

ACLT6205 Impressionism: A Pretty Radical Style

Course Outline

Description:

Impressionism was a French, anti-establishment style of the late 19th century which asserted completely new and scandalous ideas about art. Although we see it now as a relatively conservative style of tranquility and beauty, it defied all of the conventional artistic approaches of its time. Examine popular works by Monet, Renoir, and Degas, and learn about how these artists, and many other Impressionists, turned the art world on its head! Learn why a style, which lasted a relatively short period, has made such a lasting "impression."

Course Goals:

To familiarize students with the specific stylistic and thematic characteristics of Impressionist art and the major artists who created it, and why the movement was deemed scandalous at the end of the 19th century.

Course Objectives:

At the completion of this course, the student will be able to identify some reasons for the rise and fall of impressionism, identify the various features of the style that made it distinctive, and recognize some of the major works of famous artists of the movement.

Attendance Requirements:

There are no completion requirements for this course and no record of attendance will be provided.

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>.

Western Continuing Studies

Course Schedule:

WEEK 1: Introduction/The Style of Impressionism

a) Stylistic Elements

-concern for light and colour, and for capturing a fleeting moment in time by blurring images and using "broken" brushstrokes.

-the influence of photography is also evident in the cropping of images.

b) Impressionism as Compared with the Academic Style

-the academic style called for large works which were highly polished (no visible brushstrokes), and which emphasized a psychological meaning. The inclusion of human figures was important to show the artist's skill at depicting anatomy. Impressionists were against the academic approach.

c) The Influence of Romanticism

-Romanticism (1800-1850) was more concerned with colour than draftsmanship. Romantic artists such as Constable and Turner came to influence the Impressionists.

WEEK 2: The Subject Matter of Impressionism

a) The Popularity of Genre Scenes

-Impressionists preferred genre scenes and landscapes because they could be completed en-plein-air (in open air, or on the spot). Outdoor scenes, in particular, exploited the use of light and colour.

-cafe scenes, women enjoying leisure activities, mothers and their children, and landscapes were all popular imagery.

b) A Brief History of Genre Painting

-genre painting first gained popularity in 17th-century Holland, but lost its importance in the Neoclassical period of the late 18th-early 19th centuries. Realism (1840-1880) popularized genre painting again, which influenced the Impressionists.

WEEK 3: Impressionist Artists

a) Artists: Monet, Morisot, Renoir, Manet

WEEK 4: Impressionist Artists Continued

a) Artists: Degas, Gonzales, Cassatt, Boudin, Pissarro, Sisley

WEEK 5: Transition from Impressionism to Post-Impressionism

a) Artists: Seurat, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cezanne

-Impressionism ended for political and artistic reasons. In terms of the latter, Post-Impressionists typically passed through an Impressionist phase, but rejected aspects of the style. To attain greater meaning, they desired art that was more solid in its appearance (Seurat, Cezanne) and colour that was interpretive rather than descriptive (Van Gogh, Gauguin).

WEEK 6: The Rise and Fall of Impressionism in Canada

a) Artists: Paul Peel; William Blair Bruce, William Brymner, Maurice Cullen, John Sloan Gordon, Robert Harris, Laura Lyall, Suzor-Cote, Helen Galloway McNicoll; Group of Seven

-The rise and fall of Impressionism followed a similar pattern in Canada as it did in Europe; however, the movement came to Canada significantly later. We see it here by the middle 1890s, years after the movement had already ended in France. I hope that you enjoy the course!