INTRODUCTION TO ART HISTORY:  
AMERICAN PAINTING 1910-1940  
Frye Art Museum

Instructor:  Rebecca Albiani

DATES:  July 28-31, 2009, 10:15 am-12:45 pm

PREREQUISITES:  None

NUMBER OF CREDITS OR CEU’s:  One credit or 10 clock hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION:  An introductory class designed to introduce the major trends in American painting from about 1910 to 1940.  This course will discuss the impact of European modernism on the American art scene in the early years of the 20th century and the efforts made by many artists in the U.S. to be both “American” and “modern.”  Furthermore, we will examine the impact of major social forces – the Great War, increasing urbanization and industry, the Jazz Age, the Great Depression – on art-making in America.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:  The participant will acquire a vocabulary for discussing early 20th century painting.  The participant will gain a basic familiarity with a number of artistic movements including the Ashcan School, Cubism, Futurism, Precisionism, Regionalism, and Social Realism.  With a heightened understanding of the social forces that shaped this art, the participant will be well positioned to use this fall’s “American Modernism” exhibition at the Frye Art Museum as a tool in his or her own teaching.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS:
1.  Attend all sessions
2.  Participate in discussions as appropriate
3.  For credit, research one artistic development and present this research in written form

INSTRUCTOR:  Rebecca Albiani, formerly a Ph.D. candidate in Renaissance art history, received her M.A. from Stanford University and her B.A. from U.C. Berkeley.  She has taught aesthetics and introductory art history courses covering from ancient Egypt to the 20th century.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:  This course will include illustrated slide lectures, interactive discussion of the works shown, and an opportunity for participants to present their own research in a written format.

GRADING CRITERIA IF TAKING COURSE FOR CREDIT:  Participants will be graded pass/fail or with a letter grade as requested.  Projects (papers) are due one week following the last day of class.  Timely submission of papers is very important.  A “P” or “C” grade requires full attendance, active participation in class activities, and the preparation of a 1-2 page typewritten (double-spaced) analysis of a work of art from the
period covered in class OR project (to be discussed with instructor) such as lesson plan for teaching the art of this period.

A “B” grade requires full attendance, active participation in class activities, and the preparation of a 2-3 page typewritten analysis two works of art from a period covered in class OR project (to be discussed with instructor) such as lesson plan for teaching the art of this period.

An “A” grade requires full attendance, active participation in class activities, and the preparation of a 3-5 page typewritten analysis of two or more works of art from a period covered in class OR project (to be discussed with instructor) such as lesson plan for teaching the art of this period.

Grading Criteria:  
Class attendance  40%  
Discussion participation  20%  
Research paper  40%

EVALUATION: All participants will be provided with an evaluation form from Seattle Pacific University as well as an evaluation form for the use of the Frye. Feedback will be sought for appropriateness and usefulness of content information. Materials provided, effectiveness of instruction, course schedule and logistics of using the museum facility will be critiqued.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Because of the condensed time period of this course, no required reading will be given. The following are suggested readings for further interest.

Dennis, James M. *Renegade regionalists: The Modern Independence of Grant Wood, Thomas Hart Benton, and John Steuart Curry.*  University of Wisconsin Press, 1998
Lesson 1: Introduction and Beginnings

The state of American art in the early 20th Century

- European influences: Academicism, Impressionism
- Homegrown realist styles – Homer, Eakins

“Apostles of ugliness:” the Ashcan School (The Eight)

- Realists under the mentorship of Robert Henri
  - Bellows, Sloan, Glackens, Shinn, Luks

Lesson 2: Early American Modernism
Impact of the Armory Show 1913 (organized by Arthur Davies)
  Futurism – Joseph Stella, Max Weber
  Cubism – Stuart Davis, Marsden Hartley
Stieglitz circle: introducing European modernism, promoting American Modernism
  Arthur Dove, Hartley, John Marin, Georgia O’Keeffe, Charles Demuth
Precisionism – Demuth, Charles Sheeler

Lesson 3: American Scene Painting
Impact of the First World War – isolationism
Regionalism
  One response to Great Depression: return to agricultural roots
  Thomas Hart Benton (Missouri), Grant Wood (Iowa), John Steuart Curry (Kansas)
Hopper’s unaffiliated realism
Harlem Renaissance: an alternate regionalism
  Jacob Lawrence and black history

Lesson 4: Socially Committed Painting
Satirizing Roaring 20s society; “Riding the Gilded Juggernaut of Jazz & Gin”
Social Realism, American-style
  Political radicalism and its relationship to style and technique
  Ben Shahn, William Gropper, Reginald Marsh, Isabel Bishop
Impact of the Great Depression on the arts
  WPA art: Public Works of Art Project, Federal Art Project
  Response to the Mexican muralist movement; WPA poster art, art education