# History of Art Criticism

## Prof. Alessandro Rovetta; Prof. Davide Dall’Ombra

1. ***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The aim of the course, divided into two modules, is to provide an introductory understanding of the emergence and developments of modern art history. By studying its leading figures and their historical-critical experiments, students will gain insight into the elaborate methodological process characterising two centuries of passionate and deeply motivated attempts to grasp distinctive phenomena and leading characters in figurative culture in both Italy and Europe.

The past two centuries have been marked by the increasing acknowledgement of an autonomous statute of the Art History, which has deeply changed the historiographic horizon through the implementation of diversified research methods. Thus the idea of art history as subsidiary discipline has been overturned by showing its original hermeneutic character and extraordinary openness towards different cultural and social contexts.

At the end of the course, students will: have a general overview of the history of art criticism; have a critical understanding of the various methods used in art history; and be able to construct their own methodological approach to studying artistic phenomena.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Module 1: *History and History of art: an open question on art criticism in Italy and Europe between the 19th and 20th century.*

The *first module* (Prof. Alessandro Rovetta) deals with the developments of art historiography between the Nineteenth and the early Twentieth century with particular reference to the relationship between history and history of art. The course will focus in particular on the developments in art historiography between Luigi Lanzi, Giovan Battista Cavalcaselle and other European historians, particularly on the German scene (Rumhor, Passavant, Waagen); the juxtaposition of the connoisseurship of Giovanni Morelli, Gustavo Frizzoni; the link between art, culture and anthropology, from Jacob Burckhardt to Aby Warburg, including Erwin Panofsky’s iconography and iconology formulation; the pure visibility period of the Vienna School of Art History with Franz Wichoff and Alois Riegl; the birth of the discipline in Italy with Adolfo Venturi.

Module 2: *The method of the connoisseur in the 20th century, from Bernard Berenson to Roberto Longhi's “workshop”: critical debate and personalisation.*

Module 2 (Prof. Davide Dall’Ombra) explores the developments of connoisseurship in Italy in the twentieth century, addressing its implications for art historiography and for the development of exhibition and documentary practice, as a gauge of the change in the discipline and its audience. After a brief introduction on the origin, affirmation and timeliness of the philological-attributionistic method, and the confrontation of “venturiani” and “longhiani”, based on the figure of Bernard Berenson, the course will examine the figure, work, method and school of Roberto Longhi. The course will incorporate guided tours, integral part of the Course, document-based material and testimonies to focus on the *Paragone* journal “workshop”, examining the relationships between Longhi and two of his “irregular” students, Federico Zeri and Giovanni Testori, in terms of influences and differences in method.

***READING LIST***

Module 1:

M. Rossi, *Le fila del tempo, Il sistema storico di Luigi Lanzi*, Florence, 2006.

D. Levi, *Cavalcaselle.* *Il pioniere della conservazione in Italia*, Turin, 1988.

J. Anderson, *La vita di Giovanni Morelli nell’Italia del Risorgimento*, Milano, 2019

M. Ghelardi, *La scoperta del Rinascimento.* *L’età di Raffaello di Jacob Burckhardt*, Turin, 1991.

G.C. Sciolla, *La critica d’arte del Novecento*, Turin, 1995.

M. Ghelardi, *Aby Warburg. la lotta per lo stile,* Turin 2012.

M. Nezzo-G. Tomasella, *Dire l’arte. Percorsi critici dall’antichità al primo Novecento*, Il Poligrafo, Padova, 2020

Course pack containing an anthology of texts and essays on the topics and figures featured on the course.

Module 2:

U. Kultermann, *La storia della storia dell'arte*, Vicenza, 1997.

G.C. Sciolla, *La critica d’arte del Novecento,* Turin, 1995.

G. Dalli Regoli, *L'attribuzione dell'opera d'arte.* *Itinerari di ricerca fra dubbi e certezze*, Pisa, 2003*.*

G. Previtali (ed.), *L’arte di scrivere sull’arte.* *Roberto Longhi nella cultura del nostro tempo*, Rome, 1982.

Anthological course pack including texts of the authors covered and supplemental essays.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures studying written material and with slides and video clips; supervised trips (integral parts of the course) and the discussion of students’ papers.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be examined by means of an oral exam of appropriate length. The exam will assess their understanding of content covered in lectures and in the reading material, in terms of accuracy of knowledge, but also extent of their ability to approach the latter critically. In particular, they will be assessed on clarity of expression, ability to summarise information and develop relevant answers, and their use of specialist language.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

*Prerequisites*

Because this is a Master’s level course, students are expected to have at least general knowledge of the history of medieval, modern and contemporary art, enhanced by studying certain topics in depth and applying good critical skills. Any gaps in their knowledge will be identified in lectures and remedied by means of targeted interventions.

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.