HAA 0501: Introduction to American Art (Honors)
Spring 2011
Room 204 Frick Fine Arts, TTH: 9:30-10:45
Prof. Kirk Savage
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Office hours: Tuesday 10:45-noon, or by appt.
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Summary: America is, and has always been, a meeting point for cultures from around the globe -- from Europe, Africa, and the New World. Historically this meeting-ground has been both violent and creative. This course will introduce students to the arts produced in that meeting-ground by America's diverse peoples and heritages. Selectively surveying history from the indigenous “moundbuilders” to the early 20th century, we will examine the diversity of artistic production in the context of cultural interaction, conflict, and conquest.

Today we associate art with galleries and museums, but for most of history art objects were made for very different settings, very different reasons, and very different purposes. To understand a painting made in 1650 we need to understand how that society differed from our own, which means that in this course we take history seriously.

Since this is an Honors College section, I will expect students to learn much of the factual content of the course by reading outside of class time in the textbook and in selected primary sources. Regular homework exercises will guide your reading and thinking. Class time will be devoted to learning and practicing skills of visual analysis and historical interpretation, and applying these skills to new material and new problems not “covered” in the textbook.

Goals:
1. To come to know better how to look at art and analyze what you see in specific terms.
2. To learn how to analyze and understand art objects in their specific cultural and historical settings; often this means learning how to ask the right questions.
3. To learn to see the art of the U.S.A. as the product and interaction of multiple world traditions.
3. To inspire you to learn more about American art in museums and in the world around you, and to give you the tools you need to be an informed and skeptical viewer.

Requirements:
Assignments: 20%. There will be three graded assignments, due Feb 11, Mar 15, and Mar 29. I will count only the highest two of the three grades toward your final course grade, but all three assignments must be turned in to get any credit.
Midterm, Feb 22: 20%. The format will be short essay questions that emphasize synthesis and application rather than memorization.
Take-home final, due Apr 28: 30%. Similar to the midterm but longer and more varied.
Class participation: 30%. This includes your work during class time as well as short, ungraded homework exercises that I will assign approximately once a week throughout the semester. Attendance is obviously necessary in order to participate in class and is therefore part of your participation grade. For each class date I will record a mark
between 1 and 3 (1 = absent, 2 = physically present but silent or minimally engaged, 3 = present and contributing); you can keep track of your marks on Courseweb. More than two unexcused absences will result in a progressive downgrading of your class participation grade.

**Readings:** The textbook is available in the Book Center:

There is also a collection of primary sources in a PDF, listed on the calendar below as Docs, and available on Courseweb. A few additional readings are listed on the calendar, and are available either on the internet or through Courseweb.

**Courseweb:** Make sure and check regularly for announcements and to keep track of your class participation and grades.

**ArtStor:** ArtStor is a huge database of art images to which Pitt subscribes. I have set up a group of study images within ArtStor. Many of these are also in the textbook, but the artstor images have a zoom function that is very useful for seeing details. To access it, you first have to register with ArtStor, which you can do at any campus computer or by going into Pittnet remotely with sremote.pitt.edu. Go to the ULS website and find the alphabetical list of databases; click on ArtStor and connect to the database. After clicking Enter the ArtStor Digital Library you will find a prompt to register. Register using your Pitt email and a password. From now on you can access the database simply by going to www.artstor.org and logging in with your Pitt email and password. This will allow you to use the database from anywhere without going through Pittnet. To get access to the image group use the Find Menu and choose “unlock password-protected folder”; enter your info and the password kirksavage. This will open up the folder “Savage Courses.” Within the folder is the image group HAA 0501 (Spring 2011). Once you unlock the folder it will be available to you all semester.

**Policies:**
1. **Disability:** If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services [216 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890/412-383-7355 (TTD)], as early as possible in the term. Disability Resources and Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

2. **Academic Integrity:** Cheating or plagiarism on any exam or assignment is not tolerated under the School’s Academic Integrity Code. Simply put, plagiarism is using someone else's words as if they are your own. If you ever use someone else’s text word for word in your own writing, you must enclose those words in quotation marks and cite the source; if you paraphrase from a source, you must cite it as well. If you try to pass off someone else’s writing or ideas as your own in any exam or assignment, or otherwise cheat in the course, **you will receive an F grade in the course and you will be reported to the dean’s office for disciplinary action pursuant to the School’s Academic Integrity Code** (see http://www.fcas.pitt.edu/academicintegrity.html).
3. **Email**: Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address. To forward e-mail sent to your University account, go to http://accounts.pitt.edu, log into your account, click on Edit Forwarding Addresses, and follow the instructions on the page. Be sure to log out of your account when you have finished. (For the full E-mail Communication Policy, go to www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/09/09-10-01.html.)

4. **Attendance**: Since this is not a passive lecture course, attendance in class is necessary to do the work of the course. See the course requirements above to understand how attendance is counted in the final grade.

**Calendar:**
(Note: The second line in each entry lists the key works for that day, by the figure #s in the textbook; AE=American Encounters; Docs=PDF of primary source documents.)

**Unit 1: Animals**

Jan 11 Indigenous artifacts pre-contact
1.1 (Birdman shell cup), 1.6 (wood-duck bowl), 1.10 (shell cup designs) + our Caddo pot
Read AE: 3-13.
Optional reading: Morton, “Certain Aboriginal Remains” (PDF)
How to read a textbook (skeptically): Effigy bowl: what is it? What was it for?

Jan 13 Indigenous artifacts post-contact
2.13 (horse effigy comb) + Narragansett piece, 7.6 (Mandan hide), 9.37 (Wohaw)
Read AE: 32-35; Docs: 448-49
How to read an image (conventions): compare DC metro map to Mandan hide
Bring homework exercise to class

Jan 18 Animals as prey and specimens
2.5-6 (White), 4.36 (Kuhn), 5.33 (Peale), p. 170 (Audubon)
How to read an image (cont): conventions in Kuhn and Peale
Bring homework exercise to class

Jan 20 Animals as specimens (cont)
Unit 2: Identities

Jan 25 Europeans and Indians in contact
2.3 (Galle), 2.12 (Powhatan’s mantle), 2.22 (Verelst), 2.23 (Portrait of Caldwell)
Read AE: 40-42.
How to read portraiture

Jan 27 Puritans: religion and gender
3.13 (Mr. Freake), 3.14 (Mrs Freake and Mary)
Read AE: 67-70.

http://www.worcesterart.org/Collection/Early_American/Artists/unidentified_17th/john_f/painting.html
http://www.worcesterart.org/Collection/Early_American/Artists/unidentified_17th/elizabeth_f/painting.html
http://www.worcesterart.org/Collection/Early_American/Artists/unidentified_17th/freakbography/index.html
Bring homework exercise on Freake portraits to class

Feb 1 Puritans: death
3.16 (Smith), 3.38 (Lamson gravestone)
Read AE: 71-73, 88-89.

Feb 3 Cosmopolitans: Britishness and gender
4.30-32 (Copley) + Girl with a Bird and Dog, Boy with Squirrel
Read AE: 120-25; Docs: 48-49.

Feb 8 Race, class, and gender in the mid-19th century: genre painting
6.33-34 (Mount), 6.31 (Spencer), 6.35 (Blythe) + Justice
Reading images: “Eel Spearing” and “Blood Tub”
Bring homework exercise to class

Feb 10 (no class)
February 11: Assignment 1 due in dropbox by midnight.

Feb 15 Artistic identity
Copley Family, 6.27 (Mount), 10.4 (Chase)
Read AE: 194-96, 324-26; Docs: 672-75.
Bring homework exercise to class

Feb 17 Catch-up/review

Feb 22 Midterm
Unit 3: Enemies

Feb 24 Combat and sacrifice
4.34 (West), 5.3 (Revere), 4.38 (Copley), 5.4 (Trumbull)
Read AE: 125-31, 137-41; Docs: 99-100
Bring homework exercise to class

Mar 1 Indians on the frontier
Vanderlyn, *Death of Jane McCrea*, 7.14 (Crawford), 7.15 (Deas), 9.35 (Four Horns), 9.42 (Buffalo Bill)
Read AE: 222-25, 312-17; Docs: 452-53.

Mar 3 Putting images in historical context: early photography and mass warfare
Read AE: 268-271, Faust Civil War lecture (PDF)
Bring homework exercise to class

Mar 8-10 (Spring Break)

Mar 15 “Thou shalt not kill”
8.36, 8.37 + Effect of a Shell, 8.38 (Homer)
Read AE: 271-74; “Brady’s Photographs” (PDF)
Assignment 2 due in dropbox before class

Mar 17 The urban underclass
11.26-27 (Riis)
Read AE: 384-86.

Unit 4: Slavery and Emancipation

Mar 22 Slavery
4.36 (Kuhn), 4.1 (Unknown), 5.10 (Jennings) + abolitionist emblem, 8.33 (Zealy), 8.31 (Johnson)
Read AE: 95-6, 147, 267-70; Docs: 343-47.
Bring homework exercise to class

Mar 24 Emancipation
p. 280 (Ward), 8.42 (Lewis), 9. 4 (Ball), 9.6 (Saint-Gaudens)
Read AE: 277, 284-87; Docs: 530-33

Mar 29 Stereotype and resistance to type
Mount *Banjo Player*, Stephen Foster monument, 9.12 (Tanner)
Read AE: 292-93
Assignment 3 due in dropbox before class
Unit 5: Land

Mar 31 Landscape representation
8.2 (Earl), 8.3 (Wall), Cole Kaaterskill Falls, 8.17-8.20 (Cole)
Read AE: 241-45, 252-57; Docs: 264-65.

Apr 5 Landscape representation (cont)
Kaaterskill Falls, 8.21 (Durand), 7.12 (Durand), 9.22 (Watkins)
Read AE: 258-59, 300-302.
Bring homework exercise to class

Apr 7 Landscape design
4.6-4.7 (Mt Vernon), 8.6 (Central Park) + Downing plan of Mall, 13.27 (FLW)

Unit 6: Modernity

Apr 12 Modern work
11.15 (Eakins), 10.15 (Cassatt), 12.1 (Bellows), Hopper, Office at Night
Read AE: 373-75, 392-94; 334-35; Docs: 592-97.
Bring homework exercise to class

Apr 14 Modern vision
11.5 (LaFarge), 11.28 Muybridge, 10.12 (Whistler), 14.5 (Langdon), 12.19 (O’Keeffe),
14.12 (Weber)
Read AE: 362, 386-87, 332-34, 405-410, 455-59; Docs: 805.

Apr 19 The skyscraper and the city
10.24 (Sullivan), 14.7 (Sheeler) + Manhatta, 12.27 (Strand), 14.20 (O’Keeffe), 16.10
(Douglas)
Watch http://www.archive.org/details/Manhatta_1921
Bring homework exercise to class

Apr 21 Wrap-up and catch-up

Apr 28 Take-home final due in dropbox