

WOODSWORTH COLLEGE University of Toronto
2024 Siena Summer Abroad Program

FAH 394Y0: Italy in International Modernism: 1909 to the present

Instructor: Prof. Elizabeth Legge <eliz.legge@utoronto.ca>

This course follows Italian art within the history of European and international modernism, from the First Futurist Manifesto in 1909 rejecting the “eternal and futile worship of the past,” through the problematic modernity of Italian fascism, the “transavantgarde” painters of the 1980’s who looked for “a past removed from the rhetoric of the great traditions,” into the present day. Italy Particular attention will be paid to the relative pressures of the local and national as against the dominant international theories and “styles” at any given time.

Field trips to the major collections of modern art and international exhibitions of contemporary art, in Rome and in Tuscany, will offer a rich context for this exploration of the dynamic Italy of the past hundred years.

In this course you will be given the opportunity to think about what it’s like to be cutting-edge modern or avant-garde, while living in a country that is a rich museum. You will be given the opportunity to work on your own critical writing skills, thinking about describing works of art as a curator, critic, and, generally, creative writer.

Course Format: We will combine lecturing, in-class discussions, and visits to important sites

Learning Outcomes: After successful completion of this course, students will have a knowledge of Italy’s role in modern art history. You will learn to write about visual primary materials and develop critical skills through your short essay and art responses.

Reading:

For your reference, when you are thinking about what you write, and things you have seen, these online books provide a useful overview of twentieth century art and provide a context for Italian modernism.

Arnason, H. H. *A History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture*. New York: 1998.
https://archive.org/details/historyofmoderna00arna_0

Brettell, Richard R. *Modern Art, 1851-1929 : Capitalism and Representation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. <https://archive.org/details/modernart18511920000bret>

Cottini, Luca. *Art of Objects: the Birth of Italian Industrial Culture, 1878-1928*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018. (Available online through U of T libraries)

Hopkins, David. *After Modern Art: 1945-2017*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. (Available online through U of T libraries)

White, Anthony. *Italian Modern Art in the Age of Fascism*. New York: Routledge, 2019.
(Available online through U of T libraries)

For your first essay:

[Claudia Neumann, *Design Directory Italy* \(London: Pavilion, 1999\). Available on the Quercus Course page in "Files".](#)

Marking Scheme:

Class participation 5%

This means alert/awake attendance, and preparedness to enter into discussion.

1. Journal 25%

Keep a journal of your daily experiences - observations of people, places, and things -
- that reflects what you see and learn. It might include notes and sketches.

2. Essay 30%

[This project is easier to do if you can do it in advance. There is a PDF of a useful reference book, *Design Directory Italy*, on the Quercus Course page in Files.](#)

TOPIC:

One of the great twentieth century Italian contributions has been in the area of design, including the design of cars, domestic appliances, fashion, and furniture.

Choose **one object** of twentieth century Italian design. Useful examples are in *The Design Directory Italy*, on the Quercus Course page in Files.

Write a 4 page (1000 word) short essay about that object.

Here are some questions you can think about in writing your essay:

What function does the object fulfill?

Does its design make it more functional to do its task, or is it more about making it attractive?

How is it innovative?

How does it fit into a social or historical context?

How does it relate to other objects in art or design that come before it, or in the same time period ?

*Part of this assignment is having you do research and find information. You should use the University of Toronto library website to search for academic journal articles on Italian design. You need at least TWO references that **are not Wikipedia**.

If you are unsure of your references, email the instructor for advice!

3. Two on-site art responses

Value: 40% (20% each)

Maximum length: 500 words (2 double-spaced pages) each

Due: First Saturday after the end of the course

Write 2 individual responses to works of art that you have seen **during the course**. Take this opportunity to use your eyes, to look closely at the work, and to try and find your own way of describing and your responses to it. One way to prepare for this is to make notes as we visit different locations, so that you have material to work with.

Some questions you might think about:

How is this work typical of a given artist or movement?

How do the artist's choice of materials, techniques, and scale/size affect what we take away from the work?

How does the physical location and installation of the work affect its impact?

Schedule:

Mon.	5	Introduction
Tues	6	Lecture: 20 th Century Sculpture
Weds	7	Field Trip to Gori Collection of outdoor sculpture installations, Pistoia
Thurs	8	Lecture: Futurism
Mon	12	Lecture Fascism Sironi, Ara Pacis
Tues	13	Rome Walking Tour
Weds	14	Ara Pacis, Sta Maria del Popolo, National Museum of Modern Art, Villa Borghese
Thurs	15	EUR
Mon	19	Metaphysical Art
Tues	20	Ferragosto
Weds	21	Palio
Thurs	22	Contemporary Art Installations in Colle di Val d'Elsa, Poggibonsi, San Gimignano
Mon	26	Lecture Postwar I
Tues	27	Lecture Postwar II
Weds	28	Venice Guggenheim Museum
Thurs	28	Venice Walking Tour Punta della Dogana Pinault Collection (Palazzo Grassi)

***Important Writing Support Resources**

Many students feel that they are held back in terms of ability to express themselves by difficulties with writing. This may range from difficulty with basic structures of sentences and paragraphs, to difficulty with academic writing style.

Whatever the difficulty, please check out your college's writing centre.

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice>

***Note on Plagiarism from the University of Toronto Academic Integrity Handbook**

If you plagiarize, or cut and paste from the internet, you will be given a failing grade.

Plagiarism is the most common academic offence.

Plagiarism includes failing to cite sources AND/OR failing to place within quotation marks material taken verbatim from a source, regardless of whether the material is acknowledged with a citation. **Failure to use quotation marks is an academic offence.**

The inclusion of false, misleading, or concocted references is an offence which often occurs in conjunction with plagiarism. This can be a product of sloppy research or a deliberate attempt to mislead the reader into thinking that the paper has been properly researched and cited. Both are inappropriate, the latter much more so.

"If you do not tell your reader where you found the material or idea by providing an accurate reference to the source from which you borrowed it or if you don't place within quotation marks material taken word for word, this is plagiarism."