

AP Art History

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The AP Art History course should engage students at the same level as an introductory college art history survey. Such a course involves critical thinking and should develop an understanding and knowledge of diverse historical and cultural contexts of architecture, sculpture, painting and other media. It also provides an opportunity for schools to strengthen an area neglected in most curricula. In the course, students examine and critically analyze major forms of artistic expression from the past and the present from a variety of cultures. While visual analysis is a fundamental tool of the art historian, art history emphasizes understanding how and why works of art function in context, considering such issues as patronage, gender and the functions and effects of works of art. Many colleges and universities offer advanced placement and/or credit to students who perform successfully on the AP Art History Exam.

T H E C O U R S E

Student Preparation

While the course does not assume prior training or seek primarily to identify students who will major in art history in college, it does require a high degree of commitment to academic work and to the purposes of a program designed to meet college standards. Students who have done well in other courses in the humanities, such as history and literature, or in any of the studio arts are especially encouraged to enroll. It is hoped that the experiences of students in the practice of art and in other humanities courses will prove useful in enriching the context of the art history course.

Teaching the Course

The *AP Art History Teacher's Guide* provides an excellent introduction to teaching the course (http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/teachers_corner/2177.html). In addition, teachers who have not previously taught courses in art history are advised to undertake additional study at local universities and/or at AP Summer Institutes. The AP Art History Development Committee, a group of AP Art History instructors and college and university art history educators who collaborate in the development of the course and exam, strongly suggests that teachers receive some training in college-level courses in the discipline. School administrations should be prepared to fund this professional development.

AP classes require extra time on the part of the teacher for preparation, personal consultation with students, and the reading and careful criticism of a much larger number of assignments than would usually be given to students in regular classes. The Development Committee urges that any teacher offering such a class or classes be given some reduction in assigned teaching hours. Because art history depends heavily on visual and library materials, it is essential that funds be budgeted for regular purchase of books and visual materials. (See the following page for suggestions.)

Although many schools are able to set up college-level AP Art History courses, in some schools AP study may consist of tutorial work associated with a regular course or an individually tailored program of independent study.

The *AP Art History Teacher's Guide* includes information about the content of AP courses in art history and equivalent college courses, ways to organize the course and suggestions for appropriate resource materials. The electronic discussion groups (EDGs) accessible through AP Central also provide a moderated forum for exchanging ideas, insights and practices among members of the AP professional community.

Teaching Resources

Visual Resources

Teachers are encouraged to include in their courses the direct study of original works of art in their communities. In the case of architecture, local examples should be studied firsthand.

Most major textbooks are accompanied by a variety of teaching materials such as a CD-ROM with many of the images, teacher and student workbooks, and information about online resources. This will help the new teacher begin to build a collection of images to support the teaching of the course. Because art history is a comparative discipline, using simultaneous projections of multiple images is standard in courses taught at the college level. Ideally, AP Art History teachers should prepare to teach the course in the same way.

The Development Committee encourages all teachers to consult sources in addition to their textbooks in order to provide students with visual materials and information about them. Although slides are no longer used in the AP Art History Exam (printed color inserts have replaced the slides), boxes of approximately 20 slides, with identifications and questions from recently administered exams, may be ordered on AP Central.

The *AP Art History Teacher's Guide* and AP Central list image resources for AP teachers. See page 37 for more information on these resources. The AP Art History Course Home Page on AP Central (apcentral.collegeboard.com) takes you to resources such as AP workshops, previous exam questions and scoring commentary, teaching strategies, lesson plans, articles, suggested websites and other art history resources.

Textbooks

AP Central contains reviews of textbooks commonly used in college art history survey courses. Teachers should keep in mind that textbooks are unequal in coverage of the content required by the AP Art History Exam. In preparing and teaching their classes, teachers should consult more than one resource.

While there are several excellent and widely used textbooks that focus exclusively on European art, teachers will need to supplement such works in order to provide sufficient coverage of art beyond the European tradition.

Course Content

The AP Art History Development Committee periodically conducts curriculum surveys to determine course content at the institutions that accept AP students. College courses generally cover the various art media in the following proportions: 40–50 percent painting and drawing, 25 percent architecture, 25 percent sculpture, and 5–10 percent other media. The AP Art History Exam reflects these distributions through multiple-choice questions and long and short essay questions.

Art history emphasizes understanding works of art within their historical context by examining issues such as politics, class, religion, patronage, audience, gender, function and ethnicity. Because these contextual issues cannot be ascertained about prehistoric art, prehistoric art does not appear in the exam. Prehistoric examples such as the *Woman of Willendorf*, the Caves of Lascaux, and Stonehenge are not accepted as appropriate examples in Section II of the exam.

The AP Art History course also teaches students visual analysis of works of art. The course teaches students to understand works of art through both visual and contextual analysis. The AP Art History Exam contains an increasing number of multiple-choice questions and essays that reflect these evolving emphases.

The following content table reflects other results of the most recent college curriculum surveys, showing the content areas generally covered in these college courses and a percentage range of course time devoted to each content area. This information may be especially helpful for teachers who are beginning their first AP Art History course. The AP Art History Exam generally reflects this coverage.

College Course Coverage

<i>Content</i>	<i>Approximate Percentages</i>	<i>Total</i>
I. Ancient Through Medieval		30%
A. Greece and Rome	10–15%	
B. Early Christian, Byzantine, Early Medieval	5–10%	
C. Romanesque	3–7%	
D. Gothic	7–10%	
II. Renaissance to Present		50%
A. Fourteenth Through Sixteenth Centuries	12–17%	
B. Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries	10–15%	
C. Nineteenth Century	10–15%	
D. Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries	10–15%	
III. Beyond European Artistic Traditions		20%
– Africa		
– the Americas		
– Asia		
– Near East		
– Oceania		
– global Islamic traditions		

The AP Art History Exam requires students to write two 30-minute essays. Both of these 30-minute essay questions ask students to use specific examples from different times and/or cultures. One of the questions asks students to use specific examples selected from at least one culture from beyond the European tradition. These essays may be comparative. (See pages 23–24 for more information about these questions.)

T H E E X A M

The format of questions in the multiple-choice and free-response sections of the AP Art History Exam may vary from year to year; the sample questions that follow are therefore intended chiefly to indicate only the types of competencies and range of subject matter to be tested. The 2009 *AP Art History Released Exam* (accompanied by a CD of exam images) is currently available for purchase in the College Board store.

Because of the variety of abilities called for and the range of subject matter referred to, no student is expected to perform equally well on all portions of the exam. Rather, the scope of the exam is meant to help students from widely varying learning environments demonstrate the degree to which they have accomplished the overall purposes of the AP course in Art History.

Several questions in the exam require simultaneous viewing of two works of art presented in printed color inserts. To help students prepare for this portion of the exam, practice sessions using two side-by-side images should be conducted in the classroom. For the parts of the exam that are based on these inserts, the exam instructions will indicate the total time allotted for each part, and the proctor will suggest the times for completing each question. However, students will be responsible for pacing themselves, as they will be able to move freely from question to question within the allotted time for each part.

Information about the process used in scoring the exam, including standards and samples of students' answers, can be found in the AP Art History Released Exams and on AP Central. AP Central also contains the Student Performance Q&A, written each year by the Chief Reader (who leads the exam scoring processes) to guide teachers in preparing students to write answers to free-response questions.

The exam uses the designations B.C.E. (before the common era) and C.E. (common era). These labels correspond to B.C. (Before Christ) and A.D. (anno Domini), which are used in some art history textbooks. A note to that effect appears in each year's exam.

Section I. Multiple-Choice Questions

The multiple-choice section consists of 115 questions to be answered in 60 minutes. It constitutes 40 percent of the student's AP Exam score. This section is designed to test the student's knowledge of art history, such as basic information about artists, schools and movements; chronological periods and significant dates; cross currents among artistic traditions; and the subjects, styles and techniques of particular works of art. The multiple-choice questions allow students to demonstrate as wide a range of knowledge as is possible within the limited time available, but it is not expected that everyone will be able to answer all of the questions correctly within the limited time