**Survey of Western Art**

**Course code:** ART100

**Semester and year:**Fall 2025

**Instructor:** Karolina Dolanská, Ph.D.

**Day and time**: Thursdays 11:15 - 14:00

### **Instructor contact:** karolina.dolanska@aauni.edu

**Consultation hours:** After class

**Art fee:** 1500 CZK

Art fees for this course will be used to cover class excursions, gallery visits and talks, museum entrances, and guest lectures.

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| **Credits US/ECTS** | 3/6 | **Level** | Bachelor |
| **Length** | 15 weeks | **Prerequisite** | None |
| **Contact hours** | 42 hours | **Grading** | Letter grade |

# Course Description

The course presents an introductory survey of History of the Western Art from the Paleolithic era to the present day. The scope of the course is broad, focusing on a limited set of major examples which will document the most important pieces in the eyes of the art historians. The course will not be, however, about memorizing names and dates. It will rather try to expose students to the beauty of art and deepen their historical understanding. It will allow them to observe pieces of art in their context of time and specific meaning, as well as an artistic value. Students will sharpen their visual skills and learn to apply their knowledge to works of art that they may have never been exposed to before.

# Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

* Have an understanding of artistic and architectural developments of the Western art and architecture
* Identify major art historical periods and styles of art and architecture and recognize their defining characteristics
* Recognize works of important artists and architects and understand them in their historical context
* Prepare and present research on a chosen topic.

# Reading Material

## Required Materials

* Kleiner, Fred, S., Gardner's Art Through the Ages: The Western Perspective, Volume I and Volume II, 16th edition (posted online under NEO Resources)
* E. H. Gombrich, The Story of Art, Phaidon. Oxford (on reserve at the AAU library and posted online under NEO Resources)

## Recommended Materials

* E. H. Gombrich, Art and Illusion, Phaidon Press. London (posted online under NEO Resources)
* Adams, Laurie Schneider (1999): *Art across time*, Volume I + II, McGraw-Hill (available to check out at the AAU library)

# Teaching methodology

Each session will consist of slide-based lectures, discussions of images and texts, class presentations, as well as excursions to museums, art galleries, and historical sites relevant to the topics covered in the class. Students will be evaluated on the basis of their comprehension of course materials, attendance and preparation, critical engagement with ideas presented in the course, and the ability to synthesize key issues developed throughout the semester.

# Course Schedule

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| Date | Class Agenda |
| Class 1  Date: Sep 04, 2025 | Topic: Introduction. Overview of the course.  Reading:   * Chapter 1: Strange beginnings, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich * Art Across Time: Chapter 1   Online documentaries: Dr. Eugen Weber's The Western Tradition: Episode 1 - The Dawn of History |
| Class 2 ¨ Date: Sep 11, 2025 | Topic: Paleolithic and Neolithic Art, Ancient art of Mesopotamia and Egypt.  Reading:   * Chapter 2: Art for eternity, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich * Art Across Time: Chapters 2, 3, 4   Online documentaries: Dr. Eugen Weber's The Western Tradition: [Episode 2 - The Ancient Egyptians (1989)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRbRdwi1rZI), [Episode 3 - Mesopotamia (1989)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6zeZowtqxg&t=1s), Episode 4 - From Bronze to Iron (1989) |
| Class 3  Date: Sep 18, 2025 | Topic: Classical Greek Art and Hellenistic Art  Reading:   * Chapter 3: The great awakening, and Chapter 4: The realm of beauty, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich * Art Across Time: Chapters 5, 6   Online documentaries: The Western Tradition - Episode 5 - The Rise of Greek Civilization (1989)  * The Western Tradition - Episode 6 - Greek Thought (1989)  The Western Tradition - Episode 7 - Alexander the Great (1989)The Western Tradition - Episode 8 - The Hellenistic Age (1989) |
| Class 4  Date: Sep 25, 2025 | Description: Roman Art, Early Christian art, Byzantine Art  Reading:   * Chapter 5: World conquerors, Chapter 6: A parting of ways, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich * Art Across Time, Chapters 7, 8, 9   Online documentaries: Dr. Eugen Weber's The Western Tradition Series - Episode 9 - The Rise of Rome, The Roman Empire, The Byzantine Empire |
| Class 5  Date: Oct 02, 2025 | Topic: Romanesque Art and Architecture.  Reading:   * Art Across Time, Chapter 10 * Chapter 8: Western art in the melting pot: Europe, sixth to eleventh century * Chapter 9: The Church Militant: The twelfth century, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich.   Online documentaries:   * BBC documentary Art of Eternity by Andrew Graham-Dixon   **Assignments/deadlines: Abstract to the Mid-Term Paper Due** |
| Class 6  Date: Oct 09, 2025 | Topic: Gothic Art and Architecture – Nature Redeemed  Reading:  Art Across Time, Chapters 11, 12   * Chapter 10: The Church Triumphant: The thirteenth century, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich * Chapter 11: Courtiers and burghers: The fourteenth century, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich. * Chapter 12: Conquest of reality: The early fifteenth centruy, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich.   Online documentaries:   * BBC documentary on the Renaissance by Andrew Graham-Dixon |
| Class 7  Date: Oct 16, 2025 | Topic: Renaissance  Reading:   * Chapter 13: Tradition and innovation I: The later fifteenth century in Italy, Chapter 14: Tradition and innovation: II: The fifteenth century in the north, and Chapter 15: Harmony attained: Tuscany and Rome, early sixteenth century, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich. * Adams, Chapter 15: pp. 547 – 583, Chapter 17: pp. 606 – 6   Online documentaries:   * The Medici Makers of Modern Art by Andrew Graham-Dixon * Michelangelo - Self-Portrait by Robert Snyder * BBC series on Northern Renaissance by Joseph Leo Koerner |
| Class 8  Date: Oct 23, 2025 | Topic: Late Renaissance and Mannerism  Reading:   * Chapter 18: A crisis of art: Europe, later sixteenth century, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich * Adams, Chapter 16: pp. 587 - 603 * Dr. Eliška Fučíková, The Merchants of Light, Art, science, and culture at the court of Rudolph II. (pdf)   Online documentaries:  The Apparition of Knowledge in the Court of Rudolph II.  **Assignments/deadlines: Mid-Term Paper Due** |
| October 30 2025 | **Mid-term break** |
| Class 9  Date: Nov 06, 2025 | Topic: Baroque  Reading:   * Chapter 19: Vision and visions: Catholic Europe, first half of the seventeenth century, and Chapter 21: Power and glory: I, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich * Adams, Chapter 18: pp. 625 – 672, Chapter 19: pp. 675 – 696   Online documentaries:   * BBC documentary series Power of Art by Simon Schama: Caravaggio, Bernini, Rembrandt * Caravaggio, documentary by Robert Hughes * Caravaggio by Derek Jarman * Marie Antoinette by Sofia Coppola |
| Class 10  Date: Nov 13, 2025 | Topic: Neoclassicism and Romanticism: The Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries  Reading:   * Adams, Chapter 20: pp. 699 – 714, Chapter 21: pp. 716 – 737 * Chapter 25: Permanent Revolution: The nineteenth century and, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich   Online documentaries:   * Simon Schama, Jacques-Louis David, BBC documentary series |
| Class 11 Date: Nov 20, 2025 | Topic: Art Nouveau and Secession  Reading:   * Adams, Chapter 21: pp. 716 – 737   Online documentaries:   * Shock of The New by Robert Hughes |
| Class 12 Date: Nov 27, 2025 | Topic: Modern Art  Reading:   * Chapter 27: Experimental art: The first half of the twentieth century, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich * Chapter 28: A story without end: The triumph of Modernism, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich   Online documentaries:   * Auguste Rodin – The Gates of Hell * Frank Lloyd Wright by Ken Burns * Picasso in the BBC documentary series Power of Art by Simon Schama |
| Class 13  Date: Dec 04, 2025 | Topic: Contemporary Art  Readings: TBA  Online documentaries: TBA |
| Class 14  Date: Dec 11, 2025 | **Final Exam and Final Paper Due** |

# Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

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| **Assignment** | **Workload (average)** | **Weight in Final Grade** | **Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes** | **Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes\*** |
| Attendance and Class Participation | 42 | 20% | Active participation in class discussions showing knowledge of the topics relevant to the class. | 1, 2, 3 |
| Class Presentation | 25 | 20% | Presentation skills, ability to explain the studied topic to peers, identify key issues, subject knowledge. | 1, 2, 3 |
| Mid-term paper | 25 | 20% | Prepare and present research on a chosen topic. | 1, 2, 3 |
| Final paper | 25 | 20% | Prepare and present research on a chosen topic. Show knowledge of the given subject, an ability to express thoughts in a clear prose, as well as an imagination to accompany the written text with illustrative photographs and pictures. | 1, 2, 3 |
| Final exam | 33 | 20% | Identify major historical periods and styles of art and architecture and recognize their defining characteristics from Romanesque to the Contemporary period. Contextualize the characteristics of representative forms and examples of art and architecture within the socio-cultural, historical, and political influences of their time. | 1, 2, 3 |
| TOTAL | 150 | 100% |  |  |

\*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

# Detailed description of the assignments

Students enrolled in the course will be asked to give one class presentation to take no more than 20 minutes. The presentation can be given in the classroom or outside and may be the basis of the midterm paper (3-5 typewritten pages, including illustrations and photographs), and the final paper (6-8 typewritten pages, including illustrations and photographs). Both the seminar presentation and the ideas for the paper should be discussed with the course instructor. The final paper is to be handed in on the last day of class. In addition, a final exam will take place at the end of the course. Attendance as well as active participation in class discussions are expected.

**Class Presentation (20%):**

At the beginning of the semester students will choose a topic for a class presentation, which can be as general as describing an art historical style or a time period or can deal with a specific work of art or architecture, an artist, or an architect. Presentations can have the form of PowerPoint slides, or if appropriate, can take place and/or be recorded at a pertinent historical sight, in an art gallery or a museum, describing the style and theme of the work, presenting relevant historical facts, contextualizing the artwork in a larger art-historical context, explaining what is interesting and exciting about the work, the artist, etc.

This task meets or partially meets these learning outcomes:

* Identify major art-historical periods and styles of art and architecture and recognize their defining characteristics.
* Identify important art and architecture examples found in Prague and classify them according to artistic/architectural style.
* Prepare and present research on a chosen topic.

**Assessment breakdown**

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| --- | --- |
| **Assessed area** | Percentage |
| Knowledge and understanding of the topic | 40% |
| Ability to think independently and afresh in regard to a topic at hand | 20% |
| Structure and organization of presentation | 20% |
| Delivery of presentation (visual effectiveness, clarity, impact, etc.) | 20% |

**Midterm Paper (20%) and Final Paper (20%):**

It is recommended that the midterm paper would deal with the same or similar topic as the class presentation. The midterm paper should be 3-5 typewritten pages long (including illustrations and photographs) and will be due before the mid-term break. The final paper is most likely to grow out of the midterm paper and the class presentation, treating and developing the chosen topic in a greater depth and detail. The final paper should be 6-8 typewritten pages (including illustrations and photographs) and is to be handed in on the last day of class.

This task meets or partially meets these learning outcomes:

* Identify major art-historical periods and styles of art and architecture and recognize their defining characteristics.
* Identify important art and architecture examples discussed in class and classify them according to artistic/architectural style.
* Prepare and present research on a chosen topic.

**Assessment breakdown**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assessed area** | Percentage |
| Knowledge and understanding of the topic. | 30% |
| Ability to contextualize key examples of works of modern art and architecture in relation to their style and historical context. | 20% |
| Ability to think independently and afresh in regard to a topic at hand. | 20% |
| Ability to accurately apply relevant theoretical knowledge and terminology to given examples. | 20% |
| Structure and organization of the paper. | 10% |

**Final Exam (20%):**

The Final Exam will consist of two parts: image identification and exam questions. The image identification will amount to recognition of the works of art and architecture discussed in the class, as well as the classification by style and date of those works. The exam questions will be based on topics covered in the class during the whole semester, where students will be expected to demonstrate their knowledge of the subject, an ability to contextualize key examples of art works in relation to their historical time period, and to demonstrate an ability to apply appropriate terminology learned throughout the semester.

This task meets or partially meets these learning outcomes:

* Identify major art-historical periods and styles of art and architecture and recognize their defining characteristics.
* Identify important art and architecture examples found in Prague and classify them according to artistic/architectural style.

**Assessment breakdown**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assessed area** | Percentage |
| Knowledge and understanding of the topic | 30% |
| Ability to identify key works covered in class or homework | 20% |
| Ability to contextualize key examples of works of art and architecture in relation to their historical time period | 20% |
| Ability to accurately apply relevant stylistic knowledge and terminology to given examples of art works | 20% |
| Ability to think independently and afresh in regard to a topic at hand | 10% |

**Class attendance and participation (20%):**

Students are expected to attend class regularly, to be on time, and to respect the rules and manners of the classroom while at school and on excursions (see class attendance policy below, and the *School Codex* on the University website). Students are expected to complete the readings and assignments and come prepared to participate in class activities or discussions. Students may be called upon to give short summaries, or answer questions concerning previous topics. Additionally, students are expected to actively participate during excursions, museum and gallery visits, *etc*., if such excursions take place.

In case of missing a class, it is each student’s responsibility to keep up with the assignments, and to get the information from the classmates or from the course website.

# General Requirements and School Policies

## General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU’s academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work. Please see the AAU intranet for a [summary of key policies](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xoNETY9yqNMwNP-06wDzM2VmgMIOire-?usp=sharing) regarding coursework.

## Course specific requirements

There are no special requirements or deviations from AAU policies for this course.