**Prague Art and Architecture**

**Course code:** ART 131/1

**Semester and year:** Fall 2025

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

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

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

**Consultation hours:** After class.

**Art fee**: 2000 CZK

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

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| Credits US/ECTS | 3/6 | Level | Bachelor |
| Length | 15 weeks | Pre-requisite | None |
| Contact hours | 42 hours | Course type | VA Required, HSC Required/Elective, CEA |

# Course Description

The course presents a basic overview of the history of western art from the early medieval to the contemporary time period through the art and architecture in Prague – a city which can be seen as a textbook of all styles. We will study and discuss Romanesque and Gothic art, Renaissance and Baroque art, 19th century art and architecture, Art Nouveau, Modern art, as well as contemporary art and architecture.

# Student Learning Outcomes

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

* 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.

# Reading Materials

## Required Materials

* *Prague, Eleven Centuries of Architecture*, Jaroslava Staňková, Jiří Štursa, Svatopluk Voděra. PAV Publisher, 1996 (on reserve at the AAU library and selected chapters 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)
* Kleiner, Fred S. Gardner's Art Through the Ages: The Western Perspective, Volume I and Volume II, 16th edition (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)
* *Ten Centuries of Architecture*, Volume I. – VI., Klára Benešovská, Petr Chotěbor, Tomáš Durdík, Zdeněk Dragoun. Prague Castle Administration. DADA, Prague 2001 (on reserve at the AAU library and selected chapters posted online under NEO Resources)

Other readings, various documentaries, and weekly assignments will be provided by the course instructor. Materials and information relevant to the course will be also posted on the course website. Please continuously check this site for meeting points, changes in the schedule, and important announcements.

# Teaching methodology

Each session will consist of slide-based lectures, discussions of images and texts, class presentations, and when possible, 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 03, 2025 | Topic: Overview of the course. Introduction to the history of Prague |
| Class 2 – Date: Sep 10, 2025 | Topic: Romanesque Art and Architecture.  Reading:   * Staňková, Romanesque Architecture * Architecture of the Romanesque, from Ten Centuries of Architecture * Chapter 8: Western art in the melting pot: Europe, sixth to eleventh century, and 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 |
| Class 3 – Date: Sep 17, 2025 | Topic: Gothic Art and Architecture I.  Reading:   * Staňková, Gothic Architecture * Architecture of the Gothic, from Ten Centuries of Architecture * Chapter 10: The Church Triumphant: The thirteenth century, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich. |
| Class 4 – Date: Sep 24, 2025 | Topic: Gothic Art and Architecture II.  Reading:   * Chapter 11: Courtiers and burghers: The fourteenth century, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich. |
| Class 5 – Date: Oct 01, 2025 | Topic: “Spirited Matter & Materialized Spirit” – Prague as the Capital of Holy Roman Empire under Charles IV.  Reading:   * Autobiography of Emperor Charles IV.: And His Legend of St. Wenceslas   Online documentaries:   * Prague Chronicles – the Biography of Charles IV. |
| Class 6 – Date: Oct 08, 2025 | Topic: Late Gothic Art and Architecture – Middle Ages Dissolved  Jan Hus and the Hussite Movement in Bohemia  Reading:   * Late Gothic Art - Beautiful style and Hussite critique (pdf) * Bethlehem Chapel (pdf)   Online documentaries:  BBC series on Northern Renaissance by Joseph Leo Koerner |
| Class 7 – Date: Oct 15, 2025 | Topic: Renaissance Art and Architecture  Reading:   * Staňková, Renaissance Architecture * Architecture of the Renaissance from Ten Centuries of Architecture * Chapter 12: The Conquest of Reality: The early fifteenth century, Chapter 13: Tradition and innovation: I: The later fifteenth century in Italy, Chapter 15: Harmony attained: Tuscany ad Rome, early sixteenth century, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich.   Online documentaries:   * BBC documentary on Renaissance by Andrew Graham-Dixon * Michelangelo - Self-Portrait by Robert Snyder |
| Class 8 – Date: Oct 22, 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 * Dr. Eliska Fuciková 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 |
| Midterm Break – Date: Oct 29, 2025 |  |
| Class 9 – Date: Nov 05, 2025 | Topic: Baroque Art and Architecture  Reading:   * Staňková, Baroque architecture * Architecture of the baroque from Ten Centuries of Architecture * Chapter 21: Power and Glory: I. Italy, later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich   Online documentaries:   * BBC documentary series Power of Art by Simon Schama * Caravaggio by Derek Jarman |
| Class 10 – Date: Nov 12, 2025 | Topic: 19th century Art and Architecture  Reading:   * Staňková, Neo-Classical and Romantic Architecture * Architecture of the 19th century from Ten Centuries of Architecture * Chapter 25: Permanent Revolution: The nineteenth century and Chapter 26: In Search of New Standards: The late nineteenth century from The Story of Art by E. H. Gombrich   Online documentaries:   * Simon Schama. Jacques-Louis David in his BBC documentary series * Marie Antoinette by Sofia Coppola |
| Class 11 – Date: Nov 19, 2025 | Topic: Art Nouveau (Czech Secession)  Reading:   * Prague in 1900 - From Art Nouveau to Expressionism (pdf) * The Character of the Czech Secession (pdf) * Celebrating the many facets of Mucha (pdf)   Online documentaries:   * Edouard Manet and the Impressionism * Documentary about Alphonse Mucha * The Life of Egon Schiele |
| Class 12 – Date: Nov 26, 2025 | Topic: Modern Art  Reading:   * Staňková, Early twentieth-century architecture   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:   * Documentary on the life of Auguste Rodin * Frank Lloyd Wright by Ken Burns * Picasso in the BBC documentary series Power of Art by Simon Schama |
| Class 13 – Date: Dec 03, 2025 | Topic: Contemporary Art  Readings: TBA  Online documentaries: TBA |
| Class 14 – Date: Dec 10, 2025 | Assignments/deadlines: Final Exam and Final Paper Due |
|  | \*Class topics and any excursions are subject to change in accordance to the weather conditions, ongoing cultural events and happenings in Prague, etc.. |

## 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 | 30 | 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 | 50 | 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 | 53 | 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 class with power point or at a relevant site 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 take place either in the classroom with PowerPoint slides, or 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 art work 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**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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 found in Prague 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: slide identification and exam questions. The slide 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 our excursions, museum and gallery visits, *etc*.

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to keep up with the assignments, and to get the notes from one of your classmates or from the course website. I will be happy to meet during my office hours or at an arranged time to discuss the material you missed *after you have made an effort to* *catch up*. You are also expected to visit the sights we visited in class. (In the case of museum visits, bring me the entrance ticket, and I will reimburse you for the entrance fee.)

# 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.