



Course Syllabus

Understanding Visual Arts

ARH 2000 / 84346 / Fall 2026

3 Credit Hours/ 3 Contact Hours

Pre-requisites/Co-requisites: This course requires basic computer literacy, an email address, and regular access to the Internet. This course meets area 1 Humanities requirements.

Contact Information

Instructor

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Response Time: All emails are answered
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Visual & Performing Arts Division Chair

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Course Information

Catalog Description:

In this course, students will develop an appreciation of and the ability to think critically about culture and be provided with the tools to understand, analyze, and discuss works of visual art and material culture.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will identify and describe terms, concepts, and methods used in the discipline of art history.

- Students will apply terms, concepts, and methods used in the discipline of art history to works of visual art and material culture.
- Students will identify and describe works of visual art and material culture in the works' cultural context, including works from or inspired by the Western canon and other cultural traditions.
- Students will analyze works of visual art and material culture in the works' cultural context, including works from or inspired by the Western canon and other cultural traditions.
- Students will generate an analytical response to works of visual art and material culture in the works' cultural context.

Delivery Method:

This is a web-based course. All online courses at GCSC utilize the Canvas Learning System. Students should read all information presented in the Canvas course site and should periodically check for updates--at least every 48 hours. **Remember:** This course is not one in which students may work at their own pace. Each week, there are learning modules, assignments, online lectures, online discussions, and/or online exams with due dates. Refer to the schedule within this syllabus for more information.

Class Structure and Requirements

While the flexibility of not having a fixed meeting time is one of the greatest benefits of an online course, that lack of structure often becomes a detriment. To have success in any virtual classroom, the student must be self-motivated and self-disciplined. This is particularly true in an eight-week class where the weekly workload is doubled in order to cover all of the material required for the course. To put it bluntly, we are trying to fit sixteen weeks of material into an eight-week span. The online section of Understanding Visual Arts closely resembles its on-campus cousin. Just like its face-to-face counterpart, it consists of three main parts: readings/quizzes, projects, and tests.

Readings/Quizzes

Each week, the student will be assigned readings from the textbook. These readings must be completed using the Connect SmartBook, an online E-book learning tool designed to help with comprehension and retention. (Once you log in to Connect, you'll see a tutorial on how to use it in the "How To" folder.) Each reading is connected to a weekly Quiz, you must complete all readings for that week and demonstrate a 90% comprehension level before the weekly quiz becomes available. The readings must be done using the Smart Book 2.0 in order to demonstrate proficiency. I understand that some of you may prefer to read from an actual textbook; I do too. You may do that but you'll still have to complete the Smart Questions section of your Smart Book to demonstrate proficiency. There are only two grade options for the readings – 100% or 0%. To receive 100%, you must complete all assigned readings for that week; anything less than that will result in a grade of 0%. Remember, the only way to gain access to the weekly Quiz is to demonstrate 90% proficiency. All readings/quizzes are due on Friday, 10:00 p.m. Make sure to start your work well in advance so that you have enough time to complete the assignment. Late assignments will not be accepted and will receive zero (0) points.

Projects

Projects will be assigned on a semi-regular basis. These will vary from research assignments to on-site explorations to hands-on projects. All of the projects will be submitted by clicking the Submit Assignment button by the assigned due date. Late projects will not be accepted and will receive zero (0) points. Some of your assignments will require submission of digital images — for most of you, it will be your phone. If you do not have a smartphone, a scanner is available at the library, or you can have it scanned for you at various commercial locations (Walgreens, Office Max, etc.)

Tests

All tests will be given online. These will be timed exams, limited to eighty (80) minutes. Access to exams will be limited to a three-day window. Exams will expire by 10:00 p.m. on the last date listed. If the student fails to take the test during the assigned window, he/she will receive a grade of zero (0) for that test. In case of extreme circumstances, the student may arrange to take the exam at a different time, only if that arrangement is made by the Friday before the assigned exam period. The best way to prepare for exams is by regularly completing the weekly readings, taking the time to learn from your weekly quizzes, and regularly taking notes and highlighting key concepts in your text.

GCSC Event Attendance

Over the course of the semester, the student is required to attend two (2) GCSC art events, such as art show openings, artist lectures, and artist demonstrations. I strongly suggest planning ahead to make sure that you are able to attend these; this is especially important in an eight-week session. If, for some reason, you can't attend, you can make up the points by completing extra credit (see below). While we have great theater and music programming, which you should attend if you get a chance, only visual art events count towards your Event grade. To verify attendance, the student will be asked to sign in. If your name is not on a sign-in sheet, you will not receive credit. Sign-in sheets are only available during opening receptions. All eligible events can be found on the Schedule of Events page. Students who reside far outside of the Panama City area will be required to attend two of their local art events and submit pictures and a one-page review of the event.

NOTE: Because this is an eight-week course, only two events fall within the course time frame. See the Schedule of Events page to note the dates and times of those events and make sure that you are available to attend.

Extra Credit

GCSC will host a number of "Visual Arts Events" over the course of the semester. The dates of events can be found on the Schedule of Events page. To receive extra credit, the student must attend the event/gallery and write a review (one page minimum) of the show they've attended. The review should be based on the material you have learned in the class. For example, you may talk about what "Theme of Art" a particular work fits into, and why. You may also approach the work from a formal standpoint and talk about composition, elements of design, media, etc. Another approach may be comparing the work to another work from art history. Your review may include the whole show, a couple of pieces, or just one piece that really grabbed your attention. (Please attach pictures of the work that you are describing.) Upload your paper to the Extra Credit folder. A successful completion of this assignment will add two (2) percentage points to your overall grade. You may complete a maximum of three (3) extra credit assignments over the course of the semester for a total of six (6) extra points. All events must be Visual Arts events.

Student Expectations

In this course, communication and feedback will occur through Canvas, including Canvas Inbox, Canvas Announcements, Canvas Discussions, assignment feedback, and instructor office hours. Review the statements below so that you understand the expectations for communication.

As a student at Gulf Coast State College, you are expected to:

- **Adhere to Course Guidelines:** Follow the guidelines detailed in the course syllabus, along with any additional instructions provided by the instructor. This includes understanding and complying with the course objectives, grading criteria, and academic policies.
- **Maintain Regular Contact:** Keep in touch with your instructor and classmates via your GCSC email or other designated communication channels. Regular contact helps clarify doubts, share ideas, and foster a collaborative learning environment.
- **Active Participation:** Engage actively in class discussions and submit assignments on time. Your active participation is crucial for your academic success and contributes to a vibrant learning community.

As your instructor, my commitment to you is to:

- **Provide Timely Feedback:** I will review and provide feedback on your assignments and submissions promptly. My goal is to help you understand your strengths and areas for improvement, which is crucial for your academic growth.
- **Respond Via Canvas Inbox:** I will respond to your emails or messages within 24-48 hours (excluding weekends), unless otherwise noted. I understand the importance of clear and timely communication in addressing your questions and concerns.
- **Post Regular Announcements:** To keep you updated and help you manage your time effectively, I will send out weekly reminders via announcements. These reminders will include important dates, upcoming assignments, and any changes to the course schedule.
- **Maintain Weekly Office Hours:** I will maintain regular weekly office hours, but I can also be available by appointment. This is to ensure I'm available for any questions or concerns that may come up during the week.

Course Schedule

Dates	Unit	Description
Week 1	1	Themes of Art What is art? Recognize ways we live with art, identify characteristics common to what we call art, and learn about the value of visual literacy. Exploration of the urge to make art, the categorization of art, and understanding different themes in art. Textbook Readings: Chapters 1-3 Assessments: Unit 1 Quiz
Week 2	2	Elements and Principles of Design An exploration of the building blocks of art and design.

		Textbook Readings: Chapters 4 and 5 Assessments: Unit 2 Quiz, Project 1
Week 3	Test 1	Test 1 Test one includes multiple choice, true/false, fil-in-the-blank, and short essay questions and covers Units 1 and 2
	Unit 3	Drawing and Painting Materials, techniques, and contexts to 2D approach. Textbook Readings: Chapters 6 and 7 Assessments: Unit 3 Quiz
Week 4	4	3D Materials, techniques, and contexts to 3D approach. Textbook Readings: Chapters 11 and 12 Assessments: Unit 4 Quiz, Project 2
Week 5	5	Architecture An examination of architectural terms and historic development. Textbook Readings: Chapter 13 Assessments: Unit 5 Quiz
Week 6	Test 2	Test 2 Test two includes multiple choice, true/false, fil-in-the-blank, and short essay questions and covers Units 3 – 5
	Unit 6	The Ancient World A look at ancient history and art in the ancient Mediterranean World. Textbook Readings: Chapter 14 Assessments: Unit 6 Quiz
Week 7	7	Christianity and Europe History, culture and art from the age of Constantine through the High Middle Ages. Textbook Readings: Chapter 15 Assessments: Unit 7 Quiz, Project 3
Week 8	8 and 9	The Renaissance through Enlightenment An overview of important artists and artworks from the Renaissance to the age of Enlightenment. Textbook Readings: Chapters 16 and 17 Assessments: Unit 8 Quiz, Unit 9 Quiz
	Test 3	Test 3 Test three includes multiple choice, true/false, fil-in-the-blank, and short essay questions and covers Units 6–9

Grading

GCSC Grading Scale

- A: 90 – 100%
- B: 80 – 89%
- C: 70 – 79%
- D: 60 – 69%
- F: 0 – 59%

Calculation of Grades

Readings	15%
Quizzes	20%
Projects	30%
Tests:	30%
Events	5%

Incomplete Grades

Grades of Incomplete in any course can only be assigned to students who have an emergency arise during the last two weeks of the course. To receive an Incomplete, students must:

- Submit a written request to the instructor prior to the last face-to-face class meeting. For online courses, a written Incomplete request must be received no later than the week before the Final Exam period begins.
- Have completed no less than 60 percent of the course requirements and be passing the course at the time the request for an Incomplete is submitted.
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Important Note: The Incomplete option provides 30 days from the date grades are due to make up any missing work; if work is not submitted during this period, the grade will automatically change to an “F” in Lighthouse.

Course Policies

Accessibility Statement

Gulf Coast State College supports an inclusive learning environment for all students. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that hinder your full participation, reasonable accommodations can be arranged. Prior to receiving accommodations, you must register with Student Accessibility Resources. Appropriate academic accommodations will be determined based on the documented needs of the student. Please visit [GCSC's Student Accessibility Resource \(SAR\) webpage](#) to

learn more. For information regarding the registration process, email sar@gulfcoast.edu or call 850-747-3243.

Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance and participation are significant factors that help to promote success in college. Students are expected to attend all class meetings of all courses for which they are registered.

You are expected to know the instructor's specific attendance policy, as stated in the syllabus for each course. In the event of absence, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible to indicate the reason and to inquire whether make-up work is possible. (Make-up work is offered solely at the discretion of your professor.)

If your absences in a class become excessive, as stated in the course syllabus, your professor may contact you, indicating that further absence may result in your withdrawal from the course. Your professor can withdraw you from a course for excessive absences without your permission.

Instructors will monitor attendance at the beginning of each semester. If you are not in attendance during this period, you may be withdrawn from the course. You will be financially responsible for the course and a "W or NS" will appear on your transcript. Withdrawal from a course may also have implications for financial aid.

Withdrawal Policy

Two withdrawals are permitted per credit course. After that, a grade will be assigned. Please be concerned about withdrawals. When admitting students into certain programs, universities may calculate withdrawals as grades. It is your responsibility to verify the effects of enrollment and/or withdrawal upon your financial assistance (financial aid, scholarships, grants, etc.). There are two kinds of withdrawals---student and administrative.

- *Student Withdrawal (W1)* - Students wishing to withdraw must complete the online Student Withdrawal Form before the scheduled withdrawal deadline as published in the College catalog. Student withdrawals initiated prior to the scheduled withdrawal deadline will be recorded as a grade of "W." The withdrawal deadline for an off-term or condensed term is one week after midterm.
- *Administrative Withdrawal (W2)* – A faculty member may withdraw a student up to the published withdrawal deadline for violation of the class attendance policy in which case the student will receive a grade of "W." The withdrawal deadline for an off-term or condensed term is one week after midterm.

Students cannot withdraw from developmental studies courses (college-preparatory classes) after the drop/add period without written permission from their instructor and/or their academic advisor.

Academic Integrity

Honest participation in academic endeavors fosters an environment in which optimal learning can take place and is consistent with the college's mission. Academic misconduct, including cheating or

plagiarism, is destructive to the spirit of an educational environment. GCSC professors report every instance of student academic misconduct to the college for inclusion on the student's records. Most course syllabi include an academic honesty policy and the consequences for violating this policy. Familiarize yourself with course policies regarding authorized or unauthorized use of AI to avoid the pitfalls of academic dishonesty.

The following definitions will apply:

"Cheating"

includes but is not limited to use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; the acquisition without permission of tests or other academic materials belonging to a member of the College's faculty.

"Plagiarism"

includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment as well as the purchase of papers or projects. It can also include overuse of an editing program like Grammarly or submitting work written by an Artificial Intelligence (AI) generator like ChatGPT. Make certain to consult your course syllabi for your instructor's guidelines of AI material.

"Self-plagiarism"

occurs when a student submits the same or considerably similar document to fulfill requirements in different classes. For example, if a student submits a term paper in Religion they originally wrote for an English class, this is self-plagiarism. Once a paper receives a grade in one class, it cannot be submitted again for another class.

"Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)"

is technology that uses machine learning to create new content, such as text, images, or code, based on user input. These systems are trained in vast amounts of data, including large language models and image or code generators. Common examples include ChatGPT, GitHub, Copilot, Google Gemini, Perplexity, and the Grammarly AI function.

Sanctions for incidences of academic misconduct, depending on the severity of the incidence and/or its repetition, may range from receiving an F grade (or 0) for the test, assignment, or activity, to failure of the course, to suspension or dismissal from the college.

Classroom Recording

In accordance with federal and state privacy laws, students may record class lectures for their own personal educational use, in connection with a complaint to the college, or as evidence in internal or external legal proceedings. Students may not publish or upload the recordings or any components thereof without the knowledge and written permission of the faculty member. Failure to obtain permission to publish could lead to the students having to pay damages, attorney fees, and court costs. For more information about what can be recorded, please see the guidelines in the GCSC Student Handbook.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

The use of generative AI tools in academic work requires clear guidelines to maintain academic integrity. Please review the policy selected for this course regarding the use of AI tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, Grammarly's AI features, and similar platforms for assignments, research, and other coursework.

See the student handbook for further information. Students with questions about acceptable use should consult their instructor.

Prohibited Use of AI

The use of AI-generated content is strictly prohibited in all assignments, coursework, and throughout all stages of the work process, such as brainstorming, outlining, or drafting. This includes but is not limited to tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, and Grammarly's AI function. Use of AI tools will be treated as a violation of academic integrity and may result in penalties, including a zero on the assignment and additional disciplinary actions as outlined in the college's academic integrity policy.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Gulf Coast State College does not discriminate against any person in its programs, activities, policies or procedures on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, marital status, religion, age, gender, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, disability, or veteran status. All questions or inquiries regarding compliance with laws relating to non-discrimination and all complaints regarding sexual misconduct or discrimination may be directed to Amanda Reed, Executive Director of Human Resources/Title II/504/Title IX Coordinator and Employment Equity Officer, Gulf Coast State College, 5230 W. US Highway 98, Panama City, FL 32401; 850-769-1551, ext. 3516. Rules, policies, fees, and courses described in this catalog are subject to change without notice.

Syllabus Policy

For any syllabus posted prior to the beginning of the term, the instructor reserves the right to make minor changes prior to or during the term. The instructor will notify students via e-mail or Canvas announcement when changes are made to the requirements and/or grading of the course.

Student Support Resources

Gulf Coast State College is committed to providing you with the resources you need for success as a student and beyond. View all the academic and student support resources provided at GCSC on the [Student Services web page](#).

Course Technology & Support

To successfully participate in this online course, students must have basic computer and digital information literacy skills and meet the following technology requirements:

- **Computer:** Up-to-date web browser that supports the Canvas learning management system; please refer to the system requirements for compatibility and information on using the Canvas app on mobile devices.
- **Internet Speed:** Minimum bandwidth of 8 Mbps upload/download speed to effectively engage in online activities and access multimedia.
- **Office 365 software:** Available for free download through GCSC Information Technology Services (ITS).

If you need technical support, contact the ITS Help Desk, available 24/7 at (850) 913-3303.

