History of Artistic Literature

Prof. Alessandro Rovetta; Prof. Alessandra Squizzato

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

The aim of the course is to provide an introduction into an understanding and assessment of historical-critical thought, at various periods in time, of the main phenomena and leading figures in artistic culture. The materials used will mainly be of a historiographic-methodological nature. The course will focus on studying texts and examine art work, art centres, leading figures and the ways in which art was circulated.

At the end of the course, students will have a general overview of the historical development of artistic literature. They will be able to address issues related to sourcing and studying literary sources of artistic interest, developing independent critical skills. They will be able to contextualise these sources to encourage wider understanding of the role of artistic phenomena in human culture and the Modern age.

Module 1: *Prof. Alessandro Rovetta*

As part of a general overview, some of the main artistic literature texts in the Humanistic Age and Renaissance will be presented, taking the 'artist' as a leitmotiv in revealing the gradual acknowledgement of individuality in artistic creation and its role as a catalyst in assessing and codifying taste. The most significant cases will be presented placing them in their respective historical and artistic context: Dante, Francesco Petrarca, Leon Battista Alberti, Piero della Francesca, Leonardo, Giorgio Vasari. Single-subject sessions will focus specifically on Vasari and his *Vite.*

Module 2: *Prof. Alessandra Squizzato*

The main focus of the course is the link between literature and art, words and figures, students will investigate the different dynamics and meanings of its potential implementation and, above all, its diachronic development. Particular emphasis will be placed on certain significant events: Agnolo Bronzino, a poet and painter from Florence in the first half of the sixteenth century; Giovan Pietro Bellori and *l’Ercole al Bivio* by Annibale Carracci (1672); the modern ekphrasis of the Ancient: Winckelmann, Heinse and Goethe; Johann Heinrich Füssli (1741-1825) a visual interpreter of Shakespeare; John Ruskin and his Viaggio in Italia (1845). Students are invited to develop a personal written paper which identifies and discusses a meaningful link between figurative research, literary production and critical processing, by means of a personal comparison with these models.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Module 1: *Art theorists and historiographers between Humanism and Renaissance.*

Module 2: *Art writers in the modern age: a journey through figures and words*

***READING LIST***

For Module 1

J. Schlosser Magnino, *La Letteratura artistica.* *Manuale delle fonti della storia dell’arte moderna,* La Nuova Italia, Florence, 1964, available online from *Heidelberg historic literature – digitized* (parts referred to on the lecturer’s webpage).

M. Nezzo – g. Tomasella, *dire l’arte. Percorsi critici dall’Antichità al primo Novecento*, Il Poligrafo, Padua, 2020.

M. Baxandall, *Giotto e gli umanisti.* *La scoperta della composizione pittorica. 1350-1450,* Jaca Book, Milan, 1994

Leonardo Da Vinci, *Libro di pittura,* edited by C. Pederetti-C. Vecce, Giulti, Florence, 1995.

B. Agosti-S. Ginzburg-A. Nova (edited by), *Giorgio Vasari e il cantiere delle Vite del 1550,* Marsilio, Venice, 2013.

B. Agosti, *Giorgio Vasari.* *Luoghi e tempi delle vite*, Officina Libraria, Milan, 2013.

Anthological course pack of course material containing texts and essays related to topics and protagonists considered in the course.

For Module 2

*Doppio talento e doppia creatività. Scrittori artisti e artisti scrittori*, a cura di G. Rizzarelli, in “Letteratura & Arte”, 18 (2020).

C. Savettieri, *Dal Neoclassicismo al Romanticismo*, Rome 2006.

*La description de l’oeuvre d’art. Du modèle classique aux variations contemporaines*, Acts du colloque organisé par O. Bonfait, Académie de France à Rome, Rome 2004.

*L’Ottocento in Italia. Le arti sorelle,* 3 voll*.,* *II. Il Romanticismo 1815-1848*, edited by C. Sisi Milan 2005.

*Storytelling, esperienze e comunicazione del cultural Heritage*, Comitato scientifico D. M. Burlot, P. Cordera, S. Costa, Workshop 2022.

Further more specific material will be provided during lectures. A course pack containing some of the course materials will be available from the UC Copy shop.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures to study and comment on texts and images projected in class. Study visits at museums and monuments related to the program, also coordinated with other courses; seminar meetings with specialized scholars.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed for module 1 by means of an oral exam, of reasonable duration, aimed at evaluating their acquisition of the contents covered in lectures and the reading list, both in terms of their accuracy and ability to apply critical thinking. Particular assessment criteria will be: clarity and synthesis of articulation, ability to give relevant answers and use of specialist language.

For the second module, in addition to a part of the programme on which students will be assessed by means of an oral exam, they will also be asked to produce a written paper on topics similar to those discussed in class, according to instructions provided by the lecturer.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

*Prerequisites*

Being an introductory course covering material largely unknown to first- and second-year undergraduate students, the prerequisites are textbook knowledge of medieval and modern art history enhanced by the other courses on the undergraduate degree programme. Any gaps in their knowledge will be identified in lectures and remedied by means of targeted interventions.

Any students wishing to choose this as the subject of their undergraduate dissertation or Master’s thesis must attend Prof. A. Squizzato’s "Art History Research Method" workshop (*Metodologia della ricerca storico artistica*).

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.