

HA3A8-30 The Thirties: The Arts & Society in Inter-War Britain

20/21

Department

SCAPVC - History of Art

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Otto Saumarez Smith

Credit value

30

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

50% coursework, 50% exam

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

At the heart of this module is the debate over the role of art and the artist in modern society that occurred in inter-war Britain. Rather than considering artistic developments during the period in terms of conservative artistic ideas confronted by an imported model of avant-garde practice, the module tests alternative interpretations. The Victorian tradition that linked art with civic responsibility will be connected with the modern artist's social engagement, and is contrasted with the aestheticism of critics like Roger Fry. The growing involvement of artists and designers not just in the area of fine arts and architecture but also in advertising, industrial design and film-making will be examined in the context of the precarious economic and political conditions of the period.

Module aims

The module examines the debate over the role of art and the artist in modern society which occurred in inter-war Britain. Rather than presenting artistic developments during that period in terms of a conflict between conservative artistic ideas and an imported model of avant-garde practice, the module will test various alternative interpretations. The persistence of a Victorian tradition linking art with civic responsibility and social purpose will be contrasted with the aestheticism of critics like Roger Fry and Clive Bell. The attitude of artists and architects towards

craftsmanship, and their growing involvement in industrial design, advertising and speculative building will be examined in the context of the precarious economic and political conditions of the period.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Land, landscape, the "call-to-order," utopianism and modernity

'Medieval modernism'

Primitivism, sculpture and space: Gill, Epstein, Moore and Hepworth

Artists, art and industry: Nash, Bawden, Ravilious, Marx, McKnight Kauffer, London Underground, Shell and Harrods

The image of the architect and architecture in 1930s Britain

British and Modern? Unit One - Read, Nash, Hepworth, Moore, Nicholson and Wells Coates

Artists, war and pacifism

Identity and the uncanny: Britain, society, psychoanalysis and surrealism

Society observed: the Mass Observation Project

Realism and realist debates: the Euston Road painters and the GPO film unit

Towards an International Style: émigré architects, designers, artists and Britain

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Command a knowledge of key works of British art and architecture of the period
- Demonstrate understanding of the structure of the art world during the inter-war period
- Display an understanding of the connections between art practice and art criticism
- Demonstrate an ability to interpret differing manifestations of national and artistic identity within an informed historical trajectory
- Initiate and sustain group discussion through intelligent questioning and debate at an appropriate level
- Ability to undertake research and to write up the results in the form of a well-structured argument at an appropriate level
- Familiarity with essential ICT skills
- Ability to collaborate effectively with others
- Show understanding of diverse viewpoints
- Ability to find, select, organize and synthesize evidence
- Ability to formulate a sustained argument
- Think conceptually and independently at an appropriate level
- Sophisticated visual analysis
- Bibliographical skills at an appropriate level
- Critical analysis of cultural artefacts in their context

Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

[Specific reading list for the module](#)

Subject specific skills

- Command a knowledge of key works of British art and architecture of the period
- demonstrate understanding of the structure of the art world during the inter-war period
- display an understanding of the connections between art practice and art criticism
- demonstrate an ability to interpret differing manifestations of national and artistic identity within an informed historical trajectory
- sophisticated visual analysis
- critical analysis of cultural artefacts in their context

Transferable skills

- initiate and sustain group discussion through intelligent questioning and debate at an appropriate level
 - ability to undertake research and to write up the results in the form of a well-structured argument at an appropriate level
 - familiarity with essential ICT skills
 - ability to collaborate effectively with others
 - Show understanding of diverse viewpoints
 - ability to find, select, organize and synthesize evidence
 - ability to formulate a sustained argument
 - think conceptually and independently at an appropriate level
 - bibliographical skills at an appropriate level
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Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	10 sessions of 4 hours (13%)
External visits	1 session of 2 hours (1%)
Private study	258 hours (86%)
Total	300 hours

Private study description

Required and recommended reading for seminar presentation, research for written assessments and revision for examinations.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group C2

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
3,000 Word Essay Assessed essay	40%		Yes (extension)
Reassessment component is the same			
Assessment component			
Engagement	10%		No
Reassessment component is the same			
Assessment component			
Written Examination 2 hour exam	50%		No

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- Answerbook Pink (12 page)

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback and dedicated feedback tutorials.

[Past exam papers for HA3A8](#)

Availability

Courses

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 3 of UHAA-V401 Undergraduate History of Art

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 1 of THAA-V4P2 Postgraduate Taught History of Art
- Year 4 of UHAA-V3R1 Undergraduate History of Art and French