

Painting the Dirty Thirties: American Social Realism and the Depression

ACLT6251

Course Outline

Description: Social Realism was an art movement popular in the United States in the 1930s and 40s. The realistic style focused on social and political issues that directly affected the daily lives of the working class and other oppressed groups during a dark historical period. This slide-illustrated course will examine the movement by discussing its European origins, historical context, stylistic and thematic features, and the famous artists who practiced it, including Ben Shahn, Grant Wood, Edward Hopper, and Raphael Soyer.

Course Goals: To make students aware of the historical and artistic significance of the American Social Realist Style and selected artists who practiced it.

Course Objectives: At the completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Understand the historical and artistic origins, subject matter, and stylistic elements of Social Realism
2. Identify some reasons that selected artists were attracted to the movement
3. Demonstrate some biographical and artistic knowledge about these artists
4. Offer reasons for the movement's demise and identify its legacy

Texts: None required.

Attendance Requirements: Students must miss no more than two classes to receive a completion for this course. A grade report can be printed from myWCS.

Code of Student Conduct: The purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is to define the general standard of conduct expected of students registered at Western University, provide examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this standard of conduct, provide examples of sanctions that may be imposed, and set out the disciplinary procedures that the University will follow. For the complete Code of Student Conduct: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>.

Course Schedule:

WEEK 1: What is Social Realism?

WEEK 2: Who Did Social Realism Attract?

WEEK 3: Artists: Theresa. Bernstein; William Gropper; Ben Shahn; Grant Wood

WEEK 4: Artists: Edward Hopper; Moses Soyer; Raphael Soyer; Isaac Soyer

WEEK 5: Artists: Philip Evergood; Jack Levine; Arthur Rothstein; Walker Evans

WEEK 6: The Demise of Social Realism and its Legacy