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 about 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.

The theme dealt with in semester 1 will be ***The dematerialisation of the work of art****.* The course will take a problematic as well as historical-critical approach to the topic, addressing an intersection of themes related to the events of twentieth-century art and one phase in particular, between the sixties and seventies, in which it assumes particular theoretical-critical importance. The theme will be addressed through a number of thematic focuses – the work as an “idea”; the work as an “act”; the image and qualification of “emptiness” as an aesthetic subject; the crisis of representation; variations in the use of technological media. The artists covered will include: Duchamp, Cage, Manzoni, Klein, Kosuth, Art-Language, LeWitt, Agnetti, Paolini, Kaprow, Mauri, Nam-June Paik, Vaccari, Isgrò, and Kapoor.

In semester 2, the course will focus on a single subject: ***“Making paintings”.*** ***Painting* *as an analytical practice: New forms of abstraction in the art of the 1960s and 1970s*** and will cover the contexts and artists which, between the establishment of monochrome to the theoretical elaboration of artistic practice linked to painting, led to the development of new forms of painting, alternative and complementary to positions aimed at overcoming painting in the avant-garde of the period. The artists to be examined include: the Americans Newman, Reinhardt, Stella, Louis, Noland, Martin, Kelly, Ryman, Johns, the Italians Manzoni, Schifano, Accardi, Burri, Fontana, Castellani, Dorazio, Morales, Verna, Arico, and the French groups Support-Surface and BMPT (Buren Mosset Parmentier Toroni).

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.

For students on the LM in Art History, there will be a seminar in semester 2 dedicated to the critical debate related to the topics covered in lectures.

***READING LIST***

*Semester 1 (****The dematerialisation of the work of 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.

For a general background:

F. Poli, *Arte contemporanea*, Electa, Milano, 2003, pp. 96-121.

*Arte concettuale*, a cura di P. Osborne, Phaidon Press, New York, 2006.

The following exhibition catalogues, including the essays they contain:

*L’immagine del vuoto. Una linea di ricerca nell’arte in Italia 1958-2006*, cat. della mostra a cura di M. Frnaciolli e B, Della Casa, Museo Cantonale d’Arte, Lugano, 2006 (Skira, Milano, 2006)

*Salto nel vuoto*, a cura di L. Giusti e D. Quaranta, Galleria d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Bergamo, 2023 (Officina Libraria e GAMeC Books, 2023)

Sarà oggetto di attenzione il volume *Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972…*a cura di L. Lippard, 1973 (ripubblicato da University of California Press (Berkeley, Los Angeles, New York, 1997).

*Semester 2**(****“Making paintings”.******Painting as an analytical practice: New forms of abstraction in the art of the 1960s and 1970s):***

A specific reading list, taking into account some of the many historical-critical contributions on the subject, will be selected and made available during lectures.

For a framework of critical themes and artists:

F. Menna, *La linea analitica dell’arte moderna. Le figure e le icone*, Einaudi, Torino, 1975 (e edizioni successive).

F. Menna, *La nuova pittura*, in *L’Arte Moderna*, Fratelli Fabbri Editori, Milano, 1975, vol. 14, pp. 161-192 e F. Menna, *Le correnti pittoriche non oggettive degli anni Sessanta*, in L’Arte Moderna, cit., vol. 15, pp. 97-128.

*Un’idea di pittura. Astrazione analitica in Italia 1972-1976*, a cura di F. Belloni, V. Gransinigh, Casa Cavazzini. Museo d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Udine, 2015.

F. Fergonzi, *Una nuova superficie. Jasper Johns e gli artisti italiani 1958-1966*, Electa, Milano, 2019

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.

***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.

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.