NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, GALLATIN SCHOOL OF INDIVIDUALIZED STUDY
IDSEM-UG 1804 IMPRESSIONISM & THE MODERN CITY
Fall 2014 Wednesdays 3:30-6:10 / 1 Washington Place #432
Prof. Joshua Shirkey joshua.shirkey@nyu.edu
Office hours: Mondays 2:30-5:00 / 1 Washington Place #516

By breaking with all traditional standards by which great painting was judged – naturalistic representation, historically distant subject matter, and narrative content – Impressionism defined modernism in art. It is no coincidence that Manet, Degas, Monet, Renoir, Cassatt, Morisot, and others were based in Paris, a key center of modernization in the west. Indeed, Paris itself was their primary subject. This course considers how the economic and political changes of the later 19th century did, and did not, appear in such characteristic Impressionist themes as leisure, labor, commerce, class, transportation, entertainment, poverty, family, and sex. We will seek to trace the ways that social forces like industrial capitalism and the rise of the bourgeoisie were manifested in the pictorial form of Impressionist painting and the physical form of Haussmann’s Paris.

LEARNING GOALS:
- visual analysis of artworks; critical reading of historical, theoretical, and art-historical texts
- detailed knowledge of the 19th century in France and the phenomena composing modernity
- “We must unlearn our present ease with [Impressionism], so fostered by the blockbuster exhibition. We must undo any sense that its dealings with the world were somehow visually direct. It is such oversimplification that makes this difficult art vulnerable to commodification as the most comforting and affirming art on offer.” — Griselda Pollock

REQUIRED TEXTS:
2. coursebook. AVAILABLE AT UNIQUE COPY CENTER, 252 Greene Street

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
1. Reading assignments are mandatory for all students. Each week, a few students will lead discussion of the readings. These short presentations (approx. 10 minutes) should provide basic context on the authors/texts, a summary of the main points and arguments – bearing in mind that all members of the class will have read the texts – and posit questions for group discussion. Images are strongly recommended, whenever appropriate.
2. Two short papers (2-3pp. each) based on individual visits to the Metropolitan Museum.
3. Each student will choose, in consultation with the instructor, a topic to research over the course of the semester. The final class meetings will be dedicated to student presentations of their research in progress (approx. 10 minutes). The final paper must be 12-15pp., typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12pt., and properly footnoted (preferably Chicago Manual of Style but other formats are acceptable if accurate and consistent).
4. Attendance and participation are both mandatory and expected. Each student may have one excused absence, intended for the purpose of senior colloquia. Additional excused absences, extensions, and incompletes will be granted only upon the written advice of your doctor, psychologist, spiritual adviser, or dean. No phones or laptops at the seminar table, please. Surreptitious texting/surfing will result in an immediate pop quiz for the entire class.

“As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise academic integrity include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html.”
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1. Attendance and class participation = 30%
2. Two short response papers, 10% each
3. In-class research presentation = 20%
4. Final research paper = 30%

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Sept. 3 – Introduction

2. Sept. 10 – Les temps modernes
Suggested: Honoré de Balzac, Cousin Bette (La cousine Bette)

3. Sept. 17 – Le boulevard et la rue
Clark, “The View from Notre-Dame,” 23-78.
Suggested: Gustave Flaubert, Sentimental Education (L’Education sentimentale)

4. Sept. 24 – Le bordel
Suggested: Émile Zola, Nana.
5. Oct. 1 – La maison, la toilette, et le bain


Suggested: Marcel Proust, Swann’s Way (Du côté de chez Swann)

6. Oct. 8 – Au travail: response paper #1 due


Suggested: Zola, Germinal.

7. Oct. 15 – Le théâtre, l’Opéra, et les coulisses


Suggested: Théophile Gautier, Mademoiselle de Maupin.

8. Oct. 22 – Le loisir: les jardins, le champ de courses, et le grand magasin


Suggested: Zola, The Ladies’ Paradise (Au Bonheur des Dames)
9. Oct. 29 – Les environs et le chemin de fer
Clark, “The Environs of Paris,” 147-204.


Herbert, op cit. 202-254.

Suggested: Flaubert, Madame Bovary

10. Nov. 5 – group trip to the Met: response paper #2 due/no reading assignment

11. Nov. 12 – La politique


Suggested: Victor Hugo, Ninety-Three (Quatre-vingt-treize)

12. Nov. 19 – Le café-concert
Clark, “A Bar at the Folies-Bergère” and “Conclusion,” 205-68.


Suggested: Edmond & Jules de Goncourt, Pages from the Goncourt Journal

13. Nov. 26 – student research presentations
14. Dec. 3 – student research presentations