

AH315 HIGHLIGHTS OF DUTCH ART: FROM REMBRANDT TO MONDRIAAN AND BEYOND

IES Abroad Amsterdam | Spring 2025

DESCRIPTION:

It is not a bold statement to say that Dutch art is well-known throughout most of the world. It is not one painter or a certain artistic movement that stand out. Dutch artists from different centuries or art movements from different periods are equally admired and enjoyed by masses over the globe.

This course will therefore explore the distinctive periods in Dutch history such as the early renaissance, the productive Golden Age of the 17th Century as well as specific styles of the 19th and 20th Century.

Students will have the opportunity to learn the general styles, concepts, purposes, and interpretations of Dutch Art from the Renaissance through contemporary art. The focus will be on painting, and to a lesser degree, on architecture.

The development of Dutch artistic styles relate to the economic development of the Netherlands as well as the political and social systems in place at various times. These socio-economic and political drivers will be further explored as these are important to understand the art of each period.

Dutch art is also influenced by various religious movements. Students will explore what these influences are and how certain religious symbols are represented.

Whilst the Dutch art scene was heavily dominated by men, this course will also focus on female artists throughout the ages. These artists may be less well known, their contribution to the arts is significant.

CREDITS: 4 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 60 hours

LANGUAGE OF PRESENTATION: English

ADDITIONAL COST: You will be able to use your Museum card for the visits to most museums.

A few of the museums will be visited are outside of Amsterdam. You will therefore incur some additional travel expenses around €50 (train, tram or bus).

Book: You can borrow the book *Amsterdam, A Brief Life of the City* by Geert Mak. ISBN: 9781860467899 at the Academics office at IES.

PREREQUISITES: An interest in history and the arts

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

Lectures, discussions, course-related trips, and students presentations

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Participation: 10 %
- Presentations: 20 % (Art presentation 10 % | Architecture presentation 10 %)
- Final Exam: 25 %
- Research Papers: 45% (Visual Analysis 22,5 % | Review 22,5 %)



Participation: Course participation is based on participation during field trips and group discussions. Students are expected to have read the set literature per session before the start of every session, and to be able to pose relevant questions for group discussions.

Research papers: Students complete 2 research papers, of 1000 words each. 1. A visual analyses of a painting. 2. A review about an exhibition they visited.

Presentations

Students will give two presentations.

1. Students will present on a subject/artist connected to the course. Artists/subjects will be allocated in week 2. Students can also come up with their own themes, if they are relevant to the course material. Presentation will be min. 10 minutes max. 15 minutes. Talk about the relevance of the artist within art history, the story of their art and how it was inbedded in the time that it was made. From week 3 onwards.
2. Students will present on a building situated in Amsterdam of their own choice, they will be allocated in week 2. The presentations will be done in week 3, during an architecture walk through Amsterdam. The presentation should last 10 minutes and should cover the relevance within art history, purpose of the building & architectural information. Example: Tuschinski cinema.

Scoring Rubric for Oral Presentations

PRESENCE

- body language & eye contact
- contact with the public
- poise

LANGUAGE SKILLS

- correct usage
- understandable (rhythm, intonation, accent)
- spoken loud enough to hear easily

ORGANIZATION

- clear objectives
- logical structure

MASTERY OF THE SUBJECT

- pertinence
- depth of commentary
- spoken, not read
- able to answer questions

VISUAL AIDS

- transparencies, slides
- audio, video, etc.

OVERALL IMPRESSION

- very interesting / very boring
- pleasant / unpleasant to listen to
- very good / poor communication



Final exam

The final exam consists of three essay questions. These questions will be based on the readings and lectures of the past semester.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Students will be acquainted with the specific characteristics of Dutch Art
- Students will have gained knowledge about the social economic situation of Holland in as much as it has influenced the development of the arts
- Students will be able to analyze a painting and recognize the main styles
- Students will be able to recognize and identify the art of the main Dutch artists, like Rembrandt, Vermeer, van Gogh, Mondriaan, Willink, Rietveld, Appel, Steen, Maria Sibylla Merian, Marleen Dumas)
- Students will have gained confidence in public speaking through their own presentation
- Students will have gained analyzing skills through their study of many different paintings
- Students will have gained insight in the collections of the visited museums (at least 5 museums will be visited)

CONTENT

| Week | Content | Assignments (see Moodle for up to date required reading) |
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| Week 1 February 5 | Introduction Introduction to the course, its participants and lecturer. What are participants' background and familiarity with the arts. Excursion: A walk around medieval Amsterdam, the Old Church and Our Lord in the Attic. | Assignment: Choose on artwork. During class try to introduce yourself through the artwork. Why do you appreciate it, where and when did you see it and why does this artwork tell us something about who you are? |
| Week 2: February 12 | Lecture: The oldest Dutch and Flemish artists like Van Eyck and Geertgen tot Sint Jans show a clear interest in one of the main characteristics of Dutch Art: texture and detail will be studied in the famous artworks (the Arnolfini Marriage, the Gent Altarpiece) made by these artists. Excursion: To the Amsterdam Museum | Required reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mak, G. (1995) <i>Amsterdam: The brief life of a city</i>, Uitgeverij Atlas, Amsterdam, pages 1-39 • Murray, P and Murray, L. (1963) <i>The Art of the Renaissance</i>, Thames and Hudson; London, pp 145-160 |
| Week 3 February 19 | Lecture: A short history of Dutch Architecture Excursion: A walk around Amsterdam, where each student presents on one building. | Assignment: Students will each present on a building situated in Amsterdam during an architecture walk through the city. The buildings will be allocated in week 2. The presentation should last 10 minutes and should cover the relevance within art history, purpose of the building & architectural information. |

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| <p>Week 4 February 26</p> | <p>Jeroen Bosch and Breughel</p> <p>Lecture and group discussion about the work of Jeroen Bosch and Breughel.</p> <p>We detect that their humorous landscapes and biblical scenes reflect a new sense of pride in cities and at the same time a growing unrest about the effect of city life on its citizens.</p> <p>We learn how to visually analyse a painting.</p> <p>Excursion: A visit to the Rijksmuseum where we will see the oldest Dutch art collection.</p> <p>We practice on making visual analysis of paintings in the Rijksmuseum</p> | <p>Required Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuchs, R.H. (1985) <i>Dutch Art</i>, Oxford University Press, p 8-35 • Gibson, W.S. (1973) <i>Hieronymus Bosch, Thames and Hudson</i>; London, pp 69-86 • Mak, G. (1995) <i>Amsterdam: The brief life of a city</i>, Uitgeverij Atlas, Amsterdam, pages 40-69S |
| <p>Week 5 March 5</p> | <p>Dutch artists who traveled to Rome to get acquainted with Antiquities</p> <p>Excursion: trip to the Centraal Museum Utrecht, by train. We meet in front of the museum.</p> <p>Student presentation in the museum: On painters Bloemaert, van Baburen or Jan van Scoorl</p> <p>Lecture: Jan van Scorel was for a while in Rome, as curator of the papal collections, and brought his insight into Baroque and Renaissance Art to the Netherlands. Also Bloemaert and van Honthorst and ter Brugghen came back with a thorough knowledge of the antiquities and more as is clear studying their paintings.</p> | <p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown, C. (1997) <i>Utrecht Painters of the Dutch Golden Age</i>, National gallery Publications; London, pp 21-23, 29, 31-35 • Mak, G. (1995) <i>Amsterdam: The brief life of a city</i>, Uitgeverij Atlas, Amsterdam, pages 75-95 <p>Turn in Visual Analysis through mail (as pdf)</p> |
| <p>Week 6 March 12</p> | <p>The Golden Age of Dutch Art I: Rembrandt</p> <p>Lecture: Rembrandt's paintings will be the subject for a lecture. His etchings will be studied at the Rembrandt House, Amsterdam.</p> <p>Student presentation: on the painter Jan Lievens or Gerard Dou.</p> <p>Excursion: Trip to the Rembrandt House and Collection Six (if available)</p> | <p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetering, van de, E. (2000), <i>Rembrandt, the painter at work</i>, Amsterdam University Press, pp, 3-9, 46-61 |

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| Week 7 March 19 | The Golden Age of Dutch Art II <p>Lecture: How the Dutch artists reconciled the abundance of baroque art with their protestant belief in their paintings. Jan Steen and Frans Hals will be lectured about.</p> <p>Vermeer and artists like Nicolaes Maes, Gerard Dou and Metsu excelled in interior scenes. These scenes and the symbols used often have more than one meaning as will be explained in the lecture.</p> <p>Student presentation: Rachel Ruysch</p> <p>Excursion: to the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.</p> | Required reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berger, J. (1980) About Looking, Pantheon Books; New York, pp 162-170 • Mak, G. (1995) Amsterdam: The brief life of a city, Uitgeverij Atlas, pages 96- 133 |
| Week 8 March 26 | Excursion to Haarlem <p>Class takes place in Haarlem. We meet in front of the Grote Kerk. Visits to the Grote Kerk, Teylers Museum and Frans Hals Museum.</p> <p>Student presentation: On Judith Leyster</p> | Required reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mak, G. (1995) Amsterdam: The brief life of a city, Uitgeverij Atlas, Amsterdam, pages 134- 189 • Lammertse, F. (2024), Laughter, in: Frans Hals, catalogus Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, pages 158 - |
| Week 9 April 2 | Dutch Art of the nineteenth century <p>Lecture: Dutch art of the 19th century shows strong influences of the French Realist and Impressionist movement as is evident in the work of Willem and his wife Sien Mesdag, and Weissenbruch.</p> <p>Student presentations: Jozef Israëls, Matthijs Maris or Therese Schwartz.</p> <p>Excursion: visit to the Rijksmuseum, department of 19th century Art</p> | Required reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mak, G. (1995) Amsterdam: The brief life of a city, Uitgeverij Atlas, Amsterdam, chapter 7 • Rice, T. (2002) Voyages of Discovery, See Moodle. Scriptum Publishers (ISBN 9781902686028) |

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| Week 10 April 9 | Vincent van Gogh Van Gogh reflects the changing scene in the arts as no other before him, he can be considered as one of the fathers of the expressionist movement as will be explained in the lecture. Excursion: to the van Gogh Museum, lecture by head of exhibitions Edwin Becker. | Required reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fuchs, R.H. (1985) Dutch Art, Oxford University Press, pp 143-175 |
| Week 11 April 16 | Dutch arts at the turn of the 20th century Jan Sluijters and Kees van Dongen reflect the expressionist tendencies in Paris in their vibrant, colorful paintings. In the buildings of the Amsterdam School Architects (like van der Mey) we see a similar expressionist international outlook. Student presentation: Hildo Krop Excursion: We will walk along the main apartment blocks, offices and school buildings of the Amsterdam School architects. | Required reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roode, de, I., Groot, M. (2016) Living in the Amsterdam School, S. NAI Publishers, pp: to be announced on Moodle. |
| Week 12 April 23 | Mondriaan and the STIJL movement The STIJL movement had a great impact on modern architects like Rietveld, Breuer and Gropius. Student presentation: on painter Bart van der Leek. Excursion: to the Stedelijk Museum where we practice in writing a review about one of the exhibitions. | Required reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moser, Stephanie. "The Devil Is in the Detail: Museum Displays and the Creation of Knowledge." <i>Museum Anthropology</i>, 33(1), 2010, pp. 22-32. Barnet, Sylvan, Writing a review of an exhibition, in: A short guide to writing about art, 2005. |
| Week 13 May 7 | The Interbellum Period 1918-1940 This period is best reflected in the art work of Willink, Pijke Koch and Raoul Hijncjes as is explored in the lecture. Student presentation: On the book of Charlotte Salomon Excursion: to the Jewish Museum Amsterdam | Required reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mak, G. (1995) Amsterdam: The brief life of a city, Uitgeverij Atlas, Amsterdam, pages 228- 269 Hand in review (as pdf via mail) |

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| Week 14 May 14 | The impact of World War II The impact of World War II is strongly present in the works of the CoBrA artists Appel, Corneille and Constant. Their paintings, theater designs, sculptures and architectural drawings show their affinity with societal events and international politics. Student presentation: Jacqueline de Jong Excursion: to CoBrA Museum, Amstelveen | Required reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mak, G. (1995) Amsterdam: The brief life of a city, Uitgeverij Atlas, Amsterdam, pages 279- 310 • Stokvis, W. (1999) CoBrA: 3 Dimensions, V+K Publishing, pages 62-85 |
| Week 15 May 21 | Contemporary art Lecture contemporary art in the Netherlands. Who are the important artist and what are popular and important themes. Student presentation: Natasja Kensmil Excursion: to a selection of contemporary art galleries | |
| Week 16 May 28 | Final exam 13.15 in our usual classroom. (Takes about 1 - 1,5 hours) For the exam you will answer three essay questions, for example: Describe the period after the Second World War in the Netherlands. Explain how the Cobra movement can be seen as a reaction to this period and what message they wanted to convey with their art. (Ca. 300 words) | Preparation: Study your lecture notes, the PowerPoints of the lectures and the assigned texts. |
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