



AH 325 THE STATE OF THE ART: CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN ARTISTS FROM 1945 TO THE PRESENT

IES Abroad Milan

DESCRIPTION:

Italy has always been a land of encounter for different artistic experiences. This course invites students to examine how this phenomenon developed in the field of visual arts during the second half of the 20th Century, in relation to the political, social and cultural growth of the country. How did artists meet and interact with the changes in culture, society and politics? Which cultural, social, or political roles did they play? How did the last 50 years change the category of visual arts as we know it today? How shall we study a work of contemporary art to understand its many levels of meaning? All of this will be examined and discussed with the students both in class and during course-related trips to museums, architectural landmarks, public art, and current exhibitions. An interdisciplinary approach will be used in order to clarify the concepts and present them in a broader cultural context.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 45

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

Lectures, meeting with guest speakers, film screenings, in-class activities and discussions, course-related trips, student presentations. Course-related trips and guest speakers' contributions will be prepared and followed by lectures and discussions in class. Course-related trips will be to some of the following monuments/museums/events in Milan:

- The House-Museum Boschi-Di Stefano
- Museo del 900
- Gallerie d'Italia
- Fondazione Prada
- Pirelli Hangar Bicocca
- At least one temporary exhibition or the studio of a Milan-based artist

Course-related trips will be an essential part of the course: this unique opportunity for a direct experience of monuments and works of art will provide remarkable help in the understanding and appreciation of art in Italy from 1945 to the present.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Course participation - 25%
- Midterm Exam - 25%
- Final Exam - 25%
- Research Paper and Presentation- 25%

Course Participation

Punctual reading, writing, completion of assignments, presentations, participation in-group discussions, activities, projects, and attendance will be recorded.

Midterm Exam

Both the midterm and final exams will have the following format: four short-answer questions (5% each); one analysis of a work of art studied during the course (40%); and one short essay concerning a general topic studied during the course (40%). To help the students in their preparation, the course will include a review and overview/brief before both the Midterm and the Final exams.



Final Exam

Both the midterm and final exams will have the following format: four short-answer questions (5% each); one analysis of a work of art studied during the course (40%); and one short essay concerning a general topic studied during the course (40%). To help the students in their preparation, the course will include a review and overview/brief before both the Midterm and the Final exams.

Research Paper and Presentation

The research paper should be 1000 words and is due in typewritten form one week before the final exam at the latest; students will be expected to present their research for about 10 to 15 minutes. These presentations will be scheduled during the last session of the course.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of the course, students are expected to have a more specific and mature knowledge of the history of recent art, in Italy, but also on an international level, as each subject will include a thorough comparison to similar or contemporary facts in Europe and the United States. Students are also expected to mature a critical approach to art, and to be able to read and understand specific literature on the subject, a task for which an appropriate terminology will be provided. The course-related trips and the presentations of the final papers is set to improve the students' ability to speak in public and lead a discussion on artistic and cultural matters.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Students are expected to be responsible for their own class attendance and to give academic responsibilities priority over other activities. Regular class attendance is mandatory. For physical and mental health reasons, IES Abroad Milano allows a maximum of THREE (3) absences in each Italian language course, TWO (2) absences in each Area Studies course, and ONE (1) absence in each Seminar course. Every absence beyond this allowance will automatically result in a penalty of 2 percentage points off the final grade. SEVEN (7) absences will result in a failing grade in Italian language and Area Studies courses. FOUR (4) absences will result in a failing grade in Seminar courses. Failure to attend a scheduled exam, test, quiz, or presentation will automatically result in an F grade on that assessment.

CONTENT:

DATE	Content	Readings and Assignments
Session 1	Introduction Overview of the course, Basic methodology	G. Celant (editor), <i>The Italian Metamorphosis 1943-1968</i>, exhibition catalogue, Guggenheim Museum, New York 1994, pp. XIV-XX, 648-655 - Writing assignment
Session 2	Unit 1 – Post-War and Art Realism vs. Abstraction	L. Caramel, <i>Il MAC Movimento Arte Concreta</i>, Banca Commerciale Italiana, Milan 1996 (English translation), pp. 43-69. - Writing assignment
Session 3	Unit 2 – The Informale	G. Celant (editor), <i>The Italian Metamorphosis 1943-1968</i>, exhibition catalogue, Guggenheim Museum, New York 1994, pp. 2-19. - Writing assignment
Session 4	Course-related trip The Boschi-Di Stefano House-Museum	E. Crispolti, "Lucio Fontana," in L. M. Barbero (editor), <i>Lucio Fontana</i>. Venice / New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York, 2006, pp. 51-81. - Writing assignment
Session 5	Unit 3 – On and Through the Canvas Alberto Burri and Lucio Fontana	- Source: L. Fontana, Manifesto bianco, 1946 - Reading: J. Hamilton, "Making Art Matter. Alberto Burri's 'Sacchi'", <i>October</i>, 124, Spring 2008, pp. 31-52.

		• Writing assignment
Session 6	Unit 4 – Overcoming the 1950s (I) Fontana's late work and Fausto Melotti	• G. Celant (editor), <i>Fausto Melotti</i>. Catalogue raisonnée, Electa, Milan 1994, pp. 5-21. • Writing assignment
Session 7	Course-related trip: Bruce Nauman exhibition at Hangar Bicocca (a comparative perspective on environments in art between US and Italy)	• Materials provided by instructor to introduce the field study • Writing assignment
Session 8	Unit 5 – Overcoming the 1950s II "Azimuth" and Manzoni	• Source: P. Manzoni, For the discovery of a zone of images, 1957 • G. Celant, "In Piero Manzoni's Territory," in G. Celant (editor), <i>Manzoni</i>, exhibition catalogue, MADRE Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples, Electa, Milan, 2007 (English translation), pp. 14-45 • Writing assignment
Session 9	Unit 5 – Overcoming the 1950s (III) Arte Programmata	• Source: U. Eco, <i>Arte programmata</i>, 1962 • Writing assignment
Session 10	Review and Brief for Midterm Exam	
Session 11	Q&A session	
Session 12	MIDTERM EXAM	
Session 13	Commented screening of the documentary <i>Swinging Roma</i>	• Writing assignment
Session 14	Unit 6 – Pop Art and Italy Brief for individual research paper and presentation	• W. Guadagnini, <i>Pop Art Italia 1958-1968</i>, Silvana Editoriale, Cinisello Balsamo, 2005 (texts in English). • Writing assignment
Session 15	Unit 7 – Art and Politics around the '68 Arte Povera and Conceptual Art Students submit their choice for individual research paper and presentation	• Source: G. Celant, <i>Arte Povera</i>, 1967-69 • Reading: L. M. Barbero, <i>Milan – Turin 1958-1968: Birth of an "Identity"</i> and F. Pola, "The Art Context in Milan and Turin: A Bipolar and Ramified Identity," in <i>Time & Place: Milano – Torino 1958-1968</i>, exhibition catalogue, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Steidl Verlag, 2008, pp. 10-27, 56-67. • Writing assignment
Session 16	Unit 8 – Painting and Sculpture in Italy since the 1970s (I)	• Source: M. Staccioli, <i>Working Notes</i>, 1973-1993 • Reading: F. Pola (editor), Mauro Staccioli. <i>Space: a Blank Page</i>, A arte Studio Invernizzi, Milan 2006, pp. 11-27. • Writing assignment

Session 17	Unit 8 – Painting and Sculpture in Italy since the 1970s (II)	- Reading: A. Bonito Oliva, “Bel Canto Ahead, Torture Behind,” in I. Gianelli (ed.), <i>Transavanguardia</i>, Skira, Milano-Geneve, 2002, pp. 37-54. - Writing assignment
Session 18	Unit 9 – New Media and beyond: Studio Azzurro	- Source: Studio Azzurro, selected writings, 1980s-1990s - Reading: Studio Azzurro. <i>Ambienti sensibili (Sensitive environments)</i>, exhibition catalogue, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, Electa, Milan 1999 (English translation), pp. 15-16, 18, 21-23, 29-30, 32, 39-40, 67-68, 70-72, 147-167. - Writing assignment
Session 19	Students’ Final Presentations (1)	
Session 20	Students’ Final Presentations (2)	
Session 21	Commented screening of the documentary <i>Maurizio Cattelan: Be Right Back</i>	N. Spector, “The Aesthetics of Failure,” in Ead., <i>Maurizio Cattelan: All</i>, Guggenheim Museum Publications, New York 2011, pp. 23-44. - Writing assignment
Session 22	Review and Brief for the Final Exam	

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS (whose collections / displays can be tentative subjects for your papers):

- The Boschi-Di Stefano House-Museum
- Museo del 900
- Gallerie d’Italia
- Fondazione Prada
- Pirelli Hangar Bicocca
- Galleries, museums, exhibitions in the city (consult with instructor for current availability)

REQUIRED READINGS:

All sources and readings will be available in pdf format on Moodle.

- Barbero, L.M. *Milan – Turin 1958-1968: Birth of an “Identity”* in *Time & Place: Milano – Torino 1958-1968*, exhibition catalogue, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Steidl Verlag, 2008, pp. 10-27
- Bonito, Oliva, A. “Bel Canto Ahead, Torture Behind,” in I. Gianelli (ed.), *Transavanguardia*, Skira, Milano-Geneve, 2002, pp. 37- 54.
- Caramel, L. “The MAC Constellation”, in *MAC*, exhibition catalogue, Niccoli, Parma 1996, pp. 43-69.
- Celant, G. “In Piero Manzoni’s Territory,” in G. Celant (editor), *Manzoni*, exhibition catalogue, MADRE Museo d’Arte Contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples, Electa, Milan, 2007 (English translation).
- Celant, G. (editor), *Fausto Melotti*. Catalogue raisonnée, Electa, Milan 1994.
- Celant, G. (editor), *The Italian Metamorphosis 1943-1968*, exhibition catalogue, Guggenheim Museum, New York 1994.
- Crispolti, E. “Lucio Fontana,” in L. M. Barbero (editor), *Lucio Fontana*. Venice / New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York, 2006, pp. 51-81.
- Guadagnini, W. *Pop Art Italia 1958-1968*, Silvana Editoriale, Cinisello Balsamo, 2005.
- Hamilton, J. “Making Art Matter. Alberto Burri’s ‘Sacchi’”, *October*, 124, Spring 2008, pp. 31-52.
- Pola, F. “The Art Context in Milan and Turin: A Bipolar and Ramified Identity,” in *Time & Place: Milano – Torino 1958-1968*, exhibition catalogue, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Steidl Verlag, 2008, pp. 56-67.
- Pola, F. (editor), Mauro Staccioli. *Space: A Blank Page*, Arte Studio Invernizzi, Milan 2006.



- Spector, N. "The Aesthetics of Failure," in Ed., *Maurizio Cattelan: All*, Guggenheim Museum Publications, New York 2011, pp. 23-44.
- Studio Azzurro. *Ambienti sensibili (Sensitive environments)*, exhibition catalogue, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, Electa, Milan 1999 (English translation).