

Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences  
**College in High School**

2024-2025  
***Introduction to World Art***  
*HAA 0010--3 Credits*

**Description:** This course introduces students to art from around the world. It examines particular paintings, sculptural works and architectural sites that are considered by many to be "masterpieces." But students also study ritual practices, performance, religious objects, cultural artifacts, sacred sites, memorials, and other diverse forms of creative expression most of which will be unfamiliar. Students will learn the cultural, political, and historical role that an art object played in its original context. The course will span an immense period of human history and will cover art produced around the world. In doing so, the course also questions the very term "art," encouraging students to think more broadly and inquisitively about its meaning and cultural use. Essentially, this course is concerned with why and how human beings have made things. It provides a framework for students to investigate and empathize with the diversity of human culture across the globe, encountering objects crafted in distant regions and/or crafted by others whose world pictures and values differ from their own, and understanding how distinct cultures have intersected throughout time.

The course is structured thematically and examines a selection of key case studies with assignments designed to prioritize close visual, spatial and material analysis, interpretative skills, contextual thinking, and argumentation over memorization. Students will make comparative connections between significant world cultures including a selection from the following: Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the south Pacific. Students will learn how artistic production in these diverse cultures was shaped by specific contexts (historical, political, religious, cultural, and social), emerged from diverse value systems, and met the needs of specific makers, situated humans living in a particular place and time.

**Prerequisites:** None.

**Grading:** Grading should include a variety of assignments that will advance students' writing, critical reading, and oral communication skills. These can include short or low-stakes writing assignments (in various modes), essay exams (in-class or take-home), or in-class or video presentations. Creative assignments are also encouraged, as are collaborative projects. Students in this class are frequently encouraged to relate the material they are learning and the works they are studying to their own world – to the built environments, social spaces, and visual cultures they inhabit. If possible, students should analyze a work of art or site in person, visiting a local or regional historic site, memorial, museum, public artwork, or gallery for at least one of their assignments. Multiple choice and short answer quizzes are possible, but at least 2/3 of the student's grade should be determined by more substantive critical writing, analysis, reflection, oral presentation, and/or creative assignments.

**Readings:** All readings are provided by the University of Pittsburgh faculty liaison. These will include University-provided handouts on each key work, primary source materials, some scholarly articles or chapters from peer-reviewed journals and books, exhibition catalogue excerpts, museum websites, and

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Smarthistory videos. Instructors will have access to pre-recorded lectures for their personal use or to share with students.

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### **Learning Objectives:**

#### Close Looking and Analysis

- Study a work of art in person
- Make precise, accurate and comprehensive observations about an image, object or space that supports an interpretation or argument
- Develop terminology to describe and analyze works of art in various media
- Through practice, hone attention, visual acumen, and develop a heightened awareness of environments, images, and material objects

#### Rethinking “Art”

- Develop a more critical definition of “art” and thus think about culture, how it is produced and how it operates in the world
- Articulate a more complicated and capacious understanding of the purpose of art and the uses to which it can be put

#### Contextual Understanding

- Identify how artistic production shapes and is shaped by historical, political, religious, cultural, and social contexts and needs
- Identify specific makers and patrons and consider how their situated circumstance, living in a particular place and time, determines the form and function of art
- Trace how the purpose and meaning of art shifts in different contexts in different historical moments
- Think reflexively about your own role as an observer and interpreter

#### Global Understanding

- Begin to develop a critically informed knowledge of artistic traditions in a global context
- Consider how a global approach to art challenges Western assumptions about art and the Eurocentric biases of the discipline of art history
- Think critically about cultural contact and the role art (its production, collection, and circulation) plays in establishing, maintaining, or challenging political and social power

#### Extend Curiosity

- Demonstrate engagement in the course through an eagerness to extend one’s thinking about art and its place and purpose in the world
- Bring something new to the class, share what you are learning with others in our learning community

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### Pose Good Questions

- Consider what you do not know about ‘art’ and other world cultures and formulate critically astute questions about a specific art object

### Outline of Course:

Must be covered:

- Introduction
  - What is Art?
  - “Thing Thinking”

Choose at least 2 units from each group and a minimum of 7 units. (Teachers can choose to cover all units, featuring fewer key works in each unit.) This course endeavors to include at least 2/3 of course content from the cultures of Asia, Africa, the Americas, the Pacific Islands, Indigenous communities, and people who have been historically excluded from disciplinary surveys of art’s history.

- Group A
  - Death and Memorialization
  - Power and Authority
  - Sacred Sites
  - Ritual: Image, Object, Agency
- Group B
  - Mobility and Exchange
  - Contested Sites
  - Landscape/Nature/Environment
  - Body and Identity
  - Art and/as Resistance

Instructors can also elect to add this last unit (see below) or work with the University of Pittsburgh faculty liaison to incorporate Pittsburgh-based sites or art works into the units listed above. Materials for this unit will be completed soon.

- Group C – Pittsburgh Lab
  - Identity and the Nationality Rooms
  - The Immigrant Experience: The Maxo Vanko murals at St. Nicholas in Millvale
  - The Carnegie International and “Contemporaneity”
  - Andy Warhol in/and Pittsburgh
  - Art in the City: Public Art Downtown
  - Pittsburgh Buildings: Architecture in the City

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**Academic Integrity:** All College in High School teachers, students, and their parents/guardians are required to review and be familiar with the University of Pittsburgh's Academic Integrity Policy located online at <https://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policies-and-procedures/academic-integrity-code>.

**Grades:** Grade criteria in the high school course may differ slightly from University of Pittsburgh standards. A CHS student could receive two course grades: one for high school and one for the University transcript. In most cases the grades are the same. These grading standards are explained at the beginning of each course.

**Transfer Credit:** University of Pittsburgh grades earned in CHS courses appear on an official University of Pittsburgh transcript, and the course credits are likely to be eligible for transfer to other colleges and universities. Students are encouraged to contact potential colleges and universities in advance to ensure their CHS credits would be accepted. If students decide to attend any University of Pittsburgh campuses, the University of Pittsburgh grade earned in the course will count toward the student grade point average at the University. At the University of Pittsburgh, the CHS course supersedes any equivalent AP credit.

**Drops and Withdrawals:** Students should monitor progress in a course. CHS teacher can obtain a Course Drop/Withdrawal Request form from the CHS office or Aspire. The form must be completed by the student, teacher and parent/guardian and returned to teacher by deadlines listed. Dropping and withdrawing from the CHS course has no effect on enrollment in the high school credits for the course.