

HIST 3071 U.S. History, 1877-1917: A Visual Culture Perspective

Fall 2010, TTR 2:00-3:15 LeConte 323

Professor Akela Reason; Office: LeConte 239

Office Hours: 12:30-1:30 TTR

Email: areason@uga.edu

Course Description

This course focuses on the history and visual culture of the Gilded Age and Progressive (1877-1917) era in the United States. A time of rapid change, these years witnessed tremendous urban and industrial growth accompanied by extremes of wealth and poverty. Much of the visual culture of this period reflects the tension between rich and poor. The artistic production between these two periods also highlights a significant shift, marking a turn from the conservative taste of the American Renaissance to the avant-garde forms of early Modernism. The influence of race, class, gender, and immigration on the visual culture of the period will be of primary importance. We will consider the work of cultural producers as well as their critics. Whenever possible this class will attempt to contrast elite culture (painting, sculpture, and architecture) with more popular genres (film, the pictorial press, and vernacular art forms).

Please note: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Course Structure:

All readings are to be done before the class for which they are assigned. Leon Fink's *Major Problems in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* will provide the historical context for the period. Roughly one chapter per week will be assigned from this text. In addition, you will be reading and viewing cultural materials from the period. Images are included here not as illustrations but as historical documents worthy of analysis. You will be required to know all images featured in the texts, as well as images that appear on the course's eLearning Commons page. We will also be viewing short films of the period (most are available through the Library of Congress's American Memory website).

Required Texts:

Leon Fink, *Major Problems in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*

There is also a required course reader available at Bel-Jean copy center.

Additional readings can be found using the JSTOR database.

Requirements:

1. Attendance. Students are required to attend all classes. Three or more absences will be deemed excessive and will affect your grade.
2. Participation: Students are expected to have completed all readings assignments and come to class prepared to discuss them.
3. Papers: there are three (3) short directed papers based upon specific course readings and images (3 pages).
4. Exams: there is an in-class midterm and a comprehensive final exam (given during the final exam period). Make-ups will not be scheduled except in the unlikely event of a serious documented emergency.

Grading:

Attendance and participation	10 %
Short papers	30%
Midterm	30%
Final Exam	30%

Academic Honesty:

All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The link to more detailed information about academic honesty can be found at: <http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction and the Centennial Exhibition

Aug. 17 Introduction
Aug. 19 Fink, Chapter 1; Robert Rydell, Chapter 1, “The Centennial Exhibition, Philadelphia, 1876” in *All the World’s a Fair* (reader)

Week 2: The South and the Legacy of War

Aug. 24 Fink, Chapter 4
Aug. 26 Kirk Savage, “Slavery’s Memorial” in *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves* (reader)

- Week 3: Industrial Capitalism**
 Aug. 31 Fink, Chapter 2
 Sept. 2 Sean Dennis Cashman, "Midsummer of the American Renaissance," in *America in the Gilded Age* (reader)
- Week 4: Native America and the West**
 Sept. 7 Fink, Chapter 3
 Sept. 9 Shannon Egan, "'Yet in a Primitive Condition' Edward S. Curtis's North American Indian" (reader); Class will visit the Hargrett Library exhibition *Shadow Catcher: The Photographs of Edward S. Curtis*
- Week 5: Tenements and Urban Immigration in New York**
 Sept. 14 Fink, Chapter 5
 Sept. 16 Jacob Riis, "How the Other Half Lives—Studies Among the Tenements," *Scribner's Magazine*, December 1889 (reader); View Riis photos; Edison Film Short, "New York City 'Ghetto' Fish Market"
- Paper # 1 due**
- Week 6: Politics in the Gilded Age**
 Sept. 21 Fink, Chapter 6
 Sept. 23 Wendy Wick Reeves, "Thomas Nast and the President," *American Art Journal* (1987) (**JSTOR**); Sarah Burns, "Party Animals: Thomas Nast, William Holbrook Beard, and the Bears of Wall Street" *American Art Journal* (1999) (**JSTOR**)
- Week 7: Economic Depression and Labor Unrest**
 Sept. 28 Fink, Chapter 7
 Sept. 30 Thomas H. Pauly, "American Art and Labor: The Case of Anshutz's *The Ironworkers' Noontime*" *American Quarterly*, (Sep., 1988) (**JSTOR**); D.W. Griffith film, *A Corner in Wheat* (1909); Richard T. Ely, "Excerpt from 'Pullman: A Social Study,' 1885" in Steven Conn and Max Page, eds. *Building the Nation* (reader)
- Week 8: The Columbian Exposition**
 Oct. 5 Robert Rydell, "Rediscovering the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition" *Revisiting the White City* (reader)
- Oct. 7 **MIDTERM**
- Week 9: Professionalism and the Consequences of Modernity**
 Oct. 12 Fink, Chapter 8
 Oct. 14 Sarah Burns, Revitalizing the "Painted-Out" North: Winslow Homer, Manly Health, and New England Regionalism in Turn-of-the-Century America," *American Art* (1995) (**JSTOR**)

Week 10: Spanish American War and Visions of Empire

Oct. 19 Fink, Chapter 10

Oct. 21 View the Spanish American War on Film; Marjorie P. Balge, "The Dewey Arch: Architecture or Sculpture?" in *Archives of American Art Journal* (1983) (JSTOR); Michele H. Bogart, "Barking Architecture: The Sculpture of Coney Island," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* (1988) (JSTOR)

Week 11: African American Life

Oct. 26 Fink, Chapter 10

Oct. 28 Jeannene M. Przyblyski, "American Visions at the Paris Exposition, 1900: Another Look at Frances Benjamin Johnston's Hampton Photographs," *Art Journal*, (1998) (JSTOR); Judith Wilson, "Lifting the 'Veil:' Henry O. Tanner's *The Banjo Lesson* and *The Thankful Poor*" (reader)

Paper #2 Due

Week 12: Consumer Culture

Nov. 2 Fink, Chapter 11

Nov. 4 William R. Leach, "Transformations in a Culture of Consumption: Women and Department Stores, 1890-1925," *Journal of American History* (1984) (JSTOR); View Department Store images

Week 13: Progressive Reform

Nov. 9 Fink, 12

Nov. 11 Kelly H. L'Ecuyer, "Uplifting the Southern Highlander: Handcrafts at Biltmore Estate Industries" in *Winterthur Portfolio* (summer-autumn 2002) (JSTOR)

Week 14: The Environment

Nov. 16 Fink, Chapter 14

Nov. 18 Alan C. Braddock, "Poaching Pictures: Yellowstone, Buffalo, and the Art of Wildlife Conservation," in *American Art* (2009) (reader) Images of the West

Week 15:

Nov. 23 Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 25 Thanksgiving Break

Week 16: Progressivism and Modernism

Nov. 30 Fink, Chapter 13

Dec. 2 Ellen Wiley Todd, "Photojournalism, Visual Culture, and the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire," in *Labor* (2005) (reader); Frances Pohl, *Framing America*, pp. 322-342 (reader)

Paper # 3 due

FINAL EXAM

Tues. Dec. 14 3:30-6:30