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Course to be Globalized: Art 111: Art Appreciation

Description of the course:

Art Appreciation introduces students to a variety of art media as well as to the origins and historical development of art. The course emphasizes the relationship of the visual elements and design principles to various art forms including but not limited to sculpture, painting, craft, and architecture. Upon completion, students are able to identify and analyze a variety of artistic styles, periods, and media. This course has been approved to satisfy the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement for the general education core requirement in humanities/fine arts. This is a Universal General Education Transfer Component (UGETC) course.

Description of the Module:

This Global module will focus specifically on the Middle East and Islamic World. Students will learn about historical and contemporary Middle Eastern and Islamic artists, traditional Islamic art forms. They will also compare and contrast traditionally Western visual arts conventions with Persian and Islamic conventions. Students will learn that many factors influence artistic practice and artistic conventions within a society. These factors can include religious belief and ritual, societal norms, cultural values, geography, trade, and access to raw materials.

Global Learning Outcomes

1. Identify differing artistic conventions in European and Islamic civilizations and contextualize these differences by citing examples in each civilization's values, religious practice, geography, etc.
2. Identify specific ways that trade, travel, and artistic influence between the Islamic and European civilizations influenced art and architecture in each society.
3. Identify, and analyze particular works created in the Islamic world, particularly ceramics, mosaic, manuscript illumination, textiles, and glass.

Global Learning Activities

1. Title: Visual Analysis exercise

Objective: Students will be able to articulate why traditionally Western and Islamic paintings depict scenes differently. These depictions reflect societal values around the visual arts and the hierarchy of artistic media.

Procedure: This exercise will take place during the second week of class, as part of a unit about art analysis. Two images will appear on screen. One will be an Italian Renaissance painting of an interior scene in which the artist uses linear perspective to depict spatial recession (Example: *School of Athens* by Raphael, 1510). The other will be a Persian manuscript painting by the artist Kamal al-din Behzad, a contemporary to Raphael living and working in Herat, modern day Afghanistan. (Example: *The Caliph visits the Turkish Bath* by Kamal al-din Behzad, 1480.) Students will have just learned how Western painters can imply three-dimensional space on a flat surface.

We will have a class discussion in which students will compare and contrast the Italian Renaissance fresco with the Persian Manuscript. Students will compare and contrast the following visual aspects:

- spatial recession
- depictions of the human form
- use of intricate details and pattern

Through this comparison, they will see that Persian and Islamic artists have different priorities in artistic depictions.

Students will then use prior knowledge from the class to articulate the reasons for these differences. They have already learned that Islamic artists prioritize pattern, ornament, and surface decoration over realistic depictions of space and people. This is due to traditional Islamic art forms (mosaic, textiles, ceramics) which emphasize surface decoration. It is also because the hierarchy of traditional Islamic arts values calligraphy and the artistic potential of the written word. It is common for Persian manuscript painters to use the written word as a decorative element.

Follow-up Assignment and Assessment: Following this in-class activity, students will write a short informal journal entry (one of 5 they complete during the course) in which they complete a visual analysis of a Persian or Islamic painting. They will be given a list of websites of Islamic art collections to help them select their topic. They will also complete a personal response and self-reflection in which they describe what it is like to see artistic depictions that are different from traditional Western art. They will also have a chance to reflect on art from their own culture (if non-Western).

Resources:

Hillenbrand, Robert. *Islamic Art and Architecture*. Thames and Hudson, 1998.

Metropolitan Museum of Art. *Heilbrun Timeline of Art History*. New York, 2017. Website.

<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/>

Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. *Archnet*. Cambridge, 2014.

Electronic Database. <https://archnet.org/>

Museum with No Frontiers. 2017. Electronic Database. www.museumwnf.org

2. Title: Cross-cultural influences in architectural sculpture

Objective: Students will be able to identify and explain ways in which architectural sculpture during the Medieval Period in Europe reflects both Christian and Islamic artistic conventions.

Procedure: This activity will take place during the unit about sculpture. Students will explore several examples of sculpture created during the Medieval Period. Through small group discussion followed by large group discussion, students will articulate ways that the sculptures, which depict human and animal forms, have been intentionally abstracted.

Students will observe that both human and animal forms are flattened and elongated, emphasize surface decoration rather than realism, pattern, and reduction to geometric shapes. Animal forms are particularly whimsical and imaginative.

Students will then learn that during the Medieval period in Europe there was artistic and cultural interaction Christian and Islamic cultures. Both Islamic and Christian artists travelled throughout Europe working on religious buildings. This gave rise to Islamic influence in sculpture.

They will also learn that there was discomfort in depicting Christian religious figures, such as Jesus, Mary, the twelve Disciples and the Prophets, realistically during the Medieval period. Religious leaders were concerned that realistic depictions of religious figures would confuse church-goers. For this reason, adapting traditionally Islamic artistic conventions was appropriate.

Follow-up and Assessment: Works featured during this class unit will be included on the course quizzes. Students will complete short-answer responses in which they articulate the abstraction present in Christian architectural sculpture and the cultural reasons for this abstraction.

Resources:

Hillenbrand, Robert. *Islamic Art and Architecture*. Thames and Hudson, 1998.

Metropolitan Museum of Art. *Heilbrun Timeline of Art History*. New York, 2017. Website.

<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/>

Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. *Archnet*. Cambridge, 2014.

Electronic Database. <https://archnet.org/>

Islamic Art Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art: www.metmuseum.org

3. Title: Contemporary Islamic artists

Objective: Students will be able to identify ways that contemporary Islamic artists are influenced by or work within the Persian and Islamic traditions. They will also be able to explain ways that artists modernize these art forms, methods, and styles.

Procedure: This activity will take place during the unit on painting. Students will have just completed a lesson about the Persian Miniature painting tradition. Students will then watch a film about the contemporary Pakistani-American artist Shazia Sikander. Sikander is trained in the traditional technique of Persian painting, but modernizes the tradition to comment on her dual identity as a Muslim growing up in a largely Hindu society and living her adult life in America.

During the film, students will take notes on what aspects of traditional Persian painting Sikander retains in her practice. This will be followed by small and large group discussions about Sikander's work within the Persian tradition.

Follow-up and Assessment: Students will select a work by Shazia Sikander. The work can include a miniature painting, large scale installation, or animation. The students will describe the elements in the work that allude to Sikander's tradition and to her dual identity. Students will also have the opportunity to personally respond to her work. Many students at Durham Tech live in North Carolina now, but are from another state or another country. Similar to Sikander, they often feel a dual identity. Sikander's work resonates with them for this reason.

Resources:

Art in the 21st Century. Dir. Art 21. Shazia Sikander. 2001. Film.

Please note: Other, more recent, films about Sikander's work are also accessible via YouTube.

Please note: The Ackland Museum of Art also has work by contemporary Islamic Artists.

4. Title: Traditional Crafts from the Islamic World

Objective: Students will learn that traditional art and craft forms in the Islamic World differ somewhat from those in the Western World.

They will articulate a variety of reasons that this is the case. Some that they will cite include:

1. The high value placed on the artistry and decorative aspect of the written word,
2. Trade and access to different art materials in the Islamic World,
3. Islam is an aniconic religion (depictions of human beings are forbidden in Islamic religious art)
4. Islamic religious worship necessitates different art forms.
5. Art forms in the Islamic world are often functional. Traditionally Western art forms, painting and sculpture, are non-functional.

Students will also learn that art forms delegated to 'craft' in the Western World, and traditionally created by women, were art forms of the highest regard in the Islamic World and practiced by the most renowned artists.

Procedure: Students will learn about key examples of art and craft items from the Islamic World, including textiles, rugs, painted ceramics, painted glass lanterns. Through class discussion, students will learn the key artistic elements of these pieces as well as aspects of their historical context. For extra credit, class members will have the option to spend one class day at the Ackland Art Museum, where they will see Islamic crafts on display. The Ackland Art Museum has an excellent collection of traditional Islamic crafts in their permanent collection. It can be hard to schedule a field trip at the Ackland Museum because parking is a challenge during the week.

Follow-up and Assessment: Students that participate in this field trip will complete a short writing assignment in which they describe their experience seeing Islamic crafts in the museum. The writing assignment will include some art analysis but will emphasize self-reflection. Many students will not have previously seen traditional art forms from outside the Western World in real-life.

Resources:

Ackland Art Museum. *5 Faiths Project*. Chapel Hill, NC, 2017. Website. <http://ackland.org/five-faiths-project/>

Ackland Art Museum. "Court and Capital: Art from Asia's Greatest Cities." Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 2017.

Ackland Art Museum. "Permanent Collection." Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

The Ackland Museum of Art also has a few examples of contemporary Islamic Art. A well-known work is: *Converging Territories* by Laila Essaydi. Ackland Museum of Art, Chapel Hill, NC. Photography.

5. Title: Architecture

Objective: Students will learn to identify the key architectural forms and artistic elements in Islamic architecture. Students will also identify and contextualize influence between Islamic and Christian architectural forms built during the Medieval period.

Procedure: This activity will take place during the unit on Architecture. Students will first learn both the function and traditional architectural elements of an Islamic Mosque. Students will then learn about two mosques in different regions of the Islamic World: the Suleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul and the Great Mosque of Cordoba in Spain.

Suleymaniye Mosque: Students will be introduced to the Byzantine Church, Hagia Sophia, in historic Constantinople (modern day Istanbul). They will then learn that when the Eastern Roman Empire fell to the Ottoman Empire, the Ottomans modelled all mosques in the region after Hagia Sophia.

We will have just finished our unit on Islamic craft, so students will easily be able to articulate how the Ottomans adapted the Christian form to suit their artistic and craft traditions. (This includes focus on surface decoration through painted ceramic tiles decorated with geometric interlace and floral arabesques. Islamic mosques also feature written language used as a decorative element)

Great Mosque of Cordoba: Students will learn that there was much Islamic art influence on Christian Churches and Christian art Influence on Islamic Mosques during the Medieval Period in Europe. Students will first learn about the Great Mosque of Cordoba, created during the Islamic rule of Al-Andalus in Spain. Students will then see a variety of Pilgrimage Churches created in the same geographic region.

In a large group discussion, students will articulate artistic and architectural similarities between the two. Students will learn that this is a result of active travel during the Medieval Period. Both artists and Christian Pilgrims were travelling throughout Spain and France. These artistic travelers saw both types of architecture and ‘borrowed’ the artistic forms that they liked. It was also not unusual for artists to work on both Christian Churches and Islamic Mosques.

Follow-up and Assessment: Students will complete an informal writing assignment in which they select an Islamic Mosque or Christian Church from an approved list. Students will describe similarities and differences between the two forms and articulate reasons for those similarities and differences.

Resources:

Hillenbrand, Robert. *Islamic Art and Architecture*. Thames and Hudson, 1998.

Denny, Walter. *Iznik: The Artistry of Ottoman Ceramics*. Thames and Hudson, 2003.

Helpful online and print resources for Islamic Art and Culture:

Ackland Art Museum. *5 Faiths Project*. Chapel Hill, NC, 2017. Website. <http://ackland.org/five-faiths-project/>

Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. *Archnet*. Cambridge, 2014. Electronic Database.

Museum with no Frontiers. 2017. Electronic Database.

Hillenbrand, Robert. *Islamic Art and Architecture*. Thames and Hudson, 1998.

Metropolitan Museum of Art. *Heilbrun Timeline of Art History*. New York, 2017. Website.

Metropolitan Museum of Art. Islamic Collection. www.metmuseum.org

Robery Hoyland. *In God's Path: The Making of Islamic Civilization*. 2014.

Also: The Ackland Art Museum at UNC has an excellent and diverse collection of Islamic Art. The Book Arts Collection at the Hanes Art Library also contains 2 books by Islamic artists.