

# **ARA 294: Art and Visual Learning**

(3 credit hours)

by

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&

Hillary Andrelchik, Art Teacher & PhD Student

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# INTRODUCTION

## ***Course Description***

Art and Visual Learning is a broad ranging introduction to art and the visual world, which focuses on art and artifacts from diverse cultures and eras, various two and three-dimensional media, meaning and purpose in art, as well as community and internet art resources.

## ***Course Format***

The course has a lecture-discussion-workshop format supported with substantial online content materials. It is planned for two, 90-minute sessions each week, for a 15-week semester.

## ***Course Objectives***

- 1) Students reflect on the ideas from their own life experiences that influence their understanding of art.
- 2) Students use art vocabulary to describe, analyze, and compare a wide range of visual objects from museum art and public art to consumer crafts and product design.
- 3) Students explore and experiment with a variety of two and three dimensional art media.
- 4) Students investigate cultural, historical, and biographical information in order to better understand and appreciate art and artifacts made for diverse purposes throughout history and across cultures.
- 5) Students critically examine art resources in their community and on the Internet.

## ***Relationship Of The Course To The Overall Curriculum***

Elementary education majors, special education majors, and early childhood education majors need to be prepared to integrate art learning based on the Arizona Visual Arts Standards into their curriculum planning. ARA 294 provides basic art information and skills that they can use as a basis for that planning. As a designated Humanities elective students can satisfy an important general studies requirement while gaining a solid foundation in art understanding.

## ***Pedagogical Approaches***

Presentation of course content is focused in a major way on visual learning. Activities are designed to guide students in accessing their own prior knowledge and experience as a basis for introducing new concepts. Homework ensures that students apply new ideas and skills so that they can check their understanding and receive regular feedback on their learning. Major assignments require each student to engage in personal art inquiry by reflecting on his/her own artistic decision making and by constructing her/his own interpretation of a significant artwork.

## ***Textbook and Materials***

Barrett, T. (2011). *Making Art: Form and Meaning*, New York: McGraw Hill.

## ***Art Supplies and Equipment***

Set of 12 basic color pencils or crayons

Several colors of fine-tipped color markers

Soft graphite pencil

White glue or glue stick

Scissors

Set of eight colors of construction paper or other colored paper (You need only a few sheets of each color, so you might want to coordinate with several classmates to buy a packet of assorted colors.)

Sketchbook or pad or basic drawing paper or plain printer paper

Tracing paper (You need only a few sheets of each color, so you might want to coordinate with several classmates to buy a packet of assorted colors.)

Magazines for cutting up

# ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR EACH UNIT

## ***Introduction***

In the first unit of Art and Visual Learning (3 weeks) students reflect on how they respond to art and also consider basic ideas usually associated with art.

### Essential Questions

1. What range of ideas (viewpoints) do viewers commonly use to understand art?
2. What is the difference between a preference statement (I like it.) and a judgment (I have reached the conclusion that it is a good artwork)?
3. How do artworks express meaning (interpretation)?
4. What are significant differences between original artworks and reproductions?
5. Are all artworks representational? That is, do they all have subject matter?
6. What range of forms (painting, architecture, installation, etc.) can artworks take?
7. What are some of the major media and processes artists use to make art?

## ***Visual Elements***

In the second unit of Art and Visual Learning (3 1/2 weeks) students explore line, shape, mass, space, texture, value (light & dark), and color basics.

### Essential Questions

1. How have artists used points and lines to enhance the impact of their work?
2. How have artists used shape to enhance the impact of their work?
3. How have artists used mass and volume to enhance the impact of their work?
4. How have artists used space to enhance the impact of their work?
5. How have artists used texture to enhance the impact of their work?
6. How have artists used value (light & dark) to enhance the impact of their work?
7. How have artists used color to enhance the impact of their work?

## ***Compositional Principles***

In the third unit of Art and Visual Learning (2 weeks) students explore relationships (part to whole and part to part) within artworks.

### Essential Questions

1. How do artists balance variety and unity to create interesting and engaging artworks?
2. How do relationships in relative size contribute to the variety and unity of artworks?
3. How do artists use repetition and pattern in their work?
4. How do artists organize visual elements to draw viewers' attention to specific areas in their work?

## ***Cultural Context***

In the fourth unit of Art and Visual Learning (1 1/2 weeks) students consider the influence of various contexts both on artists' decision making and viewers' responses to artworks.

### Essential Questions

1. How can factors of time and place affect what an artist makes and how an artwork is understood?
2. How can the function or purpose of an artwork affect what an artist makes and how an artwork is understood?
3. How can the context in which an artwork is exhibited affect what an artist makes and how an artwork is understood?

## ***Broad Themes In Art History***

In the fifth unit of Art and Visual Learning (1 1/2 weeks) students explore six broad themes addressed by many artworks throughout history (and prehistory) and globally across diverse cultures.

### Essential Questions

1. Why have virtually all indigenous peoples from prehistory to the present valued art as essential to their lives and cultures?
2. What role has religion played in the history of art?
3. How have artworks helped to maintain power and status in diverse cultures?
4. How have artists contributed to revolutions?
5. How was the individual understood differently during the modern art era than in previous eras in the history of art?
6. What is postmodern art and how does it differ from modern art?

## ***Personal Inquiry In Art***

In the sixth and final unit of Art and Visual Learning (3 1/2 weeks) students continue to inquire 1) through reflecting on their own art making, by revisiting a process they tried earlier in the course, and 2) by constructing their own interpretation of an artwork they selected early in the course.

### Essential Questions

1. What sort of decisions do artists make throughout the artistic process?
2. What do artists have to say about their own art?
3. What makes some interpretations of artworks better than others?
4. What sort of support can be gathered to construct a convincing interpretation?

# ACCOUNT OF ASSIGNMENTS

## ***My Art Understanding***

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Students apply the Viewpoints Theory of Art Understanding to their own responses to art, identify specific Viewpoints they tend to use, and demonstrate their understanding of the Viewpoints they use with specific examples.
2. Students relate the Viewpoints they use to prior personal and/or cultural experiences that may have influenced them.

### ASSIGNMENT:

- A. Choose two images to use for this assignment and throughout the semester. One should be an artwork from your textbook. The other should be commercially designed image, for example, a CD or DVD cover or print advertisement.
- B. Complete the online Arizona Viewpoint Collaborative tool four times:
  1. Two times with artworks selected from the choices on the Arizona Viewpoints Collaborative
  2. Once with the artwork you selected from the textbook
  3. Once with the commercial image you selected.
  4. Print out or record the results of your four uses of the Arizona Viewpoint Collaborative tool.
- C. Read "Viewpoints: How We Understand Art" (pdf)
- D. Write a one or two-page paper:
  1. How accurately do you think the results of your four online Viewpoints results were? Explain, giving examples.
  2. Explain some of the factors you think affect how you respond to artworks, giving examples beyond the four required in "B" above. For example, personal or cultural life experiences or previous art making or viewing experiences.

## ***Reproduction Vs. Original***

### OBJECTIVE:

1. Students differentiate between original artworks and reproductions by describing specific features in the originals that are not visible in the reproductions.

### ASSIGNMENT:

- A. Locate a local or regional art museum (or other location where you can see original artworks) that you can visit specifically for this assignment, not from memory. You will need a reproduction of an artwork that is on display at the art museum, for example a printout from the museum's website, a postcard, or a reproduction in a brochure (not your own photo). You might need to contact the museum to be sure the artwork is currently on display in museum, not in storage.
- B. Visit the museum. Bring the reproduction with you so you can compare it directly to the original artwork in preparation of your paper.

C. Write a one-page paper

1. Identify the artist (if possible), title, medium, and size.
2. Identify the museum where you saw the original artwork and the date of your visit.
3. Identify the type of reproduction you are using, for example, printout, postcard, photocopy, or image from a brochure.
4. Describe, in detail, specific difference between the original and the reproduction. Do not generalize. Be sure to note specific features you see in the original that are not visible in the reproduction.

### ***Visual Connections Presentation***

OBJECTIVES:

- 1: Students explain and describe shared visual features or concepts (art forms, media, subject matter, or elements and principles, contexts, etc.) in diverse artworks.
2. Students create online presentations that demonstrate their understanding of shared visual features through the use of text and images of artworks.

ASSIGNMENT:

- A. Select a visual from class around which to develop an online presentation, such as (art forms, media, subject matter, or elements and principles).
- B. Register at ArtsConnectEd (<http://www.artsconnected.org/>) and explore how to find artworks and prepare an online presentation.
- C. Search for artworks related to your visual feature and choose 6-10 good examples.
- D. Create a presentation to demonstrate your understanding of the visual feature and how it is present in all the artworks.
- E. Add text to describe your choices and demonstrate your understanding.

### ***Reflection on Artistic Decision Making***

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students explain and described their choice of medium.
2. Students explain and describe their choice of subject matter.
3. Students analyze the visual elements and principles they used and how those elements and principles affected their artwork.
4. Students explain influences of culture or art history on their work.
5. Students propose and explain possible uses for their art making abilities in their own lives/classrooms.

ASSIGNMENT:

- A. Create one artwork (8" X 10").
  1. Any media/technique explored in class
  2. Any subject matter of your choosing
  3. Demonstration of understanding of visual elements and composition principles discussed in class
- B. Write a reflection on your art making process that includes:

1. Explanation of why you chose the medium
  2. Explanation of why you chose the subject matter
  3. Discussion of form (visual elements and composition principles)
    - i. Three main elements or principles used
    - ii. How they affect the artwork
    - iii. Why you chose those three elements or principles
  4. Discussion of how cultural or art historical context/s affect the final artwork
- C. Reflect on the art making process.
1. How has your experience changed through the semester?
  2. How can you use this knowledge in your own personal/classroom lives?

### ***Interpretation of an Artwork***

#### OBJECTIVES:

1. Students propose persuasive interpretations of artworks.
2. Students explain and describe how the subject matter, if any, contributes to the meaning. *[This objective does not apply to students who interpret an artwork that does not have subject matter.]*
3. Students explain the effects of an artwork's medium on visual features of that artwork.
4. Students explain how the selection and organization of visual elements in artworks contribute to the works' moods, messages, or meanings.
5. Students use art historical and cultural contexts to help explain the significance of artworks.
6. Students describe and explain their evolving response to artworks over time.
7. Students explain and describe connections between artworks and aspects of their own culture.

#### ASSIGNMENT:

- A. Re-interpret your Key Artwork.
1. Complete a written version of your interpretation of the Key Artwork you've been studying throughout the course (the artwork about which you write your "Initial Interpretation").
  2. Create a poster/presentational version of your interpretation.
    - a. Can be done using poster board or on PowerPoint (depending on classroom projection facilities).
- B. Complete a written paper about your interpretation to include
1. a color reproduction of the Key Artwork
  2. sections which deal with:
    - a. Subject
      - i. What, if anything, is depicted in the artwork?
    - b. Medium
      - i. Identify and discuss media/medium from which Key Artwork is made.

- ii. Identify and discuss the techniques that were used to create the Key Artwork.
  - c. Form (Visual Elements and Composition Principles)
    - i. Identify and discuss the three visual elements or composition principles that are most clearly/prominently displayed in the Key Artwork.
    - ii. Explain why/how these elements or principles are used, and why they are important to the overall artwork.
  - d. Contexts
    - i. Identify and discuss the art historical context/s to which the Key Artwork most appropriately relates and how.
    - ii. Identify and discuss each of the three cultural contexts (time or place, function or purpose, and exhibition context) and how they relate to Key Artwork.
- 3. Reflection
  - a. Discuss why you chose the Key Artwork at the beginning of the course, and how/if your feelings towards the artwork have changed.
  - b. Explain how this artwork relates to your own culture.
  - c. Discuss any other thoughts/ reflections on this artwork and course content.

C. Create a poster/presentation of your interpretation to share with the class in a round-table poster session. Include a color reproduction of the Key Artwork and 3-4 of the details you feel are most important from B 1 & 2 above.

## **ACCOUNT OF GRADING**

5% = My Art Understanding

10% = Reproduction Vs. Original

10% = Visual Connections Presentation

20% = Reflection on Artistic Decision Making

20% = Interpretation of an Artwork

25% = Thoughtful application of course content demonstrated in homework assignments

10% = Active, focused participation in in-class individual and group activities

100%

# ARIZONA PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS

**Standard 5: The teacher collaborates with colleagues, parents, the community and other agencies to design, implement, and support learning programs that develop students' abilities to meet Arizona's academic standards and transition from school to work or post-secondary education.**

The performance assessment shall measure the extent to which the teacher:

3. Accesses community resources and services to foster student learning
  - *In ARA 294, students explore local/regional art institutions (such as an art or history museum, or a community arts center) in order to identify qualities in original artworks that are not visible in reproductions.*
  - *Throughout ARA 294, students locate educational webpages of local/regional art institutions, including instructional resources for elementary students.*

**Standard 7: The teacher has general academic knowledge as demonstrated by the attainment of a bachelor's degree. The teacher also has specific academic knowledge in his or her subject area or areas sufficient to develop student knowledge and performance to meet Arizona academic standards**

The subject knowledge assessment shall measure the extent to which the teacher has knowledge of:

1. Skills and concepts related to the subject area
  - a. At the elementary level, the teacher demonstrates knowledge of language arts and reading, math, science, social studies, and fine arts.
    - *In ARA 294, within the fine arts, students explore a wide range of visual art forms.*
2. Major facts and assumptions that are central to the discipline
  - *In every session of ARA 294, students are introduced to key concepts in the visual arts and apply them to a variety of artworks.*
3. Debates and the processes of inquiry that are central to the discipline
  - *In ARA 294, students are introduced to and explore current trends in art education, such as visual culture education, constructivist art interpretation, and diverse cultural inclusion.*
4. Integration of disciplinary knowledge with other subject areas

- *In ARA 294, students expand their art vocabulary as a basis for improved reading and writing. (language arts)*
- *In ARA 294, students investigate relationships between artworks and the cultures within which they were produced. (history and social studies)*
- *In ARA 294, students gather evidence to support conclusions and build arguments to support their interpretations. (science and mathematics)*

# ARIZONA VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS

## **Strand 1: Create**

Student will create artworks to communicate ideas, meanings, and/or purposes.

### **Strand 1: Create: Concept #1: Creative Process**

Develop, revise, and reflect on ideas for expression in personal work.

- *In ARA 294 the major assignment, "Reflection on Artistic Decision Making," requires students to 1) reflect on their own artistic decision making using a medium they select early in the course, 2) continue their reflection on art making throughout the course, and finally, 3) create and analyze their artistic choices in making a small artwork at the end of the course.*

## **Strand 2: Relate**

Student will analyze and interpret contextual ideas, meanings, and purposes of art from diverse cultures and time periods.

### **Strand 2: Relate: Concept #1: Artworlds**

Describe the role that art plays in culture and how it reflects, records, and interacts with history in various times, places, and traditions.

- *In ARA 294 unit 4, "Cultural Contexts," and unit 5, "Broad Themes of Art History," focus on the interaction of art and culture and on dominant art traditions throughout history and across cultures.*

## **Strand 3: Evaluate**

Student will draw thoughtful conclusions about the significance of art.

### **Strand 3 Evaluate: Concept #1: Art Issues and Values**

Justify general conclusions about the nature and value of art.

- *At the beginning of ARA 294, students write analyses that identify the ideas they tend to use to understand art. They also consider their own art preferences (what they like) in comparison to their own art judgments (conclusions about what they think is good art).*

### **Strands 1, 2, and 3 Concept #2: Materials, Tools, and Techniques**

Use materials, tools, and techniques in his or her own artwork.

- *In ARA 294, two sessions, "Art Forms" and "Media and Processes," focus specifically on art materials, tools, and techniques. Additionally, several activities and homework assignments in unit 2, "Visual Elements," and unit*

3, "Composition Principles" ask students to use art materials and tools to demonstrate their understanding of elements and principles.

### **Strands 1, 2, and 3 Concept #3: Elements and Principles**

Use elements and principles of design in their own artwork.

- *In unit 2, "Visual Elements," students explore and use elements of design, including line shape, mass, space, texture, and color.*
- *In unit 3, "Composition Principles," students explore and use principles of design, including unity, variety, balance, scale and proportion, repetition and pattern, and focal point.*

### **Strands 1, 2, and 3 Concept #4: Meanings and Purposes**

Express ideas to communicate meanings and purposes in artworks.

- *Week 10 session B in ARA 294, "Functions and Purposes," focuses on how artists are influenced by the function or purpose of their art.*
- *In the ARA 294 major assignment, "Reflection on Art Making Decisions," students consider what they are attempting to express in their own art work.*
- *In the ARA 294 major assignment, "Interpretation of an Artwork" each student constructs his/her own interpretation of a significant artwork s/he has selected for consideration throughout the course.*

### **Strands 1, 2, and 3 Concept #5: Quality**

Apply criteria to assess the quality of in-process and finished artwork.

- *In the ARA 294 major assignment, "Reflection on Art Making Decisions," students 1) begin early in the course by selecting a medium, 2) follow through with experimentation in media throughout the semester, and 3) finally produce their own final work and assess its quality at the end of the course.*

# NATIONAL VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS

## **Content Standard #1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes**

### ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS:

Students know the differences between materials, techniques, and processes.  
Students describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses.

Students use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories.

Students use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner.

- In ARA 294, students explore a variety of two and three-dimensional art media and processes.
- In homework assignments, students practice using a variety of media and techniques.
- One of five major assignments requires students to make an artwork and reflect on the choice of medium in their own artistic decision making.

## **Content Standard #2: Using knowledge of structures and functions**

### ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS:

Students know the differences among visual characteristics and purposes of art in order to convey ideas.

Students describe how different expressive features and organizational principles cause different responses.

Students use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas.

- In ARA 294, two of six units focus on visual elements and organizational principles.
- Students explore how function and purpose affect how artworks are made and understood.
- One of five major assignments requires students to make an artwork and reflect on their choice of visual elements and principles in their own artistic decision making.
- One of five major assignments requires students to interpret an artwork using visual elements and principles (among other features of the artwork) to support their interpretations.

## **Content Standard #3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas**

### ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS:

Students explore and understand prospective content for works of art.

Students select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning.

- In ARA 294, students explore how artworks represent people, places, and things through a range of subject matter with different degrees of realism from realistic to highly abstracted.
- One of five major assignments requires students to make an artwork and reflect on their choice of subject matter in their artistic decisions.
- One of five major assignments requires students to interpret an artwork using subject matter, if any, (among other features of the artwork) to support their interpretations.

#### **Content Standard #4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures**

##### **ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS:**

Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures.

Students identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times, and places.

Students demonstrate how history, culture, and the visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art.

- In ARA 294, two of six units focus on cultural and historical contexts and how they influence both art making and art understanding.
- One of five major assignments requires students to make an artwork and reflect on the influence of their culture or art historical knowledge on their own artistic decision making.
- One of five major assignments requires students to interpret an artwork using cultural and/or historical context (among other factors) to support their interpretations.

#### **Content Standard #5: Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others**

##### **ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS:**

Students understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art. Students describe how people's experiences influence the development of specific artworks.

Students understand there are different responses to specific artworks.

- ARA 294, begins by exploring a variety of criteria used to assess the merits of diverse artworks and by asking students to describe and reflect on their own art preferences and the bases of their own art judgments.
- Students explore functions and purposes of artwork today and through time across cultures.

#### **Content Standard #6: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines**

##### **ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS:**

Students understand and use similarities and differences between characteristics of the visual arts and other arts disciplines.

Students identify connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum.

- Throughout ARA 294, social studies, language arts, and argumentation are integrated within activities and information presented.
- One of five major assignments requires students to make an artwork and reflect on their own artistic decision making and also to specifically propose and explain possible uses for their art making abilities in their own lives and classrooms.

## REFERENCES

### **Books**

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### **Websites**

ArtsConnectEd

<http://www.artsconnected.org/>

Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the Walker Art Center

Google Art

<http://www.googleartproject.com/>

Museum of Modern Art (MOMA)

<http://www.moma.org/>

start at "Collection"

LA County Museum of Art (LACMA)

<http://www.lacma.org/>

start at "Collection"

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

<http://www.metmuseum.org/>

Has World Maps, Timelines, Thematic Essays, Works of Art, Index (by artist)

Tempe Center for the Arts

<http://www.tempe.gov/TCA/Gallery/Education/default.htm>

“Gallery” “Education”

The Getty Center

<http://www.getty.edu/art/>

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