

SAMPLE SYLLABUS #1

AP[®] Art History

Curricular Requirements

CR1	The students and teacher have access to a college-level art history textbook (print or electronic) and images of the required works of art.	<i>See page:</i> 2
CR2	The students and teacher have access to diverse types of primary sources and multiple secondary sources written by historians or scholars interpreting the past.	<i>See pages:</i> 2, 3
CR3	The course provides opportunities to develop student understanding of the big ideas as outlined in the AP Course and Exam Description (CED).	<i>See page:</i> 3
CR4	The course provides opportunities to develop student understanding of the required content outlined in each of the units described in the AP Course and Exam Description.	<i>See page:</i> 4
CR5	The course provides opportunities for students to develop Art Historical Thinking Skill 1: Visual Analysis.	<i>See page:</i> 7
CR6	The course provides opportunities for students to develop Art Historical Thinking Skill 2: Contextual Analysis.	<i>See page:</i> 7
CR7	The course provides opportunities for students to develop Art Historical Thinking Skill 3: Comparison of Works of Art.	<i>See page:</i> 7
CR8	The course provides opportunities for students to develop Art Historical Thinking Skill 4: Artistic Traditions.	<i>See page:</i> 8
CR9	The course provides opportunities for students to develop Art Historical Thinking Skill 5: Visual Analysis of Unknown Works.	<i>See page:</i> 8
CR10	The course provides opportunities for students to develop Art Historical Thinking Skill 6: Attribution of Unknown Works.	<i>See page:</i> 8
CR11	The course provides opportunities for students to develop Art Historical Thinking Skill 7: Art Historical Interpretations.	<i>See page:</i> 8
CR12	The course provides opportunities for students to develop Art Historical Thinking Skill 8: Argumentation.	<i>See page:</i> 9

Advanced Placement Art History Sample Syllabus #1

Introduction

The central questions in this course include the following: What is art and how is it made? Why and how does art change? How do we describe our thinking about art? Through these essential questions, students explore the big ideas of AP® Art History, effectively and precisely articulating an artwork’s meaning and function, its maker’s methods, and the ways it reflects and affects its historical and cultural contexts. With these core questions as the foundation, this course is organized into 10 chronological units, emphasizing daily practice of questioning techniques, methods of discussion, analytical paradigms, guided discovery, and independent learning. These enable our students to develop critical-thinking and visual literacy skills with which they can mine meaning from any artwork they encounter throughout their lives.

Resources

Primary Textbook: **CR1**

Kleiner, Fred S., *Gardner’s Art Through the Ages: A Global History*, Thirteenth Edition, 2009, Cengage Learning. **CR1**

Image set: Images of all 250 required works are available to students at the Khan Academy® website. [khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/introduction-ap-art-history/a/required-works-of-art-for-ap-art-history](https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/introduction-ap-art-history/a/required-works-of-art-for-ap-art-history)

Secondary Texts

Strickland, Carol. *The Annotated Mona Lisa: A Crash Course in Art History from Prehistoric to Post-Modern*, 2007, Andrews McMeel Publishing.

Nici, John B. *Barron’s AP Art History with Online Tests*, Fourth Edition, 2018, Barron’s Educational Series.

Supplementary Primary Sources:

Giorgio Vasari: *The Life of Michelangelo*, from *The Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects* (second edition, 1568). **CR2**

Primary source readings in Linnea H. Wren, ed. *Perspectives on Western Art*, 2 vols. Westview Press, 1987, for example:

- Ahmed Ibn Fadlan, *Viking Ship Burial* (pages 193–196). **CR2**
- Boccaccio, “The Black Death,” *The Decameron* (excerpt) (pages 274–277). **CR2**

CR1

The syllabus includes the title and author of a college-level art history textbook.

The syllabus includes a statement that students have access to the required image set, including how/where images are made available to students.

CR2

The syllabus includes specific examples of at least two different types of primary sources beyond works of art.

Supplementary Secondary Sources:

Video discussions on Smarthistory®, for example:

- “Brunelleschi and Ghiberti: The Sacrifice of Isaac” **CR2**

Essays from the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, for example:

- Jason Rosenfeld. “The Salon and the Royal Academy in the Nineteenth Century”

Student Practice

Throughout each unit, **Topic Questions** will be provided to help you check your understanding. The Topic Questions are especially useful for confirming understanding of difficult or foundational topics before you move on to new content or skills that build upon prior topics. They can be assigned before, during, or after a lesson, and as in-class work or homework. You’ll get rationales for each Topic Question that will help you understand why an answer is correct or incorrect, and your results will reveal misunderstandings to help you target the content and skills needed for additional practice.

At the end of each unit or at key points within a unit, **Personal Progress Checks** will be provided in class or as homework assignments in AP Classroom. You’ll get a personal report with feedback on every topic, skill, and question that you can use to chart your progress, and your results will come with rationales that explain every question’s answer. We’ll set aside a class period or two to go over the results and address any misunderstandings.

Deepened Understanding of the Big Ideas: **CR3**

Big Idea 1—Culture: As a class we discuss specific elements of the Bundu mask that represent aspects of the culture that created it. We also look at other images of Bundu masks and discuss various ways the mask represents importance of the river god Sowo, as well as the ways these works encode societal expectations for the comportment of women and girls. Students will then be tasked with designing their own Bundu mask, keeping in mind the symbolism associated with such masks as well as audience, function, and performance aspects. Finished masks will be displayed in class and a critique of similarities and differences held.

Big Idea 2—Interaction with Other Cultures: Guided Discussion. After discussion of the vast empire of the Mongols and the sharing of ideas, materials, and techniques along the Silk Road, we explore ways in which the David Vases are creations of their place and time. Emphasis is placed on materials and their acquisition through trade from the far reaches of the empire, and the fact that blue-and-white porcelain was made for the specific purpose of exporting to varied audiences. Students will then write a response to a 15-minute essay prompt about the David Vases.

Big Idea 3—Theories and Interpretations: With a partner, students research and present to the class multiple academically sourced theories regarding the meaning of *The Arnolfini Portrait*. As a class, we will then discuss the reasons for such diverse interpretations.

Big Idea 4—Materials, Processes, and Techniques: We will watch the Smarthistory video entitled “Bronze Casting” during our discussions of Ancient Mediterranean art in order to better understand the difficulty of the process and how important materials are in understanding works of art in context.

Big Idea 5—Purpose and Audience: As we study *Rebellious Silence* by Shirin Neshat, we discuss issues of audience: both who can physically view her art (since she mostly exhibits outside of her native country, although the subject matter is Iranian) and who can actually read the text in her art (since her audience is often Americans who don’t read Farsi). We also explore the religious aspects of the work, including the dress of the subject and the differing interpretations this work might suggest for American and Iranian viewers.

CR2

The syllabus includes specific examples of at least two scholarly secondary sources beyond the course textbook. General reference sources (such as Wikipedia) and amateur materials (such as fan videos and blogs) do not meet the requirement.

CR3

The syllabus must include evidence that each of the five big ideas is addressed in descriptions of an activity or series of activities. An activity may address more than one big idea at a time. Activities must be labeled with the big idea(s).

Course Outline: CR4**Unit 1: Global Prehistory (30,000–500 BCE)**

Topics	Skills
1.1 Cultural Influences in Prehistoric Art	1.A, 2.A
1.2 Materials, Processes, and Techniques in Prehistoric Art	1.B, 1.C, 5.A, 5.B
1.3 Theories and Interpretations of Prehistoric Art	7.A, 7.B

Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** on AP Classroom for Unit 1.

Unit 2: Ancient Mediterranean (3500 BCE–300 CE)

Topics	Skills
2.1 Cultural Contexts of Ancient Mediterranean Art	1.A, 1.B, 1.C, 2.A, 2.B, 2.C, 3.A, 5.A, 5.B, 6.A, 6.B
2.2 Interactions Within and Across Cultures in Ancient Mediterranean Art	4.A, 4.B
2.3 Purpose and Audience in Ancient Mediterranean Art	2.B, 2.D
2.4 Theories and Interpretations of Ancient Mediterranean Art	8.A, 8.B

Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** on AP Classroom for Unit 2.

Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part A** on AP Classroom for Unit 2.

Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part B** on AP Classroom for Unit 2.

Unit 3: Early Europe and Colonial America (200–1750 CE)

Topics	Skills
3.1 Cultural Contexts of Early European and Colonial American Art	2.A, 2.D
3.2 Interactions Within and Across Cultures in Early European and Colonial American Art	3.B, 4.A, 4.B, 4.C, 4.D
3.3 Materials, Processes, and Techniques in Early European and Colonial American Art	1.C, 6.A, 6.B
3.4 Purpose and Audience in Early European and Colonial American Art	2.B, 2.D
3.5 Theories and Interpretations of Early European and Colonial American Art	7.A, 7.B, 8.A, 8.B, 8.C

Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** on AP Classroom for Unit 3.

Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part A** on AP Classroom for Unit 3.

Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part B** on AP Classroom for Unit 3.

CR4

The syllabus must include an outline of course content by unit title or topic using any organizational approach to demonstrate the inclusion of required course content.

Unit 4: Later Europe and the Americas (1750–1980 CE)

Topics	Skills
4.1 Interactions Within and Across Cultures in Later European and American Art	2.C, 3.B, 4.A, 4.B, 4.C, 4.D
4.2 Purpose and Audience in Later European and American Art	2.B, 2.D
4.3 Materials, Processes, and Techniques in in Later European and American Art	1.C, 6.A, 6.B, 8.B
4.4 Theories and Interpretations of Later European and American Art	7.B, 8.A, 8.B

Complete **Personal Progress Check** on AP Classroom for Unit 4.

Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part A** on AP Classroom for Unit 4.

Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part B** on AP Classroom for Unit 4.

Unit 5: Indigenous Americas (1000 BCE–1980 CE)

Topics	Skills
5.1 Interactions Within and Across Cultures in Indigenous American Art	2.A, 2.C, 4.A
5.2 Materials, Processes, and Techniques in Indigenous American Art	1.B, 1.C, 5.A
5.3 Purpose and Audience in Indigenous American Art	2.B, 2.D
5.4 Theories and Interpretations of Indigenous American Art	7.B

Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** on AP Classroom for Unit 5.

Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ** on AP Classroom for Unit 5.

Unit 6: Africa (1100–1980 CE)

Topics	Skills
6.1 Cultural Contexts of African Art	1.C, 2.A, 2.C, 3.A, 4.A, 4.B, 5.A, 5.B
6.2 Purpose and Audience in African Art	2.B, 2.D, 6.A, 6.B
6.3 Theories and Interpretations of African Art	7.A

Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** on AP Classroom for Unit 6.

Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ** on AP Classroom for Unit 6.

Unit 7: West and Central Asia (500 BCE–1980 CE)

Topics	Skills
7.1 Materials, Processes, and Techniques in West and Central Asian Art	1.C
7.2 Purpose and Audience in West and Central Asian art	2.B; 2.C; 2.D
7.3 Interactions Within and Across Cultures in West and Central Asian Art	4.A, 4.B, 4.D, 8.D

Complete **Personal Progress Check** on AP Classroom for Unit 7.

Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part A** on AP Classroom for Unit 7.

Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part B** on AP Classroom for Unit 7.

Unit 8: South, East, and Southeast Asia (300 BCE–1980 CE)

Topics	Skills
8.1 Materials, Processes, and Techniques in South, East, and Southeast Asian Art	1.C, 3.A, 3.B, 6.A
8.2 Purpose and Audience in South, East, and Southeast Asian Art	2.B, 2.C, 2.D
8.3 Interactions Within and Across Cultures in South, East, and Southeast Asian Art	4.A, 4.B, 4.C, 4.D
8.4 Theories and Interpretations of South, East, and Southeast Asian Art	8.A, 8.B

Complete **Personal Progress Check** on AP Classroom for Unit 8.

Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part A** on AP Classroom for Unit 8.

Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part B** on AP Classroom for Unit 8.

Unit 9: The Pacific (700–1980 CE)

Topics	Skills
9.1 Materials, Processes, and Techniques in Pacific Art	1.B, 1.C, 5.A, 5.B
9.2 Interactions Within and Across Cultures in Pacific Art	2.A, 2.B, 2.C
9.3 Theories and Interpretations of Pacific Art	7.A, 7.B

Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** on AP Classroom for Unit 9.

Unit 10: Global Contemporary (1980 CE–Present)

Topics	Skills
10.1 Materials, Processes, and Techniques in Global Contemporary Art	1.B, 1.C
10.2 Purpose and Audience in Global Contemporary Art	2.B, 2.D, 3.A, 3.B
10.3 Interactions Within and Across Cultures in Global Contemporary Art	4.A, 4.B, 4.D
10.4 Theories and Interpretations of Global Contemporary Art	7.A, 7.B, 8.D

Complete **Personal Progress Check** on AP Classroom for Unit 10.

Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part A** on AP Classroom for Unit 10.

Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ Part B** on AP Classroom for Unit 10.

Developing Art Historical Thinking

Skill 1: Visual Analysis **CR5**

In the first days of class, as an introduction to AP Art History, students will look at the projected image of Gericault's *Raft of the Medusa* in silence for one full minute. Next, in groups, students use their whiteboards to draw what they remember from the scene. We then discuss what elements stood out the most and what most groups included in their renderings. We then discuss what details we can see and what we think the story of the work might be. Students are then given a document detailing the story behind the painting as homework, which we discuss in class the next day. Students then identify, describe, and explain key visual elements of the work.

Developing Art Historical Thinking

Skill 2: Contextual Analysis **CR6**

After the completion of the study of the Palace of Versailles, students are given an essay assignment to compare Versailles with the Forbidden City based on the theme of power and authority.

- These structures are similar in that they were made for rulers. What are the similarities and differences between the French and Chinese monarchies? How do the forms and functions of these palaces support each monarch's right to rule within their respective cultural contexts? Describe specific ways the rulers have both set themselves apart and included themselves in their respective courts.

Developing Art Historical Thinking Skill 3: Comparison of Works of Art **CR7**

After the completing the study of the St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, students are asked to compare this structure with the Kaaba in Mecca. Students are asked to respond about both the idea of sacred spaces and importance of pilgrimage to both sites.

- The structures seen here have similar purposes for their audiences. What is the purpose of these structures? How do the form, function, content, and context aid the worshippers of these two faiths in achieving their goals?

CR5

The syllabus must provide a description of one activity or series of activities in which students identify describe and explain visual elements of works of art. Each activity or series of activities must be labeled Skill 1.

CR6

The syllabus must provide a description of one activity or series of activities in which students analyze contextual elements of a work of art, and connect contextual and visual elements of a work of art. Each activity or series of activities must be labeled Skill 2.

CR7

The syllabus must provide a description of an activity in which students compare two or more works of art by describing and explaining relevant points of comparison. Each activity or series of activities must be labeled with Skill 3.

Developing Art Historical Thinking

Skill 4: Artistic Traditions **CR8**

Students are given an art project to complete after we have studied Greek pottery from the Geometric to the Classical period (students are exposed to a variety of vessel types and their uses, and the black- and red-figure techniques of decoration). Students are then given a terra cotta clay body that emulates the color of the clay in Attic red-figure pottery. They design their own pot using a combination of pinch, coil, or other handbuilding techniques, then create a design with black underglaze, approximating either the red-figure or black-figure technique. Students then discuss the transition from black-figure to red-figure in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE in Athens and propose possible reasons for this transition.

Developing Art Historical Thinking Skill 5:

Visual Analysis of Unknown Works **CR9**

After completion of the 10 course units, and as we spend a week in review for the AP Exam, we complete various activities with our class set of “Masterpiece Cards.” Images are divided up at random among the groups in class and include 250 cards total from the Renaissance to Pop Art, with most of these works *not* being in the set of 250 images from College Board. Groups are asked to analyze visual elements of the works, and identify and categorize the works in a variety of ways—including by known artists, by culture, by artistic style, and by medium.

Developing Art Historical Thinking Skill 6:

Attribution of Unknown Works **CR10**

After studying Greek sculpture from Archaic, through Classical, and into the Hellenistic styles, students are given an essay to complete where they need to attribute “unknown” works to each of these styles, giving supporting evidence for their attributions. The works included are the *Sleeping Satyr*, *Apoxyomenos*, and *Lady of Auxerre*.

- Label each of the works shown with their correct period style. Support your attributions with at least two pieces of evidence, as well as discussing similarities to a specific work from the image set from that period.

Developing Art Historical Thinking Skill 7:

Art Historical Interpretations **CR11**

Students are given the following homework assignment:

Architectural historian J. B. Ward-Perkins wrote:

“The Forum and Markets of Trajan were contemporary and complementary monuments, the two halves of a single plan; and yet it would be hard to imagine two groups of buildings that were more different in almost every respect . . . the one ultra-conservative . . . the other the last word in contemporary tastes and techniques.” (*Roman Imperial Architecture*, 1994).

Analyze Ward-Perkins’ interpretation, referring to specific features of the materials, design, function and decoration of the Forum and Markets of Trajan.

In the following class, students share and discuss their analyses of the conservative and modern features of the two building complexes.

CR8

The syllabus must provide description of a series of activities in which students analyze the relationships between a work of art and a related artistic tradition, style, and/or practice. Each activity or series of activities must be labeled with Skill 4.

CR9

The syllabus must provide a description of an activity or series of activities in which students analyze visual elements of a work of art beyond the image set. Each activity must be labeled with Skill 5.

CR10

The syllabus must provide a description of an activity in which students make an attribution of an unknown work and justify their attribution. Each activity or series of activities must be labeled with Skill 6.

CR11

The syllabus must provide a description of an activity or series of activities in which students analyze an art historical interpretation. The source(s) of the art historical interpretation used in the activity or series of activities must be cited. Each activity or series of activities must be labeled with Skill 7.

Developing Art Historical Thinking

Skill 8: Argumentation **CR12**

1. Students are asked to respond to an essay question addressing works of art that make powerful anti-war statements. Students may choose Goya's *The Third of May 1808*, Picasso's *Guernica*, or Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial, or they may choose another appropriate work (providing a full identification). Students must develop a thesis and support it using specific visual and contextual evidence.
2. Students write an essay on the following prompt: "What was the impact of photography on painting in the 19th century?" Students must develop a thesis and support it using specific visual and contextual evidence.

CR12

The syllabus must describe at least two assignments (including one essay) in which students develop a claim and support the argument using specific and relevant evidence. Each activity/assignment must be labeled with Skill 8.