This course provides an introduction to the painting, sculpture, photography, graphic art and decorative arts of North America, primarily the United States, from the Colonial Period until World War II. Beginning with imagery of contact and conquest throughout the continent, the course will go on to trace visual culture’s contribution to the conceptualization of an American national identity in the during the Federal and Antebellum periods, the Civil War, Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, and the early twentieth century. Most lectures are thematic. Some provide an in-depth analysis of one or two artists and other survey a wider field. Among the topics considered will be the course of various genres of painting (such as portraiture, history painting and landscape), the emergence of American artistic institutions including schools, museums and criticism, the role of visual culture in constructing meanings of race, class and gender, and the relationship between visual culture and national identity. Artists discussed will include (but not be limited to) Benjamin West, John Singleton Copley, Thomas Cole, Lilly Martin Spencer, Harriet Powers, Rafael Aragon, Robert Duncanson, Frederick Church, Winslow Homer, Thomas Eakins, James MacNeill Whistler, Mary Cassatt, Thomas Moran, Henry Ossawa Tanner, Emily Carr and Eadweard Muybridge. Readings draw heavily on primary sources to give students a feel for how artists and critics described their historical situations. Be forewarned that I often begin class with a writing exercise or discussion question based on the reading for that day.

Lectures are supplemented by a weekly discussion session in which students will critically respond to readings and works of art. The class will take two field trips to view original works of art in different contexts.

Students who keep up with the readings and assignments should achieve three goals: to become familiar with works of art being studied; to be able to articulate their thoughts about art clearly and thoughtfully in written and verbal contexts; and to increase their skills in thinking critically about art and culture. I am happy to address questions about the content, assignments or approach of the class by e-mail or in office hours at any time during the semester.

TEXTBOOKS
The following books have been placed on reserve at Avery library. The first book is also available for purchase at Labyrinth books on 112th street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue


There is also a course reader, which is available for purchase in the Barnard Art History Office (301 Barnard Hall).
REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES
Writing Assignments: Four assignments involving looking and/or reading will be distributed over the course of the semester. Students must complete three of these assignments (the first assignment must be completed by everyone) by the due dates listed in the course calendar. Assignments turned in after the due date will be marked down. Students with a valid medical or scheduling reason may request an extension from the section leader up to two weekdays before the assignment is due.

Exams: The examinations will include 10 identifications and an essay that draws on readings and class discussions related to that half of the semester. All images used for the identifications will come from the online gallery.

Class Participation: Active participation in discussions is expected. Students will be evaluated on both the quality and the quantity of their participation.

Field Trips: We will be taking two field trips. The first will be to the Sanford Gifford exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum. The second (date tba) will be a walking tour of the architecture and urban spaces of downtown New York. While I understand that everyone is quite busy, I expect each student to attend at least one of the two. Participation in discussion on these trips will be factored into the class participation grade.

Absences: Because classes include lectures on slide images that may not be available for study elsewhere, and because class time will include formal and informal discussion as well as lectures, it is important that students attend class and discussion section and participate regularly in order to fully understand the material. Students who are absent for any reason should obtain notes from a colleague. Students with excessive absences (3 or more) should not have unreasonable expectations about their grade.

Etiquette: All students are expected to regard the professor and other students with respect and to restrict any disruption of class to absolute emergencies. Please arrive and depart on time, turn cell phones off before entering the classroom and refrain from taking breaks during our brief time together.

GRADUATE STUDENTS: Graduate students enrolling in this course will have slightly different requirements including a research paper. Please see me after the first class.

EVALUATION
In general, a grade of “C” indicates adequate mastery of the material and merely competent written and oral presentation; a “B” shows additional effort, with full understanding of the data and concepts, clear and well-produced written work and regular class participation; an “A” is reserved for those students producing superior work, which includes a full comprehension of materials accompanied by thoughtful, well-written papers that go beyond the assignment and exceptional class participation.

Final Grades will be computed roughly as follows:

- 10% First paper
- 20% Second paper
- 20% Midterm
- 20% Third paper
- 20% Final exam
- 10% Class participation

HELPFUL HINTS
Know your syllabus. There are heavy readings for some days so don’t leave it all until the night before. Come to class having read and thought about the reading assigned for that day.

Start your writing assignments early enough to revise.

Take notes in lectures and discussions. Pay close attention to the images shown and how they are analyzed. My lectures frequently bring together artists and concepts that dealt with separately or not at all in the readings. Good lecture notes will provide you with the opportunity to compare and evaluate the interpretations I present and those in
the texts assigned. This will be essential practice for the final exam and for formulating your own arguments in your papers. A guide to taking notes in art history courses can be found on my webpage.

Go to museums and galleries as often as you can. There is no substitute for looking at the real object and we live in one of the best places for doing this. In addition to the assigned trip to the Metropolitan Museum, you should make time to visit some of the following, each of which has a strong collection of American works from the period being studied: Whitney, Cooper-Hewitt, Brooklyn Museum, International Center for Photography, National Museum of the American Indian at the Heye Center, New York Historical Society, the Hispanic Society of America and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, El Museo del Barrio, Guggenheim, Studio Museum in Harlem. Links to the webpages of these institutions can be found on my webpage.

If you are having a problem of any kind with the course, see me right away--there is almost always time to solve problems early on.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
I am happy to make academic adjustments for qualified students with disabilities. Please contact me as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner. Handouts are available in alternative accessible formats upon request.

IMPORTANT DATES
September 18  First Paper Due
October 7  Drop Deadline
October 9  Second Paper Due
October 16  Midterm
October 30  Third Paper Due
November 3/4  Academic Holiday
November 13  Last Day to declare P/D/F or withdraw
November 20  Fourth Paper Due
November 27  Thanksgiving
TBA  Final exam

SCHEDULE OF LECTURE/DISCUSSION TOPICS

September 2:  Introduction to American visual culture

September 4:  Visualizing the New World
Read:  Prown, “Mind in Matter”
Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind* (selection in reader)
Recommended:  Berlo and Phillips, chapters 1-3

NOTE: Please read the textbook as appropriate throughout the semester.

September 9:  Colonial portraiture
Read:  Copley, “Correspondence”
Lovell, "Reading Eighteenth-Century American Family Portraits "

September 11:  Spanish Colonial Religious Art
Read:  Steele, *Santos and Saints* (selection in course reader)

September 16:  Africans in America
Read:  Patton, Chapter One

September 18:  The Visual Culture of Revolutionary History
Read:  Boime, “Blacks in Shark-Infested Waters”
First Paper DUE

September 23:  Thomas Cole and the Landscape Tradition
Read: Cole, “Essay on American Scenery”
Irving, “Rip Van Winkle”

September 25: Western Adventures: Catlin, Kane and Audobon
Read: Catlin, “Letters from the Mouth of the Yellowstone”
Limerick, “The Persistence of Natives”
Recommended: Berlo and Phillips, chapter 4

September 30: American types and Cultural Politics
Read: Johns, American Genre Painting: The Politics of Everyday Life

October 2: The Domestic and the Picturesque
Read: Lubin, “Lilly Martin Spencer”
Beecher, American Woman’s Home

October 7: Race, gender, and Ideal sculpture
Read: Patton, Chapter Two (reserve)
Hatt, “Making a Man of Him”

October 9: Journeys
Read: Avery, “Heart of the Andes”
Melville, Moby Dick (selection in the reader)
Second Paper due

October 14: 1848

October 16: Midterm

October 21: Picturing War
Read: Trachtenberg, “Albums of War” (course reader)

October 23: Surveying the West
Read: Anderson, “Kiss of Enterprise” (course reader)

October 28: The Arts of the Reservation
Read: Berlo, Plains Indian Drawing
Recommended: Berlo and Phillips, chapter 7

October 30: Class Canceled due to Field Trip

November 4: Academic Holiday

November 6: Whistler and Aestheticism
Read: James, “The Real Thing”
Third Paper Due

November 11: Gender at Work: Eakins and Cassatt
Read: Berger, Man Made (selection in course reader)
“Thomas Eakins: on his teaching methods”

November 13: Trompe L’Oeil and other visual pleasures
Read: Staiti, “Illusionism, Trompe-L’Oeil and the Perils of Viewership”

November 18: Modernisms and Modernity
November 20:  Documentaries
Read:  Stange, *Symbols of Ideal Life* (section in the reader)
Fourth Paper Due

November 25:  American Avant-Gardes
Read:  Corn, *Great American Thing* (section in the reader)
   Henri, “The New York Exhibition of Independent Artists”
   Cox, “The ‘Modern’ Spirit in Art”

November 27:  No Class-Thanksgiving

December 2:  The Harlem Renaissance
Read:  Patton, Chapter Three
   Locke, “The Legacy of Ancestral Arts”

December 4:  Muralism
Read:  Rivera, “The Radio City Mural,” *Workers Age*

TBA:  FINAL EXAM REVIEW
TBA:  FINAL EXAM