

Italian Treasures: Art & Architecture from Antiquity through the 20th Century

3 credits

Teacher responsible: Dr. Tiziana D'Angelo

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20 hours

DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the development of Italian art and architecture as a history of images, people and ideas. Ever since antiquity, the Italic peninsula served as an important cultural crossroads and its history is reflected in the monuments, paintings and sculptures that are still considered to be landmarks of Western art.

The course discusses material spanning three millennia, from Etruscan art through the avant-garde movements of the 20th century. Therefore, it is structured around a set of research questions which focus on the relationship between artists, works of art and their social, political and historical meaning and context. Students also have the opportunity of exploring the art-making process by learning about specific techniques, materials and styles.

The first part of the course investigates the origins of Italian art and follows its development in antiquity by looking at three important centres: Etruria, Roman Pompeii and Byzantine Ravenna. We then explore the spectacular achievements of Florentine Renaissance artists, discussing their friendships and rivalries as well as the role played by their patrons. Baroque and Neoclassical art are examined in connection with technical innovations and the Classical tradition. The last lectures focus on the impact that political ideologies and social concerns emerging in the 20th century had on artistic creativity and expression.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

This course aims to introduce students to the history of Italian art and, most importantly, provides them with a set of archaeological and art historical skills that will enable them to appreciate and analyse artistic monuments, use them in their research and think critically about Italian culture and history.

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

The first half of each lecture situates works of art within their cultural context, whereas the second half offers close examination of a single or a small group of pieces that can serve as case studies to acquire and practice skills of visual and historical analysis.

FINAL EVALUATION:

Students' final assessment will be based on class participation and an oral examination.