

northwestern university
DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY

Quarter/Year

Spring 2019

Course Number

ART-HIST 460

Day/Time

M 2-5

Instructor

Kiaer

Course Title

Studies in 20th Century Art: Picasso: A Focus for Method



In art history as in popular culture, approached with veneration or condemnation, Picasso is synonymous with the idea of modern art. Examining Picasso's work from his early scenes of bohemian Paris to his engagement with primitivism, his invention of cubism, his association with the surrealists, his protest mural *Guernica* of 1937, and his later communist-inspired mural projects, we will ask: What makes Picasso such a powerful sign of the modern? Engaging the Picasso historiography is to engage in a focused way with the methods of modernist art history and its critics. Readings include texts by contemporaries like Gertrude Stein, Carl Einstein, and Georges Bataille, the social art history of John Berger, classic modernist texts by

Clement Greenberg and Leo Steinberg, semiotic readings by Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, post-colonialist revisions by Simon Gikandi, Patricia Leighton and Christopher Green, feminist critiques by Carol Duncan and Anne Wagner, Michael Fitzgerald's economic analysis of prices and dealers, the literature on *Guernica* including Marxist critics of the 1930s, Sarah Wilson's *Picasso/Marx*, and a special emphasis on T.J. Clark's extensive meditations on the artist and his modernism.

Required Textbooks

John Berger, *The Success and Failure of Picasso*, ISBN 0679737251

T.J. Clark, *Picasso and Truth: From Cubism to Guernica*, ISBN 0691157413

Assessments

Participation in class discussion, including presentations of readings and rotating leadership of class discussion; final research presentation and paper (ca. 12-15 pp).