
ART AND SOCIETY IN THE WEST

FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE PRESENT



Ellington Robynson, *Oath of the Imperialists*, 2013. CAPP Contemporary Art Collection, Stamp Student Union, University of Maryland

ARTH201

University of Maryland

Fall 2021

Parren J. Mitchell Art-Sociology 2203

MW 9:00-9:50 (plus discussion sections)

Prof. Joshua Shannon

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What is a human being? What is the purpose of life? How should human beings relate to one another, to the natural world, and to the cosmos? Taking the history of art to be a history of efforts to answer such questions, this course introduces students to art made in Europe and North America over the past 500 years.

The course is arranged in a modified chronological structure focusing on four periods: the Italian Renaissance, Dutch art of the seventeenth century, French art from Impressionism to Cubism, and North American Art since 1968 (the last of these we will treat first). Four main themes will govern our study of each period: “The Human Individual,” “Gender,” “Nature, or the Nonhuman,” and “Birth, Love, and Death.”

Throughout, we will consider history, human values, and some of the technical aspects of making excellent works of art.
