**History of Contemporary Art (with Workshop)**

Prof. Francesca Stroppa

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to provide students with the knowledge of the main turning points of historical-artistic development, from the Neoclassical to the contemporary period, and the educational value of the artistic heritage.

The aims of the course are: 1) to provide awareness of the methods of historical-artistic work, paying attention to subject-specific lexicon, examination of the sources and historiographical interpretation; 2) to approach the analysis of new historical-artistic contexts in an independent and critical manner, refining the skills necessary to understand the interdisciplinary development of cultural events; 3) to understand the context from which works and movements originate, their links with current affairs and the connections within the educational field; 4) to approach the topics presented in class from a teaching point of view.

At the end of the course, students will have to be able to: 1) show their acquisition of learning skills relating to the information received on works, artists and movements; 2) describe and distinguish works, artists and movements by contextualizing them in space and time with consistent vocabulary and logic; 3) learn the operational knowledge and ability to approach historiographical issues with independent judgment; 4) build interdisciplinary educational paths on the main historical-artistic themes from the 18th to the 21st century, by critically examining their contexts and any historical, literary, philosophical and musical aspects of reference; 5) develop communication skills in different contexts; 6) master learning skills, i.e. be able to build a research track, carry out surveys and transfer theoretical knowledge into empirical areas.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will address the major themes of art history from the Neoclassical to the contemporary period, following a methodological introduction of the historical-artistic discipline. It will focus on personalities, works, collections and museums, paying attention to the historical context which originated the classical and medieval prodromes that gave birth to Neoclassicism and Neo-medievalism.

The course will cover the theme of monument conservation and the importance this gains from the eighteenth century, then strengthened in the nineteenth century and consolidated over the course of the twentieth century, up to today's concept of cultural heritage, to the issue of monument safeguard and fruition of museum heritage. The course will also examine the development of education concerning historical-artistic heritage, which took shape in Italy during the 19th century in the post-unification period. In this regard, the course will analyse the transformations of cities between the nineteenth and twentieth century, the establishment of museums, the setting up of sculptures in the main squares, celebrating characters from antiquity or the Risorgimento, the production of prints and paintings with a historical theme, together with the flourishing of book illustration of the classics of literature (e.g. E. de Amicis, *Cuore*, Milan, Treves, 1886, illustrated by A. Ferraguti, E. Nardi, AG Sartorio), which prepare for the values ​​of the homeland, whose deeds are celebrated in the new museum installations for commemorative, memorial and educational purposes.

Similar educational motivations are found, although developed differently, in the post-war period, and particularly in the United States with the launch of children film productions (e.g. Walt Disney’s), whose animated drawings originate from artistic forms of monuments, paintings and sculptures present in the major European worksites.

Neoclasicism, Romanticism, the season of Realisms, Impressionism, the *Belle époque*, the age of the Avant-garde, the scenario between the two wars and the post-war reconstruction. The course also aims to offer notions of museology and education related to historical-artistic heritage on an international, national, and regional level, with reference to Lombard monuments and collections, together with UNESCO’s territorial heritage.

The course is supplemented by didactic-workshop activities entrusted to expert conductors, and characterised by specific themes and methodologies agreed upon with the course teacher. Each workshop edition will be aimed at the production of a project/artefact, the assessment of which will be entrusted to the above-indicated conductor/s on the basis of parameters shares with the course teacher, and based on criteria of: completeness, coherence, originality, didactic value.

The workshop activities develop cross-cutting or single-subject themes through a short methodological and thematic study, which transforms knowledge into didactic planning skills: a path that, from analysis to synthesis, suggests educational proposals for visual arts in preschool and primary school, from iconographic elements to iconological reasons.

***READING LIST[[1]](#footnote-1)***

Students will have to study the lecture notes and further study materials made available in the “Materials” folder on the Blackboard platform, to which they must subscribe.

Additionally, students can refer to the manual for general knowledge:

For general knowledge, refer to the manual:

- S. Settis, T. Montanari, *Arte. Una storia naturale e civile*, 3. *Dal neoclassicismo al contemporaneo*, texts by F. Belloni, C. Franzoni, Milan, Einaudi Scuola - Mondadori Education, 2020, Edizione Blu.

For the methodological and historiographical aspects of education in museum heritage and teaching through images:

- C. Cieri Via, *Nei dettagli nascosto. Per una storia del pensiero iconologico*, Rome, Carocci, 1994 (the sections chosen have to be agreed with the lecturer).

- A. Lugli, *Museologia*, Milan, Jaca Book, 1992.

- M. Bussagli, *Disney e l’arte*, Milan, Giunti edit., 2017.

At choice, students will optionally prepare one of the following essays relating to two Lombard monument examples:

- F. Stroppa, *Desiderio. La basilica di San Salvatore di Brescia: dal monastero al museo*, Preface di M. Rotili, Foreword di G. Archetti, Spoleto-Milan, Fondazione CISAM, 2018 (the sections chosen have to be agreed with the lecturer).

- *Don Orione e il Piccolo Cottolengo Milanese (1933-2013)*, Proceedings of the study conference (Catholic University of Milan, 17 January 2014), edited by G. Archetti, Rome, Edizioni Studium, 2015 (the sections chosen have to be agreed with the lecturer).

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course consists of classroom lectures, supported by projections, and the possibility to participate in meetings, seminars or conferences that are introductory to the course. The course also includes educational trips to monuments, museums or local exhibitions related to the topics covered.

The teaching is supplemented by material made available to students on the Blackboard platform, which is a necessary tool for communications.

To complement the course, workshop planning activities and didactic simulations will be organized.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The exam is oral and consists of an interview aimed at verifying the acquisition of the contents addressed during lectures, the teaching materials and the reading list provided in the syllabus.

The final mark, on a 30-point scale, is based on students’ level of knowledge, effective argumentation, and lexical property and skills. Assessment will include students’ mastering of the main thematic and historiographic questions in the long term, as well as their ability to propose and build different educational paths for preschool and primary school according to chronological periods, works, monumental contexts and museum sectors.

Positive evaluation in the examination is conditional on passing the Workshop.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Attendance at the course, although not mandatory, is strongly recommended.

The course has an introductory character, therefore there are no content-specific prerequisites; however, mastery of geographical issues and the historical context in general is required. Educational visits and participation in follow-up meetings (conferences, seminars, presentations, exhibitions, etc.) are an integral part of the course.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG, or on the Faculty notice board.

1. The texts specified in the reading list can be purchased at the University bookstores; they can also be purchased from other retailers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)