**ARTH 3399: American Art (Colonial to the Present)**

**University of Texas at El Paso**

**Fall 2014**

**Class Meeting Times:** Tuesdays / Thursdays, 12:00 – 1:20 p.m.

**Classroom:** Fox Fine Arts A458 (4th floor)

**Professor:** Dr. Melissa Warak

**Email:** mcwarak@utep.edu

**Office Hours:** M, 12:00 – 2:00; T, 2:00 – 3:00 and by appointment

**Office:** Fox Fine Arts A455

**Office Phone:** (915) 747-5150 (during office hours)

**ABOUT YOUR PROFESSOR**

Dr. Melissa Warak specializes in the relationship of music and sound to American and European art of the twentieth century. Dr. Warak is a proud Texan and a native of Houston. She earned a B.A. in English literature and art history from Vanderbilt University, an M.A. in art history from the University of Texas at Austin, and a Ph.D. in art history from the University of Texas at Austin. Her dissertation, titled *Made to Music: Interactions of Music and Art, 1955-1969*, is comprised of four case studies of the ways that visual artists from the mid-fifties to late sixties employed musical models in their work. Aside from musical and sound art, her research interests include the history of abstraction, spirituality in modern and contemporary art, science and technology in modern and contemporary art, and astronomy in art. Her research has been supported by grants and fellowships from the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, the Getty Research Institute, the Royal Music Association of the United Kingdom, the Menil Collection in Houston, and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, among others. Dr. Warak has previously taught at the University of Texas at Austin, at the University of Houston, and at Sam Houston State University. Please feel free to meet with her to talk about majoring in art history, museum internships, or careers for art historians!

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course covers the history of American painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, and new media from the colonial period to the present. We will consider themes of race, representation, and multiculturalism; in addition, we will visit and revisit notions of what it means to be an “American” artist and how these artists fashioned their identities.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

During this course, students will develop their understanding of the history of American art and visual culture and acquire skills essential to the professional art historian and art museum curator. These include the following:

1. Developing writing skills, oral presentation competencies, and points of view needed by professional art historians.
2. Learning to find and use resources for answering research questions and problems.
3. Analyzing and critically evaluating ideas and arguments.
4. Gaining knowledge of the terminology, trends, and methodologies used to study American art.

TEXTS FOR CLASS
Selected scholarly articles will be posted to the course’s related Blackboard page (see schedule). Students are responsible for downloading these from Blackboard. All readings need to be completed BEFORE the class period for the day.

I will also have a copy of the American art textbook *American Encounters: Art, History, and Cultural Identity* available for reference.


GRADING POLICY
This course will have three exams. Exams will be essay questions (you will have a choice) and you will need a “blue book” (available from the campus book store) for each exam. We will not have specific image lists for each exam. Instead, students will choose appropriate examples from class for their essay exams. Exams will be OPEN NOTE, so make sure to take notes extensively. See your professor if you need help taking notes.

Written components will include a 500-word exhibition review of the El Paso Museum of Art’s exhibition “From Renoir to Remington: Impressionism to the American West,” which opens on Sept. 21st, and a research project on a single work of art. Students will also be graded on discussion participation in class. A good rule of thumb is to try to contribute at least once per class (via ideas, questions, or responses to other students). Lastly, we will have seven reading quizzes (worth ten points each) throughout the semester; there will be no makeup quizzes. Assignment sheets for the written projects will be posted to Blackboard – make sure to read them thoroughly. Written assignments will be turned in via the Turnitin function on Blackboard and by hard copy. The last exam will NOT be cumulative.

This course will be graded on a scale of 500 points.
Reading Quizzes (7): 70 points
Participation: 20 points
Museum Exhibition Review: 20 points
Exam 1: 50 points
Exam 2: 75 points
Exam 3: 75 points
Research Project: 200 points (total)
   Paper (including formal analysis and interpretation): 100 points
   Bibliography: 30 points
Abstract: 20 points
Museum Label: 20 points
Oral Presentation: 30 points

Therefore, here is the point breakdown for grades:
466 – 500 points: A
450 – 465 points: A –
433 – 449 points: B +
416 – 432 points: B
400 – 415 points: B -
383 – 399 points: C +
366 – 382 points: C
350 – 365 points: C -
333 – 349 points: D +
316 – 332 points: D
299 – 315 points: D -
000 – 298 points: F

ATTENDANCE POLICY
Attendance is mandatory!
Class attendance is a requirement and use of the full class period is expected. An attendance sheet will be passed around at the beginning of each lecture—make sure you sign it every day. You will be allowed three absences for any reason without grading consequences. It is up to your discretion how you use these and you do not need to notify me in advance except in the case of a religious holy day (see below). More than three absences from class will result in a lowering of your overall grade by twenty points per absence (remember that this class is graded on a scale of 500 points). Six or more absences will result in an automatic failure of the course. That said, you will receive an attendance bonus of ten points to your final grade if you have perfect attendance (no exceptions; attendance must be 100%).

In the event of a family or personal emergency, quickly notify the Office of the Dean of Students, which is your advocate in these situations. If you wish to have an absence for illness or a family emergency excused, you must go through the Dean of Students’ office for verification; they will then contact me. This is to ensure your rights to medical and personal privacy. See http://sa.utep.edu/dean/student-injury-illness/.

Students should never sign the attendance sheet for anyone else or ask anyone to sign for them. Your signature is your honor. There are severe penalties for infractions on the attendance sheets. This would count as academic dishonesty and is grounds for failure in the course.

It is not enough to be physically present. Students are expected to be prepared for the day and ready to engage actively in class. Students need to remain in class the entire period to get attendance credit. Students who are more than ten minutes late or who leave early
without permission will be given half credit for attendance. Tardies / half credits will figure into the absence count.

Students are responsible for acquiring notes and announcements made during missed classes, so I encourage you to make a friend and exchange email addresses. I will not provide notes for any student.

EMAIL POLICY
All course correspondence from me will take place via Blackboard’s email function. Make sure that you are receiving emails through Blackboard and that you have a current email address on file. Please note that, due to FERPA regulations, I will not email with students about grades. If you have a question or concern about a grade, please visit office hours or make an appointment. Additionally, if you have a question that requires a long answer, you may be asked to come see me in person to save time. I try to turn around emails as quickly as possible, but do not expect an answer from me after 5:00 p.m. Lastly, please remember that emails are considered a form of professional correspondence and a little courtesy goes a long way!

LAPTOPS, TABLETS, AND PHONES
Students may not use computers and other electronic devices (including recording devices) during class. It is important that students focus their attention on the lectures and projected images without distractions and that they take careful and detailed notes. Cell phones and tablets should be silent and kept out of sight. Their bright lights are very distracting in a dark classroom. Leave the room if you absolutely must use your phone. You will be reprimanded and marked absent if you are caught using your phone in the classroom. Repeat offenses will result in disciplinary action. If a cell phone is in any way visible during an examination, that student will automatically fail the exam.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE
Please be respectful of other students in the classroom. Please do not enter the classroom late, keep your phone out of sight and silent, do not send text messages. Do not pack up your things before the end of class. Students may bring food or drinks if they are allowed in the classroom. Your professor’s biggest pet peeves are texting / looking at phones and packing bags before class ends. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom will result, minimally, in a directive to leave class or being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy.

MAKE-UP POLICY
Each assignment sheet will explain a late work policy. Assignments involving in-class activities (peer review, oral presentations) will not be accepted late. Exams will be made up ONLY in the event of an emergency situation. Plan your semester accordingly.

TAKING NOTES IN CLASS
Exam material will come from images shown in lectures; therefore, the readings in the
book will be supplemental to lectures and discussions. Completing the readings will not take the place of attendance and participation in class. It is critical that students take notes in class. Think of the exams as a way to show off what you have learned in class. I recommend bringing a notebook designated just for this course. Using bullet points will help you write down more information. Vocabulary and important terms will be written on the Powerpoint presentation slides and you should pay special attention to these terms and the works of art where they may be applicable. Basic identifying information for each work will also be provided on the Powerpoints (artist name, title, date).

**PAPER Formatting AND WRITING HELP**
Without exception, all papers must be double-spaced and have standard one-inch margins, page numbers (beginning with the first page of the main text), and a title page (with the student’s name, the date, the instructor’s name, and the title). All text must be in twelve-point font, preferably Times New Roman. There should be no extra spaces between paragraphs, and all paragraphs should be properly indented. Any quotations of at least three sentences must be set in block quotes with single spacing. Moreover, there should be a bibliography of cited works on a separate page at the end of the paper, followed by pages with illustrations of any featured artworks. All papers must be received in hardcopy by the start of class on the due date and should also be uploaded to Turnitin. For all questions pertaining to grammar, syntax, footnoting and style, see the latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. For an excellent tutorial on how to document sources properly, see the following webpage:
http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch10_s1-0001.html

Students who are concerned about the quality of their writing should contact the Writing Center and make an appointment well before the deadline:
http://academics.utep.edu/writingcenter/

**ACADEMIC Dishonesty AND PLAGIARISM**
Academic dishonesty or cheating will result in failure in this course. All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a professional manner and to maintain honesty and integrity in academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. All students are responsible for knowing the requirements of academic honesty set forth by UTEP. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to the following: cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, forgery of signatures, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. See the UTEP policy on academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty:
http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/

**POLICY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**
Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with limitations due to disabilities provided that they are registered with the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) and procure the proper documentation: http://sa.utep.edu/cass (telephone: (915) 747-5148). Students with documented disabilities must meet with the
instructor within the first two weeks of class, with CASS documentation in hand, in order to inform him of any special needs. If particular accommodations are required for the exams, the instructor must be informed and presented with the appropriate CASS documentation at least ten days before each scheduled test or no accommodations will be permitted.

**POLICY FOR STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS**

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20…” See your professor at least a week in advance if you intend to miss class or an examination in observance of a religious holy day and accommodations will be made.

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE**

**T, Aug. 26**
Topic: Introductions; Definitions of American Art

**TH, Aug. 28**
Topic: Fine Art Versus Material Culture

**T, Sept. 2**
Topic: Puritan and Colonial Art

**TH, Sept. 4**
Topic: John Singleton Copley

**READING QUIZ #1**

**T, Sept. 9**
Topic: Benjamin West’s and Gilbert Stuart’s America

**TH, Sept. 11**
**RESEARCH TOPICS DUE**
Topic: The Peale Family
T, Sept. 16
Topic: The Hudson River School

TH, Sept. 18
**RESEARCH PROJECT FORMAL ANALYSES DUE**
Topic: Picturing the West

T, Sept. 23
Topic: Art of Antebellum America
Reading: TBA

TH, Sept. 25
Topic: Art of the Civil War

**READING QUIZ #2**

T, Sept. 30
Topic: Winslow Homer and Thomas Eakins

TH, Oct. 2
***EXAM 1*** (bring a blue book)

T, Oct. 7
Topic: John Singer Sargent and Americans in Paris

TH, Oct. 9
Topic: The Ashcan School
Reading: TBA

T, Oct. 14
Topic: The Steiglitz Circle

**READING QUIZ #3**

TH, Oct. 16
RESEARCH PROJECT BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE
Topic: Regionalism and the Harlem Renaissance

T, Oct. 21
Topic: Abstract Expressionism
READING QUIZ #4

TH, Oct. 23
Topic: Post-Painterly Abstraction

T, Oct. 28
RESEARCH PROJECT ABSTRACTS DUE
Topic: Happenings and Fluxus

TH, Oct. 30
Topic: Pop Art
READING QUIZ #5

T, Nov. 4
REMEmBER TO VOTE!
***EXAM 2*** (bring a blue book)

TH, Nov. 6
RESEARCH PROJECT MUSEUM LABELS DUE
Topic: Minimalism

T, Nov. 11
Topic: Conceptual Art and Land Arts
READING QUIZ #6

TH, Nov. 13
Topic: Feminist Art

**READING QUIZ #7**

**T, Nov. 18**
**RESEARCH PAPER INTERPRETATIONS DUE**
Topic: Politics of Identity

**TH, Nov. 20**
STUDENT ORAL PRESENTATIONS

**T, Nov. 25**
STUDENT ORAL PRESENTATIONS

**TH, Nov. 27**
NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

**T, Dec. 2**
STUDENT ORAL PRESENTATIONS

**TH, Dec. 4**
***EXAM 3*** (bring a blue book)

**Dec. 5, RESEARCH PROJECTS DUE BY MIDNIGHT**