Course Description

In 1984, the American philosopher Arthur Danto declared that art and its history had come to an end. Others jumped on the bandwagon declaring the death of modernism, narrative, and even history itself. In the wake of the unprecedented period of artistic production and criticism in the U.S. after the Second World War, which included Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, the critical writings of Clement Greenberg, Rosalind Krauss, and Michael Fried, and the "postmodern" critiques of the late '60s and '70s, there seemed to be no guiding principles. From now on, Danto claimed, anything could be a work of art.

In this course, we critically examine post-war visual culture with particular emphasis on the transition from "late modern" to contemporary art. Through careful study of the artists, philosophers, and critics whose work has shaped the present discourse, we assess the meaning and implications of Danto’s thesis and consider the prospects for engaging with and understanding contemporary art and philosophy "after the end of art".

Requirements

There will be regular reading assignments, lectures, and discussion sections [25%], a descriptive essay [25%], midterm [25%], and final analytical essay [25%].

There are lots of new concepts and interesting problems in a course like this one. So I hope that you'll enjoy the challenge. At each stage, what you learn will help you move to a deeper level of understanding. Each of you will be evaluated on the basis of your own achievement — you are not competing with one another for grades. If everyone develops proficiency with the material, you'll all end up with As. So work together, help one another as much as you can, and don't hesitate to ask either me or your teaching assistant for help when you need it.

Discussion Responses and Exercises

I'll provide periodic questions and issues to address related to the readings and class discussions. These handouts will be posted to the course website in Blackboard.

Since class discussions are meant to be collaborative and thoughtful, careful preparation for discussion is essential.

Required Texts

- Course Packet (available through the course website)
Weekly Schedule of Topics and Required Readings

**Week 1: General Introduction (24 Jan 12)**
Timothy Quigley, “Course Introduction”
Joshua Taylor, “An Analysis of the Work of Art”

**Descriptive Writing Assignment — Visual Analysis [MoMA] — Due Week of 5 Feb 2012**

**Week 2: Arthur Danto and the Narratives of Art (31 Jan 12)**
Arthur Danto, *After the End of Art* (Ch. 1-3)

**Week 3: Formalism and the Social History of Art (7 Feb 12)**
Clive Bell, "Art and Significant Form"
Meyer Schapiro, "The Liberating Quality of Avant-Garde Art"

**Week 4: The Artists’ Perspective (14 Feb 12)**
[In-class screening: Emile de Antonio, *Painters Painting*]
Romare Bearden, "Rectangular Structure in My Montage Painting"
Mark Rothko & Adolph Gottlieb, "Statement"; "Art in New York" (excerpt)
Barnett Newman, Excerpts from *Tiger's Eye*

**Week 5: Abstract Expressionism — Crisis, Content, and Commitment (21 Feb 12)**
Ralph Ellison, “The Art of Romare Bearden”

**Week 6: The Critic’s Perspective (28 Feb 12)**
Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde & Kitsch"
Clement Greenberg, “Modernist Painting”

**Week 7: Criticism, Politics, and Philosophy (6 Mar 12)**
Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters"
Clement Greenberg, "‘American-Type’ Painting"

**SPRING BREAK — (13 Mar 12)**

**Week 8: The End of Modernism? (20 Mar 12)**
Arthur Danto, *After the End of Art* (Ch. 4-7)

**Week 9: Midterm (In-class) (27 Mar 12)**

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**Students with Disabilities**

In keeping with the University’s policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who may need academic accommodations should contact the office of Student Disability Services. Students requesting any accommodations will need to discuss them with Jason Luchs, who will conduct an intake, and if appropriate, provide an academic accommodation notification letter. All conversations will be kept confidential.

Mr. Luchs can be reached at 79 5th Avenue on the 5th floor (luchsj@newschool.edu, 212.229.5626 x3135). You may also access more information at http://www.newschool.edu/studentservices/disability/.

**Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is the use of another person’s words or ideas in any academic work. (This could be using using books, journals, internet postings, or other students’ papers.) For further information
on avoiding plagiarism through proper acknowledgements, including expectations for paraphrasing source material and forms of citation in research and writing, students should consult the MLA, *Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* (2nd edition), Chapter 6, on documentation.

The New School Writing Center also provides online resources about avoiding plagiarism. See http://www.newschool.edu/writingcenter/virtual-handout-drawer/

Please note that students must receive prior permission from instructors to submit the same or substantially overlapping material for two different assignments. Submission of the same work for two assignments without prior permission is plagiarism.

**Preparation for Class Discussions**

1. Read every selection at least twice.
   a. Read each selection once through quickly to get the main points of the text and to better appreciate how the author approaches the subject.
   b. Read each selection a second time to examine very carefully the details and structure of the argument.
2. Be sympathetic, but critical. Often you may feel put off by an author's language, point of view, critical approach, etc. When this happens, it's always a good idea to try to see it from the author's point of view. Then, when you understand why someone would write in such a way or adopt such a view, you'll be in a better position not only to understand it but to critically evaluate it.
3. Take notes and look up unfamiliar words.
4. Read analytically by asking the following questions:
   a. What is the central idea, thesis, objective or function of this text?
   b. Which statements, examples, or strategies in the text support this objective? Is there anything about the text that undermines what you have identified as "the central objective"?
   c. What are the key terms and how are they defined?
   d. What assumptions does the text make? (These may often be unstated or hidden assumptions, so you may have to "read between the lines" to find them.)
   e. What are some of the important implications of the position taken in the text?
5. In cases where you disagree with the text, articulate clearly what you disagree with and what reasons support your own view.

This analysis, together with your questions and responses to the readings, will form the basis of our weekly class discussions.