

**American University of Beirut  
Faculty of Arts and Sciences**

**CIVILIZATION SEQUENCE PROGRAM**

**Course No. & Title: CS251- Civilization through the Arts**

**1. Course learning Outcomes**

CVSP 251 is an interdisciplinary project to bring together the arts of painting, architecture, literature, music and film into a single context. As such it is structured around three issues, the elaboration of which and knowledge of constitute the objectives of project.

- a. The cultural concepts and ideals that the arts of each period embody and project.
- b. The legacy of the arts for our understanding of civilizations, both past and present.
- c. Working along these lines, the course trains the student to develop a compounded and sophisticated understanding of civilization through all the arts.

**2. Resources Available to Students**

The reading selections are from the fields of art history, philosophy and aesthetics, literature, music, etc. They are collected in a reading manual, which constitutes the bulk of basic reading assignments. Each student works on a topic of his/her selection, and presents it in class. Otherwise, class lectures are minimal and always implemented with audio-visual material. -Working on a major topic of their choice enables the students to explore sources of their special interest, always with the assistance of the instructor.

**3. Grading Criteria**

The course puts heavy emphasis on developing a multi-faceted cultured individuality in each student. The final project is therefore of special importance to help materialize this objective. Mid-term Exam 40% + Class participation 10% + Final project/Paper %50 = Final Grade

**4. Schedule: CVSP 251**

Week 1. - Introduction to the course

Week 2. - Theme: *Art as Imitation - Who Imitates Whom?*

*Background Readings* - a. Plato, "Art Imitates Reality", from the *Republic* [Dickie, 9-21] - b. Oscar Wilde, "Reality Imitates Art" or "The Decay of Lying: An Observation" (from *Intentions and the Soul of Man*, 1891) [Alperson, pp. 625-630]. [*Manual pp.1-7, 8-11*]

Week 3. - Theme: *The Reality of Art and the Reality of Life-Will to Power*

*Background Reading* - F. Nietzsche, "Dramatic Reality" (from *The Birth of Tragedy*, 1872) - [Dickie, pp. 239-268]. [*Manual pp. 12-27*]

Week 4. - Theme: *Art, Society, and Morality*

*Background Reading* - John Dewey, "Art and Civilization" (from *Art as Experience*, 1934) - [Neill, pp.522-525] [*Manual pp. 28-29*]

Week 5. - Theme - *Life and Death Conceived through Art*

*Background Reading* - A.E.Elsen, "Art as a Matter of Life and Death", in: *Purposes of Art* (1981) - (pp. 21-36). [*Manual pp. 30-45*]

Week 6. , Th20- Theme -

*Reading* - A.E.Elsen, "Art as a Matter of Life and Death"-

Week 7., Th27- Theme - *The Supernatural through Arts*

*Reading*- A.E.Elsen, "Images of God"

Presentations:

"Images of Christ according to K. Gibran"

"How/Where do the Ancient Egyptian Gods Live Today?"

Week 8. - Theme - *Housing Gods and Kings*

*Readings* - A.E.Elsen, a. "Religious Architecture" (pp. 61-84), b. "Architecture of Authority"

Presentations

"Medieval Church Architecture"

"Arts and the Religious Perspective and D.H.Lawrence's "Sons and Lovers"

Week 9. - Theme - *The Non-Human Environment through Arts*

*Background Readings* - A.E.Elsen, a. "Art and Nature" - b. "Art, Object and the Object of Art"

Presentation

"Women as ' Feminine nature' and Objects of Art"

Week 10. - Theme - *What Does Music Express and Represent ?*

*Reading* - E.Hanslick, "A Formalist Theory of Sound in Motion"

Presentation

"Classical and Rock: What do they Express or represent?"

-----MID-TERM EXAM: May 8- Covers the material of Weeks 1 - 10-----

Week 11. - Theme - *The Form and Matter of Film*

*Reading* - F. Sparshott, "Basic Film Aesthetics" (1971)

Presentations

"The Making of Film"

"Revolutions and the Arts or History in Image and Sound"

Week 12. - Theme - *The Pleasures of the Body and the Arts*

*Reading* - A. E. Elsen, "The Good Life in Baroque Secular Art"

Presentations:

- "The Arts and the Pleasures of the Body"
- "Tribal Arts: The Seen and the Unseen"

Week 13. - Theme - *State of the Arts Today - Modern Society and Arts*

*Reading* - A. Danto, "The Artworld" (1964) [Dickie, pp. 22-35]

Presentations

- "The State of the Arts Today-The Modern Society and the Arts"
- "Children in the Arts and the Arts in Children"

Week 14. - Theme- *Of Old and New Aesthetics*

*Reading* - B.Viola, etc. "Kiss Your Tired Aesthetics Good-Bye"

Presentations

- "The Internality/Externality of Truth through the Arts" (Chahine)
- "The Holy and the Profane in Image and/or Sound" )

Week 15. - "*Of All Things Lebanese in the Arts, Past and Present...*"

" Lebanese Art and Civil War "

## **5. Course Policy**

The following is communicated to the class at the beginning of the semester:

- Regular attendance, active class participation and proper conduct are expected and graded.
- Absences: Over 6 times will produce a First Warning; over 8 times will cause dropping the course.
- Lateness is disruptive to class and should be abstained at all times.
- Course grade= 40% (Mid-Term)10% (Class Participation) + 50% (Final Project)
- Last but not least: the reading assignment is a weekly homework. It must be read prior to class discussion.