GLOBAL IMPRESSIONISMS

Kuroda Seiki, *Withered Field (Grez)*, c. 1891

**Course Description**

This undergraduate seminar will focus on the development and afterlife of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painting in the late nineteenth-century. Focusing on both specific aesthetic practices and the social and cultural conditions that surrounded them, we will consider topics such as urban redevelopment, technical artistic processes, the creation of transnational artist colonies, and the effect of new art exhibition venues. Our investigation of these and other themes will be grounded in close attention to particular works of art as we revisit Impressionism’s central place in the history of art and new methods through which to examine its global impact and reception. Assignments will ask students to think critically about the stylistic translation of Impressionism through its global dissemination both in the nineteenth century and beyond. While this course aims to familiarize students with the critical texts, artists, and movements that shaped the development of Impressionism, it also aims to interrogate “Impressionism” as a stable or singularly definable term. What are its geographical bounds? Who does it include? Who does it leave out? What is its relationship to local histories and national schools?

**Course Requirements**

This course will use a hybrid model, offering both synchronous and asynchronous discussion modalities. Each class will be broken down into three components: read/prepare, watch/listen, and respond.
Before class: **READ** assigned article or book chapter (PDFs available via myCourses).

**PREPARE:** You will serve as the assigned discussion leader for a specific week of class. In this role, you will be responsible for moderating online and/or Zoom discussions and providing a brief framework before class begins to orient us to the day’s reading (this may include additional contextual background, a PowerPoint of key images or passages, or a list of questions for the group as we prepare for discussion).

*During class:* Complete visual analysis of the week’s “anchor image,” **WATCH/LISTEN** to assigned video (recorded lecture by Dr. Stone, podcast episode, exhibition video, guest lecture, etc.), **RESPOND** to discussion prompts or participate in group discussion. For those who can participate via Zoom during class time, you can expect roughly 45-60 minutes of synchronous discussion.

You will always have the option to participate asynchronously on myCourses in lieu of scheduled Zoom meetings and it is still expected that these discussion boards will be a place for rigorous and productive exchange.

The remote learning context presents new challenges for all involved, and I acknowledge the challenges that you may be experiencing due to the pandemic. I will do your best to provide a supportive learning environment and foster opportunities for meaningful engagement throughout the semester. There are a number of resources available to support your academic success: see Student-specific Guidelines for Remote Teaching and Learning and Remote Learning Resources. I plan to record our synchronous Zoom discussions for students who aren’t able to attend in real time. You will be notified through a ‘pop-up’ box in Zoom if a lecture or portion of a class is being recorded. By remaining in sessions that are recorded, you agree to the recording, and you understand that your image, voice, and name may be disclosed to classmates. You also understand that recordings will be made available in myCourses to students registered in the course.

**Required Course Materials**

All required readings will be available via Course Reservess, myCourses, or sent to you via email. To participate in synchronous discussions via Zoom, you will need access to a computer with wifi, a webcam, and a microphone. **Note:** Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor.

Your final grade will be assessed as follows:

- (25%) Participation in online discussion forum and/or synchronous discussion via Zoom
- (15%) Short response paper
- (25%) Virtual exhibition
- (35%) Final research paper

Further explanation of each assignment will be made available in advance of the due date. Students must complete all assignments and exams in order to pass the course. Late
submission will be penalized one letter grade for each day they are late unless an extension has been granted by the instructor. Assignments should be submitted via myCourses. FAQs for students using myCourses: Assignments.

Note: Due to the extraordinary circumstances of this semester, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Week 1 (Sept. 7): What is Impressionism?
READ

WATCH
• James Johnson, “A New Look at Impressionism, Five Faces of Impressionism”

Week 2 (Sept 14): Revisiting the Surface: Impressionism and Materiality
READ

WATCH
• “Viscosity,” Art Terms in Action, MoMA
• “Palette Knife,” Art Terms in Action, MoMA

Week 3 (Sept 21): The Question of National Schools: Impressionism in the United States
READ

WATCH
• Emily C. Burns, “Local Color in Art: Nationalism and Impressionism in the United States, Australia, and France,” given at the American Studies Center, University of Warsaw

Week 4 (Sept 28): Australia’s Impressionist Landscapes
READ
WATCH

- Peter Roberts- talks about Tom Roberts, his grandfather, National Gallery of Australia

Week 5 (Oct. 5): Nordic Light and Naturalism

READ

- Torsten Gunnarsson and Per Hedström, Impressionism and the North: Late 19th Century French Avant-Garde Art and the Art of the Nordic Countries, 1870-1920 (Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 2003), selected pages.

WATCH

- Guest lecture, Dr. Isabelle Gapp, “An Arctic Impressionism? Anna Boberg and the Lofoten Islands”

Week 6 (Oct. 12): Impressionism in Canada

READ


ASSIGNMENT DUE: Short response paper

Week 7 (Oct. 19): Realism, Impressionism, and Representation in Germany

READ


Week 8 (Oct. 26): Global Impressionisms and World’s Fairs

READ


Week 9 (Nov 2): French Artists in Exile: The Role of Britain

READ


LISTEN
• “How has London Inspired French Artists?” Tate Britain

Week 10 (Nov. 9): Ottoman Aestheticism and Turkish Impressionism
READ

LISTEN
• “Ottomans, Orientalists, and 19th-Century Visual Culture,” with Mary Roberts, hosted by Zeinab Azarbadegan

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Virtual exhibition

Week 11 (Nov. 16): Japanese Painters in Paris; Impressionism in Japan
READ

RESPOND
• “Attend” classmates’ exhibitions, respond to prompts on myCourses.

Week 12 (Nov. 23): Re-defining Impressionism: Brazil and Beyond
READ

Week 13 (Nov. 30): Dealing Impressionism in South Africa
READ

Week 14 (Dec. 7): Conclusions, Is Paris Still the Capital of the Nineteenth Century?

READ

• Response to Questionnaire on Impressionism and the Social History of Art, edited by Alexis Clark, H-France Salon 9, issue 14, #2 (2017).

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Final research paper

Appendix: McGill Policy Statements

Language of Submission: In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.”

Academic Integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures” (see McGill’s guide to academic honesty for more information).

As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.

Land Acknowledgment: McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.