History of Contemporary Art (Second-level Degree)

Prof. Francesco Tedeschi

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

The course aims to help students expand their knowledge of the history of contemporary art through single-subject sections, conceived as an opportunity to use methodological learning in the advanced study of the subject. It aims to provide a better understanding of the stylistic traits and the poetical reasons that motivate contemporary artistic research, starting from the works of the pre-eminent figures and the trends under analysis, and considering the events related to art, especially during the 20th century, in the cultural context in which they emerged and from an interdisciplinary perspective.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is composed of two independent single-subject sections, that will be held over the two semesters.

During semester 1, it will be focused on ***Space as the matter of the work of art: Cubism, Spatialism, environmental art.*** The course will analyse this subject from a problem-oriented – as well as historical and critical – perspective, exploring a topic that is closely related to the modes of representation and the different ways to use space as a formative element, in switching from painting to the various forms of environmental art expressed through installations and the different relations between art and architecture. Cubism will be considered as an introductory topic, also in relation with the critical reflections it raised, while the works by the authors of the period after World War II, between the '40s and the ‘70s, like Lucio Fontana, will represent the core of this course, with a focus also on the recent developments of a new way of acting in this direction.

During semester 2, the single-subject course will be focused on the international dimension of ***Art Informel***. The lectures will explore the founding elements of the plurality of languages and positions that are expressed, between the second half of the ‘40s and the end of the ‘60s, in the different situations of the French, European, and American environment, with a focus on the positions of the main Italian artists working in this context. In particular, the course will analyse the contemporary and the following critical reflection, also through a dedicated seminar.

N.B.: For students on the undergraduate degree programmes, semester 2 completes the year-long course in History of Contemporary Art; the general part (Prof. Elena Di Raddo) must be taken before the exam on the single-subject part in agreement with the lecturer.

Students on the Master’s programme in Modern Philology and Economics and Management of Cultural Property may choose either of the semester courses.

***READING LIST***

*Semester 1 (Space as the matter of the work of art: Cubism, Spatialism, environmental art):*

For further information on theoretical and punctual aspects of the reading list, please read below. The reading list for the final exam will be made available during the course, according to the topics and the authors that will be analysed in class.

Y.-A. Bois, La lezione di Kahnweiler, in Pablo Picasso, edited by E. Grazioli, “Riga 12”, Marcos y Marcos, Milan, 1996, p. 245-283.

R. Krauss, La scultura nel campo allargato (New York, 1978), in L’originalità dell’avanguardia e altri miti modernisti, Fazi Editore, Rome, 2007, p. 283-297.

G. Bruno, Pubbliche intimità. Architettura e arti visive, Bruno Mondadori, Milan, 2007 (in particular chaps. 1 and 5).

H. Foster, Il complesso arte-architettura, postmediabooks, Milan, 2017 (in particular chap. 8, La scultura ripensata and chap. 10, Pittura senza limiti).

F. Poli, Arte e ambiente, in F. Poli, Arte contemporanea, Electa, Milan, 2003, p. 96-121.

F. Tedeschi, Luoghi di transizione. Forme e immagini di “passaggio” tra arte e architettura, Scholé/Morcelliana, Brescia, 2020 (in particular chaps. 3, 4, and 6)

*Semester 2 (Art Informel):*

A specific reading list, taking into account the numerous historical and critical contributions to this subject, will be selected and made available during the lectures.

For an overview of the positions exposed by the trends of “*Art Informel*”, students can consult:

C. Zambianchi, Arte contemporanea: dall’espressionismo astratto alla pop art, Carocci, Rome, 2011

L’arte del XX secolo. 1946-1968. La nascita dell’arte contemporanea, edited by V. Terraroli, Skira, Milan, 2007.

Further information on the reading list – including the differences between Bachelor’s and Master’s students – will be made available during the course.

***TEACHING METHOD***

In lectures, works of art by the authors in question will be shown and analysed and contextualised within the essential critical, theoretical and documentary framework. Material viewed in lectures will be uploaded onto the Blackboard platform.

The students of the Master’s degree in History of Art will have to attend a workshop on art criticism.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed by means of an oral exam that will take place according to the official exam calendar. During the exam, based on the images viewed in class and relative content, students will be assessed on their knowledge of the artists and works in question, as well as their capacity for critical thinking and reflecting on the underlying, context-related themes explored on the course.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

*Prerequisites*

As this is an advanced course, students require textbook-level knowledge of contemporary art history encompassing the whole of the 19th and 20th centuries, enhanced by courses attended on their undergraduate programme or by attending the general History of Contemporary Art course as this one. Any gaps in their knowledge will be verified in lectures and remedied by means of tailored interventions agreed with the lecturer.

*In case the current Covid-19 health emergency does not allow frontal teaching, remote teaching will be carried out following procedures that will be promptly notified to students.*

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.