilize these processes to create art.
5. Students will gain an awareness of art history in an abbreviated form.
6. Students will develop critical thinking skills through the examination of individual works of art.
7. Students will be able to synthesize, describe, and place works into social and historical contexts.
8. Students will learn to develop and express ideas clearly, consider the effects of

meaning and message, as well as other communication skills, by working together in groups, creating presentations, and through hands-on projects.

9. Students will develop teamwork skills by working together in groups on assigned tasks.

10. Students will develop an appreciation for the visual arts, crafts, and the human imagination.

11. Students will develop personal and social responsibility through management of individual and group requirements within the course, as well as through examples of personal and social justice inherent in the history of art throughout the world.

Tentative Class Schedule

WEEK 1 Introductions, What is Art?

8/25	Introductions, syllabus and course overview Assignment: Acquire notebooks for class and Artist Journal, class Choose artwork to share with
8/27	What is Art? Learning to Look Hometown Art Share

WEEK 2 Value, Function, & Themes

9/1	Artists & Audiences
9/3	Themes of Art

WEEK 3 Vocabulary of Art

9/8	Visual Elements & Principles of Design
9/11	Review for Formal Analysis essay

WEEK 4 Formal Analysis, Drawing

9/15	In-class Formal Analysis Essay #1
9/17	Drawing

WEEK 5 Paintings & Prints

9/22 Paintings and Prints

9/23 Visit Museum of the Big Bend

WEEK 6

9/29 **Photo & Graphic Design**

10/1 Darkroom Photography Workshop

WEEK 7 Sculpture, Installation, Craft

10/6 Sculpture, Installation, Craft

10/8 Ceramics workshop

WEEK 8 MIDTERM

10/13 Artist Spotlight Group Presentations

10/15 Ceramics workshop cont'd

WEEK 9 Ancient Worlds & Early Europe

10/20 Prehistoric Art
Film: Cave of Forgotten Dreams
Artist Journal Pt. 1 Due

10/22 Ancient Art, Christianity, and the Formation of Europe

WEEK 10 The Renaissance, 17th, 18th C Europe

10/27 The Renaissance, The 17th and 18th Centuries

10/29 Artist Visit / Workshop

WEEK 11 Arts of Islam & Africa

11/3 Arts of Islam and Africa

11/5	Artist	Visit	/	Workshop
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WEEK 12 Arts of Asia, the Pacific, the Americas

11/10	Arts of Asia, the Pacific, Americas
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11/12	Artist Visit / Workshop
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WEEK 13 Modern, Post-Modern, Contemporary

11/17	The Modern World: 1800-1945
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11/19	Modern to Post Modern, Contemporary Art Around the World
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WEEK 14 Review & Thanksgiving Break

11/24	Review for Formal Analysis #2
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WEEK 15

12/1	Last Class Day - Core Assessment 2: Formal Analysis paper Artist Journal pt. 2 Due
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12/3	Dead Day – Available for office hours
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WEEK 16 FINALS

Artist Spotlight Group Presentations