Introduction to European Art

How did European art come to be “European art”? This course studies the early modern period, ca. 1400-1800, the time of formation of many of the standard conventions and genres of European art, such as linear perspective and landscape. The period also coincides with the beginnings of European exploration and colonization of other parts of the world. What, if any, is the relationship between these two phenomena? What is the relationship of art to power, knowledge, conflict, race, religious devotion, gender relations, and aspirations to freedom and self-expression? We will study key works of European art produced in what are conventionally called the “Renaissance” and “Baroque” eras, in dialogue with historical context and art objects produced around the globe. This course is intended as an introduction to the artworks and historical material covered in the class and to skills in visual analysis and historical interpretation. No prior art history coursework is required.

Required Textbooks

PDFs and other online readings. Optional: Gardner’s *Art Through the Ages* book D, Renaissance and Baroque (978-1285838014).

Assessments

Midterm, short papers, final exam