

Center for
GLOBAL EDUCATION
and EXPERIENCE

ART 231

Pre-Columbian, Colonial, and Contemporary Mexican Art

Liberal Arts Foundation (general education) requirement: ART/SPA 231 meets the LAF in Fine Arts requirement for Augsburg students.

Fine Arts LAF Statement: All peoples everywhere, have an abiding need for meaning - to connect time and space, experience and event, body and spirit, intellect and emotion. People create art to describe, define and deepen human experience. Because the arts are one of humanity's deepest rivers of continuity, the study of the Fine Arts is fundamental in a liberal arts education. As a liberal arts foundation course in the Fine Arts, this course will examine the arts as creative expression of the human imagination through activities such as creation, historical study and critical analysis.

The Fine Arts are traditionally defined in include dance, music, theatre and visual arts. Augsburg's Fine Arts departments are Art, Music, and Theatre. There is also an emerging Film Studies program. These four disciplines engage very different realms of knowledge, sets of skills, techniques and modes of discourse, but all share a common goal of rigorous inquiry into the ways artistic expression can record, discover and creatively express the truths of human experience.

Course Description

This course enables students to develop an understanding and appreciation of Mexican art from its origins to the contemporary period. The study of Pre-Columbian civilizations is a key element of the course, as it enables students to understand the development of diverse cultures and their abilities to transform their environment. Through the study of neo-indigenous colonial art, students will be able to observe the ways in which the indigenous assimilated Spanish colonial art influences in their own particular and unique forms.

During the colonial period, the Spanish influence was dominant and imposed over native art forms. Many artists arrived from Spain to the New World and created workshops and taught the native inhabitants the models and styles of the Iberian Peninsula, including gothic, renaissance, baroque, neoclassic styles.

During the contemporary period of Mexican art, students will study the great Mexican muralists, such as Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Jose Clemente Orozco, as well as other artists, such as Frida Kahlo. They will analyze the influences of earlier periods on the contemporary artists and identify key characteristics of Mexican art.

The course comprises a visual and historical tour of three periods of Mexican art:

- 1) The Prehispanic period: the preclassic, classic and postclassic periods in Mesoamerica (Olmecas, Teotihuacan, Toltecas, Zapotecas, Mayas, Aztecs and Tarascos)
- 2) The Baroque-colonial period
- 3) The Contemporary period, with special emphasis on the muralists

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The course will use experiential pedagogy, so it will include excursions to many museum as well as archaeological and historical sites. Field trips will most likely include:

- Xochicalco pyramids
- Teotihuacan pyramids
- Templo Mayor in Mexico City
- National Anthropology Museum in Mexico City
- An excursion to baroque churches and museums in and around Puebla
- The Ex-Hacienda de Cortez
- The National Art Museum in Mexico City
- The Fine Arts Palace in Mexico City
- Murals by Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Jose Clemente Orozco

The course will try to answer the following questions:

- What do we call art?
- How can you recognize the different periods of prehispanic art?
- Where and when did these prehispanic cultures flourish?
- What are the key characteristics/traits of the Mexican Baroque period?
- Who are the most representative artists, and what are the most representative works of art from the Mexican Baroque period?
- What was the historical context in which each work of art you see took place in terms of architecture and painting?
- What are the key characteristics/traits of the Mexican muralist movement?

Primary Texts

Fernández, Justino. Translated by Joshua C. Taylor. *A Guide to Mexican Art. From Its Beginnings to the Present*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969. ISBN: 978-022-6244-211.

Helm, MacKinley. *Mexican Painters: Rivera, Orozco, Siqueiros and Other Artists of the Social Realist School*. NY: Dover Publications, 1968. ISBN-13: 978-0486260280.

The instructor will also compile a reading packet that students will be given after arrival in Mexico.

Course Goals

The student will:

- 1) Identify different Mexican artistic expressions from the prehispanic period through the 20th century.
- 2) Appreciate the aesthetic value and their historical legacy of art from each period of Mexican history.
- 3) Recognize the different periods of Mexican art and the existing relationships between the historical-political contexts, as well as the different artistic styles and trends of each time period.

Learning Outcomes

Throughout this course, students will:

- Engage in the creative and imaginative process to interpret Mexican works of art.
- View specific works of Mexican art from multiple places and times.
- Identify or recognize the breadth and diversity of work in the Fine Arts across time, space, and culture.
- Show developing competencies to question, probe and inquire about human expression in their own and other cultures.

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- Engage through writing and discussion in critical analysis of the contrasting paradigms of human expression.
- Analyze common characteristics of artistic expression evident across time and among cultural/ethnic groups for formulate analyses, evaluations, and interpretations of meaning.
- Critically analyze Mexican works of art and articulate different theories of aesthetics.
- Show developing competency in such areas as the ability to:
 - Distinguish between form and content in specific works of art
 - Articulate the interaction between form and content to arrive at interpretation
 - Draw appropriate conclusions about different theories of aesthetic judgment as distinguished from personal, subjective taste.
- Recognize the fine arts as expressions of the human condition and reflections of values and cultures
- Demonstrate developing competencies in dealing with issues of difference.

Course Requirements (100% = 100 points)

15%	(15 points)	Active class participation. Class participation includes punctuality, presence in class, active engagement in class sessions, and completion of all required readings and workbook assignments on time. (See grading criteria listed below.)
20%	(20 points)	Oral presentations
15%	(15 points)	Essays
15%	(15 points)	Three short tests. (Each test about a historical period worth 5 points).
10%	(10 points)	Short Assignments.
25%	(25 points)	Final Project

Grading Criteria for Class Participation

- Full participation involves coming to class prepared and on time, completing assignments on time, participating in all class activities with enthusiasm and interest, and collaborating with the instructor and other students (as applicable).
- Your class grade will be affected by repeated tardiness and by unexcused absences. An **excused** absence consists of absence due to religious holidays, emergencies, and illness when you have called the Universal Spanish director Irma Salazar (318-2904) and asked her to advise the instructor of your absence prior to the start of class and later documented it with a doctor's note.
- Class participation also includes attending and actively participating in all speakers, "lab groups" about cultural issues, and excursions.
- Students are responsible for talking with the instructor about what they missed in class, getting notes or handouts from other students, and for making up any assignments that were completed in class.

Grading Criteria for Essays

- Structure: Introduction; organization, sequence, and development of ideas; and conclusion
- Content: Clarity and complexity of ideas
- Grammar: Correct use of complex forms studied in class
- Style: Effective use of appropriate style for given assignment

Grading Criteria for Oral Presentations

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- Structure: Introduction; organization, sequence, and development of ideas; and conclusion
- Content: Clarity and complexity of ideas
- Grammar: Correct use of grammar
- Oral Expression: Pronunciation, articulation, volume, and tone
- Written Outline: Organization of ideas and main points

Oral presentations are not considered complete (will be graded down) if they are not accompanied by an outline.

Grading Scale

Grade	Grade Points	Description
A	4.00	Excellent
A-	3.67	
B+	3.33	
B	3.00	Good
B-	2.67	
C+	2.33	
C	2.00	Satisfactory
C-	1.67	
D+	1.33	
D	1.00	Poor
D-	0.67	
F	0.00	Failure