

HAVC 135B, Summer Session 2016
Instructor: Sara Blaylock, Blaylock@ucsc.edu

Extra Credit Assignment: Brief Reflections on one of the Guiding Questions

due Friday, August 26 by 7pm via e-mail

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED!

Double-spaced, 12-point font (Times New Roman or similar), 400 – 500 words

4 total points

Prompt: Choose one Guiding Question from the course, which you did not already answer in your “Comment” assignment. Write a brief reflective essay of 400 – 500 words. You should include a few concrete examples of artworks, artists, events, movements, etc. discussed in class. However, you are not required to include quotations from any of the readings. Please do not do any outside research. Just reflect and enjoy the writing process!

Unit One

“German” Art or Art of the World?

Guiding Questions:

- What role did art and culture play in forming Germany’s national identity in the 19th century?
- How did artists and their publics respond to modernization in the late 19th century?
- In what ways did race, class, and social issues influence both traditional (academic) and non-traditional (experimental) artworks?

Unit Two

Spirit, Material, Revolution, and Discontent

Guiding Questions

- How did concept (i.e. idea) and form (i.e. style) unify in early Expressionism?
- How did major political events—including Germany’s colonial exploits, WWI, the worker’s movements in the post-WWI period, a fluctuating economy, and the rise of National Socialism—manifest themselves both formally and thematically in Expressionist and post-Expressionist art?
- What continuities exist between the Romanticist and Hegelian interest in art as a means of self-understanding and the motivations of Expressionist and Post-Expressionist artists?
- How is “authenticity” (as well as “realism”) defined and redefined across these artistic practices, including ones that were decidedly apolitical (i.e. the universal claims of Expressionism) and those that were explicitly political (i.e. the social critique and use of materials in Dada)?

- How did artists and the German public respond to technology and/or modern living? In what ways were these responses ambivalent or sometimes contradictory?
- How did the political imperatives of Dada and of some Neue Sachlichkeit artworks and photography replace the experimental ones of Expressionism? Why was that important?

Unit Three

Total Control: Art and Culture in Nazi Germany

Guiding Questions

- How did the art and visual culture of the Third Reich achieve a *Gesamtkunstwerk*?
- How did Nazi-era cultural policies instrumentalize art?
- In what ways do Nazi critiques of modern art as “degenerate” rely on racial typologies and prejudice, as well as idealistic or utopian visions of a perfected Aryan race?
- What connections can be – carefully – made between some of the ideas of “spirit” or cultural renewal that we have discussed in terms of Romanticism and Expressionism?
- Is it possible to divorce form from content? What about in politically volatile circumstances? In other words, can a Nazi-era cultural artifact be interpreted purely for its aesthetics? Why or why not?

Unit Four

Cold War Premises: Rebuilding Two Germanys

Guiding Questions:

- What task did German artists in exile face with regard to saving art and culture from Hitler’s destructive vision? How did that anxiety surface in artworks, films, and intellectual thought produced by Germans in exile?
- How did debates in the 1930s over Expressionism foreground cultural policy in a divided Germany?
- What continuities exist between artist or architecture collectives that aimed at instrumentalizing culture to build a better society and the post-war cultural policy of the communist East Germany?
- How does the turn to abstraction in West Germany compare with the spiritual and/or apolitical paths of art and architecture movements from Germany in the early 20th century?
- How might the horrible outcomes of the Nazi’s use of art and culture have influenced the apolitical turn toward abstraction in West Germany, as well as the adoption of socialist realism in East Germany?