

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

The Soviet Marxism and the Artistic Avant-Garde - 26813

Last update 04-07-2016

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: german, russian & east european studies

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Tatiana Karachentseva

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Coordinator Office Hours: Wed. 13.00-14.00

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Tatiana Karachentseva

Course/Module description:

In this course we will try to explain the fundamental paradox of the theory of art in general and literature in particular, which distinguishes the Soviet Marxism: this type of Marxism supported classical art and condemned the artistic avant-garde. We will analyze the basic principles and arguments of soviet critics of the avant-garde and consider their relevance today. We will also compare them with those principles and arguments in support of the avant-garde, which the Western Marxism put forward. In our discussions in the class we will rely on texts of Mikhail Lifshitz, Walter Benjamin, Georg Lukacs, Louis Althusser and others.

Course/Module aims:

The purposes of the course are:

- Explicate basic concepts and distinctions of the Soviet Marxist theory of the avant-garde.*
- Explain why in terms of this theory the avant-garde art is considered as a phenomenon of decadence and is opposed to the classical art.*
- Formalize the method of interpretation of different avant-garde art movements (cubism, futurism, surrealism, abstractionism), based on this theory.*
- Compare the Marxist theory of the avant-garde with the non-Marxist theories of this phenomenon.*

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Use conceptual tools to analyze different avant-garde theories.*
- Demonstrate philosophical foundations of different concepts of the art's political function.*
- Show the link between formal methods of interpretation of a work of art and the methods of interpretation of its social meaning.*

Attendance requirements(%):

100%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Discussion will be the main method of this course.

Course/Module Content:

Marxist Aesthetics and the classical art
Marxism, "vulgar sociology" and the aesthetics of the "left" art
Italian futurism and the ideology of fascism
German expressionism and Rosenberg's "Myth of the 20th century"
Cubism as a kind of geometric mysticism
Counterfeit of reality: New Objectivity and social surrealism
Struggle for realism. Repin: Kitsch or art?
Phenomenology of a tin can: pop-art

Required Reading:

Mikhail Lifshitz Literature and Marxism, a controversy by Soviet critics
Mikhail Lifshitz The philosophy of art of Karl Marx
T. Adorno, W. Benjamin and others Aesthetics and Politics
L. Althusser Cremonini, Painter of the Abstract
G. Lukacs The meaning of contemporary realism

Additional Reading Material:

A. Bowler Politics as Art. Italian futurism and fascism
J. Bowlt Russian art of the Avant-Garde
S. Bru & G. Martens, ed. The invention of politics in the European Avant-Garde (1906-1940)
P. Burger Theory of the Avant-Garde
R. Corrigan The transformation of the Avant-Garde
Albert Gleizes & Jean Metzinger Cubism
C. Greenberg Avant-Garde and Kitsch
N. Gurianova The aesthetics of anarchy: Art and ideology in the early Russian Avant-Garde
T. Harte Fast Forward: The Aesthetics and Ideology of Speed in Russian Avant-Garde Culture (1910-1930)
T. Huhn A modern critique of Modernism: Lukacs, Greenberg, and Ideology
D.G. Ioffe, F.H. White The Russian Avant-Garde and radical Modernism
F. Jameson Postmodernism or the cultural logic of late capitalism
E. Kovtun Russian Avant-Garde
A. Rosenberg The Myth of the Twentieth Century
What is an avant-garde? New Literary History, Volume 41, Number 4, Autumn 2010
W. Worringer Abstraction and empathy: a contribution to the psychology of style

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %

Presentation 0 %

Participation in Tutorials 30 %

Project work 70 %

Assignments 0 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 0 %

Other 0 %

Additional information: