

# AH208: PABLO PICASSO

Seminar Leader: Geoff Lehman

Course Times: Tuesday, 17:00- 18:30 and Friday, 13:30-15:00 (until 16:45 for museum visits)

Email: g.lehman@berlin.bard.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday, 14:00-16:00

## Course Description

This course focuses on the paintings, drawings, and prints of Pablo Picasso. Berlin's Berggruen Museum, with its collection of works by Picasso from every period of his long career, is a major resource, and visits to this museum form an integral part of the course. Topics for the course include: cubism, with special attention to its central role within the modernist avant-garde; collage, semiotics, and the problem of interpretation; sex, self-reflexivity, and personal iconography; theme and variation as pictorial practice; and the relationship to, and subversion of, the Renaissance tradition. We will consider works by Picasso in a wide range of styles created between the 1890s and the 1970s, and seminars will focus on close readings of a small number of major works within this oeuvre (the *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, the collages of 1911-12, *Guernica*, the *Las Meninas* series – to name just a few). Picasso's ongoing dialogue with Henri Matisse will also be a focus, with careful attention to the works by both artists in the Berggruen Museum. Readings include works by art critics and art historians (Clark, Krauss, Steinberg, Malraux) as well as literary and philosophical texts, and we will examine, among others, semiotic, contextualist, formalist, phenomenological, and psychoanalytic approaches to Picasso's work, always in the context of interpreting specific works of art.

## Course Books

### Recommended

T. J. Clark, *Picasso and Truth* (ISBN: 978-0691157412)

Rosalind Krauss, *The Picasso Papers* (ISBN: 978-0262611428)

## Requirements

### Attendance

For this class attendance is mandatory, and active participation in discussions will be an essential part of the course. More than two absences (that is, absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course. Readings should be done in advance of the class for which they are assigned.

Please consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

### **Museum Visits**

Five of our scheduled classes will be visits to the Berggruen Museum. These will always be on Friday, since the longer block of time scheduled for our course on Fridays allows us to make these visits during regular class time.

### **Assessment**

#### **Participation**

Students should arrive to each class on time and prepared. Being prepared means (1) having completed the assigned reading (in the specific editions indicated above), (2) bringing to class a non-electronic copy of the assigned reading, and (3) being ready to initiate and to contribute to discussion.

Engagement in class discussion should be regular as well as productive; quantity alone will not favorably affect the participation grade.

#### **Writing Assignments**

There will be two principal assignments over the course of the term: a midterm essay of 6-7 pages (2000-2300 words) and a final presentation accompanied by an essay of 9-10 pages (3000-3300 words), due at the end of the term.

### **Policy on Late Submission of Papers**

From the Student Handbook on the submission of essays:

*Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.*

### **Grade Breakdown**

Class participation: 30%

Midterm essay: 30%

Final presentation: 10%

Final essay: 30%

### **Schedule**

#### **Introduction**

Tuesday, January 31

No reading assignment

Friday, February 3

**Visit to the Berggruen Museum**

Visual assignment: group presentation

Reading:

Leo Steinberg, "The Philosophical Brothel," pp. 7-34

## **I. *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon***

Tuesday, February 7

Reading:

Leo Steinberg, "The Philosophical Brothel," pp. 34-55

Friday, February 10

Reading:

Leo Steinberg, "The Philosophical Brothel," pp. 55-74

Tuesday, February 14

Reading:

André Malraux, *Picasso's Mask*, selections

## **II. Cubism**

Friday, February 17

**Visit to the Berggruen Museum**

Reading:

Yve-Alain Bois, *Painting as Model*, "Kahnweiler's Lesson," pp. 33-47

Suggested Reading:

Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde*, "In the Name of Picasso"

Tuesday, February 21

Reading:

Yve-Alain Bois, *Painting as Model*, "Kahnweiler's Lesson," pp. 47-58

Rosalind Krauss, *The Picasso Papers*, "The Circulation of the Sign," pp. 25-55

Friday, February 24

Visual assignment: group presentation

Reading:

Rosalind Krauss, *The Picasso Papers*, "The Circulation of the Sign," pp. 56-85

Tuesday, February 28

Reading:

Patricia Leighton, "Cubist Anachronisms"

Stephane Mallarmé, "Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hazard" ("A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance")

## **III. Objects, Bodies, Windows**

(Still Lifes, Portraits, Interiors, and Landscapes of the 1920s and 1930s)

Friday, March 3

Reading:

T. J. Clark, *Picasso and Truth*, Lecture 2: Room, pp. 59-89

Tuesday, March 7

Visual assignment: group presentation

Reading:

T. J. Clark, *Picasso and Truth*, Lecture 2: Room, pp. 89-111

Friday, March 10

**Visit to the Berggruen Museum**

Reading:

TBA

**IV. Guernica**

Tuesday, March 14

Reading:

André Malraux, *Picasso's Mask*, selections

Friday, March 17

Reading:

T. J. Clark, *Picasso and Truth*, Lecture 6: Mural, selections

**Midterm essay due: 23:59 on Sunday, March 19**

**V. Las Meninas**

Tuesday, March 21

Reading:

Leo Steinberg, "Velázquez' 'Las Meninas'"

Friday, March 24

Reading:

Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, Chapter 1: Las Meninas

Tuesday, March 28

Visual assignment: group presentation

Reading:

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind"

## **VI. Theme and Variations**

(Series: *Les femmes d'Alger, Raphael and the Fornarina, Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*)

Friday, March 31

**Visit to the Berggruen Museum**

Reading:

Leo Steinberg, *Other Criteria*, "The Women of Algiers," selections

Tuesday, April 4

Reading:

Leo Steinberg, *Other Criteria*, "The Women of Algiers," selections

Friday, April 7

Reading:

Sigmund Freud, "The Mystic Writing Pad"

Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, Chapter 5, selections

SPRING BREAK (April 10-14)

## **VII. Artist and Model**

Tuesday, April 18

Reading:

Rosalind Krauss, *The Picasso Papers*, "Dime Novels," selections

Friday, April 21

Visual assignment: group presentation

Reading:

Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, selections

Sunday, April 23, 14:00

**Visit to the Berggruen Museum**

Reading:

T. J. Clark, *Picasso and Truth*, Lecture 4: Monster, selections

Tuesday, April 25

Reading:

TBA

Friday, April 28

**No class**

## **FINAL PRESENTATIONS**

Tuesday, May 2

Friday, May 5

Tuesday, May 9

Friday, May 12

**Final essay due: 23:59 on Friday, May 19**