

## Syllabus

CRN 11274 ART K102 T02  
Art History II  
Section G01: Mondays 5:30-8:15 pm

Professor: Ben Lifson  
Email address: [benlifson@yahoo.com](mailto:benlifson@yahoo.com)

## Textbook

Marilyn Stokstadt: *Art History: Portable Edition:  
Fourteenth to Seventeenth Century Art and  
Eighteenth to Twenty-First Century of Art*

Our emphasis will be first on painting, then on sculpture, and last on architecture.

Read your chapters accordingly, concentrating on painting and more lightly on sculpture and architecture. This will save you time and make you progressively stronger observers of painting.

Why this emphasis?

A photographic reproduction of a painting is a two-dimensional account of a two-dimensional object and so provides for the least falsification of the object..

A photographic reproduction of a sculpture shows you the sculpture from only one of the 360° from which it can be seen: converts a three-dimensional object into a two-dimensional one; and so falsifies the object.

A photographic reproduction of a work of architecture compresses the space occupied and contained by the building into a two-dimensional picture and so falsifies the object.

But via photographic reproduction of painting we come closer to the nature of the object than via photographs of sculpture or architecture. We have a better chance of dealing with the truth.

## Weekly Assignments; Papers; Exams

### 1. Weekly Assignments: Tracings

Each week you will hand in a tracing of each of two reproductions of paintings, drawings, prints or photographs included *only in that week's assigned pages*. .

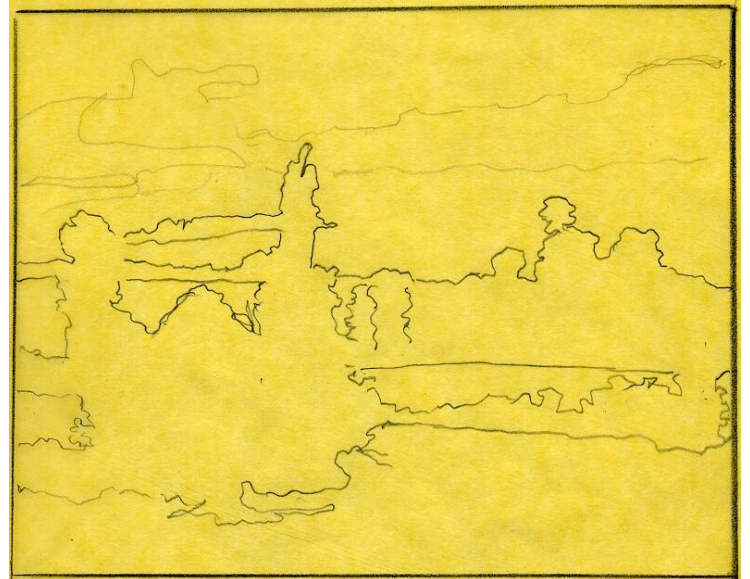
If there are no *pictures* reproduced in a chapter, trace two reproductions from earlier chapters.

### Why tracings?

Art history begins with seeing and seeing begins with looking. One way to strengthen our looking is by tracing a picture. To make a good tracing we must look carefully both at what the picture *represents*, and at its *forms*—its shapes, lines, light, and shadow.

Here is a photograph of the French countryside by the American photographer Paul Strand, together with a tracing showing how the *forms* of the trees, hedges and clouds are connected to

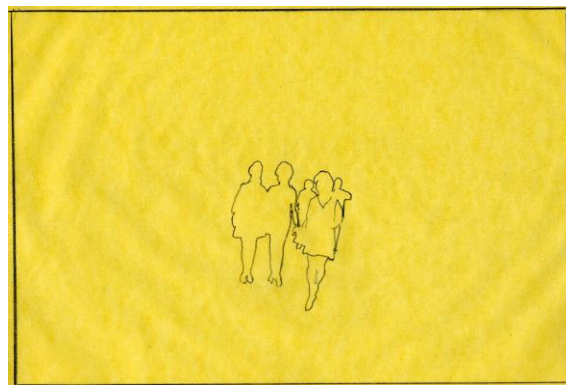
make one large *form* within the picture – which *form* is the *chief visual subject* of the picture's visual structure just as earth, fields, trees, etc. comprise the chief subject with respect to content.



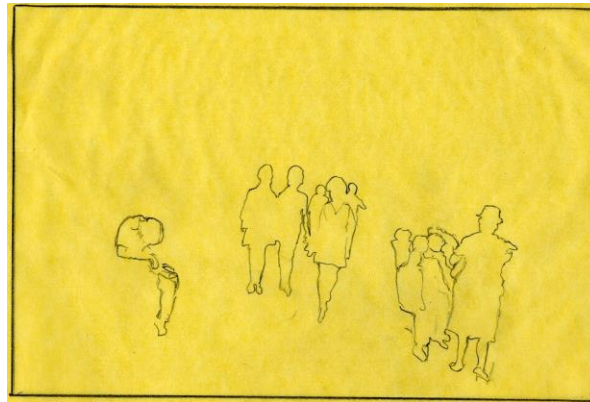
Here is a photograph of Hollywood, by the American photographer Garry Winogrand.



Here is a tracing, showing only the central group of three women,



which reveals that the group actually contains *five* figures. And here is a tracing of the same picture including all the human characters,



which reveals how *small* the figures are, how *little* of the picture they occupy, even though in the original, they appear to be so large and so strongly hold our attention; and how the young man in the wheel chair is only a fragment of a human being, making a strong interesting form.

Your tracings can be as general as that of the Strand landscape or as specific that of the Winograd street scene.

#### Details of This Assignment

**In each case, underneath your tracing 1) *give the title, the artist's name, and the date of the original.* 2) Write a brief note on the tracing paper, telling why you chose the picture, or what you learned from the tracing, or why you traced only the parts you did, or all three, or anything else relating to this work. 3) Write a brief note saying how you think your tracing represents a change in art over the previous week's reading assignment(s).**

**ALL TRACINGS MUST INCLUDE THE PICTURE'S EDGES, AS ABOVE. "PICTURE" IMPLIES EDGES. THERE IS NO PICTURE WITHOUT EDGES. WITHOUT EDGES YOU HAVE ONLY IMAGES. A PICTURE HAS EDGES. TRACE THEM EACH TIME.**

**Tracings must be turned in and kept in a folder with your name prominently written on it.**

#### 2. Term Paper, Mid Term and Final

These three traditional assignments will be conflated into an on-going one beginning with the mid-term and ending with the final.

##### A. Mid-Term

In class, from 5:30 to 8:15. Open book. Notes, outlines and downloaded reproductions permitted. Format: Double spaced, on ruled paper.

By the time of the mid-term identify a question you have about the history of painting: a question not raised in class, or raised and not answered to your satisfaction: something suggested by class

discussion, or the textbook, or by your looking. something *you* want to know: a question which, when answered, will make the history of art more meaningful to yourself.

Taking examples from Fall 2008 semester, your question can be as personal and subjective as this student's:

Why is it that, beginning in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and coming forward to the 20<sup>th</sup>, the more recent the art the less I like it? Why do I prefer work of the past to modern work?

Or it can be as objective as this student's:

What is the nature and the necessity of nudity in art? Why do artists paint the nude?

During the mid-term class meeting you will write your first version of your answer—a three-hour essay-using whatever notes, reproductions and outlines you wish.

### B. Term Paper

Your term paper will be a revision of the mid-term, following both the suggestions in my comments and your own additional thought and/or research.

The term paper will be due two weeks before the end of term, sent to me by email as a Word document attachment.

### C. Final Exam

From 5:30 to 8:15 pm. Open book. Outlines and reproductions permitted. Double spaced on ruled paper.

This will be your final revision of your answer to your question, informed by my comments, your additional thought, and what you have learned about art and art history since the mid-term exam.

### Attendance

Three Rivers Community College requires you to attend class regularly and requires me to take attendance. As this is almost a three-hour class, requiring a 10-minute break, I shall have to take attendance at the beginning of class and after break. Too many absences from either the whole or the second half of class will negatively affect your grade.

### Weekly Assignments and Topics

#### 26 January

Introduction to course: What is art history?

Changes in style over the ages but no change in the elements and principles of art:

Portraits ancient to modern.

Ancient Egypt and 19<sup>th</sup> century France.

On the difficulty of discussing works of art in reproduction. What can and can't be discussed.

Artists' obsession with an idea, a form, a motif: Pablo Picasso, Marie-Therese Walter and the myth of the Minotaur

On the difficulty of making art.

Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel Ceiling and Jean-Luc Goddard's film *Sympathy for the Devil*, the creation the Rolling Stones' song of the same name.

Form and its determination of content: photographer Larry Clark's short (40-plates) book, *Tulsa*.

2 February

Chapter 17, "Fourteenth-Century Art in Europe"

Two tracings due

9 February

Chapter 18: "Fifteenth-Century Art in Northern Europe and the Iberian Peninsula.

Two tracings due

16 February

NO CLASS

23 February

Chapter 19: Renaissance Art in Fifteenth-Century Italy

Two tracings due

2 March

Chapter 20: Sixteenth-Century Art in Italy

Two tracings due

9 March

Chapter 21: Sixteenth-Century Art in Northern Europe and the Iberian Peninsula

Two tracings due

16 March: Spring Break: NO CLASS

23 March: Mid Term Exam: 5:20-8:15 pm.

30 March:

Chapter 22: Baroque Art

Two tracings due.

6 April

Chapter 29: Eighteenth-Century Art in Europe and the Americas

Two tracings due.

13 April

Chapter 30: Nineteenth-Century Art in Europe and the United States

The Romantics: Wild Rebellious Young Men: Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony

Two tracings due.

\*\*\*Term Paper: *First Draft, Due via email*

20 April

Chapter 31: Modern Art in Europe and the Americas, 1900-1945  
Two tracings due.

27 April

Chapter 32: The International Scene Since 1945  
Two tracings due.

4 May

Catching up. General discussion.  
\*\*\*Term Paper: *Second (corrected) draft, due by email.*

11 May

Catching up. General discussion.  
\*\*\*Term Paper: *Third (corrected) draft, if necessary, due by email*

18 May:

*Final Examination, (Final In-Class Revision/Expansion of Term Paper)*