

ART HISTORY 263: MODERN ART

SPRING 2025

Prof. Joanna Inglot

Classes: 3-4:30 pm, Tuesdays & Thursdays

Meeting Place: Art 102

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course offers a comprehensive exploration of modern art, tracing its evolution from the 1900s to the 1970s across diverse cultural landscapes, including Austria, Germany, France, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, Mexico, and the United States. Students will critically investigate the complexities of modernism through key movements such as Fauvism, Expressionism, Dadaism, Cubism, Bauhaus, Constructivism, Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Minimalism, and the rise of Postmodernism. Moreover, the course will include a rigorous critique of dominant Western meta-narratives in modern art, interrogating themes of Orientalism, Primitivism, and “colonial” modernisms. Through selected case studies, we will explore how race, ethnicity, class, and gender shaped artistic dynamics in the 20th century. From the bold gestures of abstraction to the intricate narratives of identity, and from urgent dialogues about ecology and technology to the spiritual dimensions of creativity, students will engage in formative debates surrounding art and aesthetics of modernism.

The course will integrate lectures with thought-provoking discussions, providing a robust framework for understanding the historical, socio-political, and philosophical contexts that underpin iconic works of modernism. Central to this exploration will be the profound impact of Freud’s theories on the unconscious and desire, Nietzsche’s notions of the “will power” and the decline of traditional values, Marx’s critique of capitalism, alongside contributions of other influential philosophers and theorists of modernism (Bergson, Benjamin) and postmodernism (Lyotard, Baudrillard). To enhance the learning experience, students will embark on field trips and research projects at the Minneapolis Institute of Art and the Walker Art Center, engaging directly with curators and experts to deepen their understanding of this vibrant artistic period. Students will also contribute their research to museum didactics through a wide range of topics related to the multifaceted nature of modern art.

This course will count for Internationalism, Fine Arts and WA.

