INTRODUCTION TO MODERNISM

S. HOLLIS CLAYSON

The course will be a selective overview of modern art produced in and about three major cities of the United States and Europe – New York, Paris and London – between 1850 and 1950. We will also dip into early 20th-century developments in Italy and the USSR. During the century under study, self-consciously inventive art practices arose, called “modernist.” The course introduces and studies modernism, an important and contested way of labeling advanced art, and a term defined in divergent ways by different “experts.” Our special interest will be the connections between modernist art and modernity, or rather the social experience of industrialization, urbanization, high capitalism, mass commodity and entertainment culture, and all-out war. This is also the era that witnessed the consolidation of the modern art market. Some modernist art works responded optimistically to the conditions of modernity; others disavowed or criticized it witheringly. We will cover diverse artistic terrain from Impressionism and Cubism to Abstraction and Abstract Expressionism on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

WINTER 2014

MW 12:30-1:50 PM