

## AP Art History Summer Assignment

Ms. Suehiro, Room 129

Due: The first day class meets

[jsuehiro@pps.net](mailto:jsuehiro@pps.net) or [jsuehirowilsonhs1@gmail.com](mailto:jsuehirowilsonhs1@gmail.com)

Welcome to AP Art History! This year we will study the history of human-creativity from the beginning of time to the present day. This is a demanding, college-level course and we will be covering a great deal of content in a very short amount of time. In order to pique your interest and to keep your senses from becoming dull over the summer, I would like you to complete the following assignment which will count toward your Semester 1 grade. I will be forthright about this: the AP Art History course requires not only critical thinking and visual analysis skills, but also quite a bit of reading and memorizing of images and facts and fairly sound composition skills.

Looking at art. Writing about art. Not skills which are typically practiced on a regular basis by most people, even though we live in a visual culture and come across art almost everywhere we go and look. Therefore, the summer assignment requires you to actually go somewhere (either a museum or just somewhere in your community) and look at art and/or architecture. You will also get a chance to write down some of your thoughts and impressions about what you see.

Upon your return in August, we will work on honing your art analysis skills so you can become more and more comfortable and successful talking and writing about art and architecture. We will then zero-in on the real focus of the course, to “develop an understanding of [the] diverse and historical context of architecture, sculpture, painting and other media” (AP Course Description Manual).

### 1. Read the handout entitled “A Guide to Writing About Art”

### 2. Visit a museum either in Oregon or anywhere you go this summer (Bring student ID for discounts)

Or

### Visit an area where you might find distinctive architectural styles

Here are some options:

#### **Oregon Art Museums**

Coos Art Museum (Coos Bay)  
Four Rivers Cultural Center and Museum (Ontario)  
Grants Pass Art Museum  
The High Desert Museum (Bend)  
Museum of Contemporary Craft (Portland)  
Portland Art Museum  
Portland Institute for Contemporary Art  
Oregon Historical Society (Portland)  
Springfield Museum

#### **University Art Museums and Art Galleries in Oregon**

Hallie Ford Museum of Art (Willamette University, Salem)  
Photography at Oregon (U of O, Eugene)  
Schneider Museum of Art - Southern Oregon University (Ashland)  
Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (U of O, Eugene)  
The Wiseman Gallery (Rogue Community College, Grants Pass)

#### **MAX Line Art**

#### **Downtown Portland**

If you are visiting another city or country, look at various architectural styles

#### **National Monuments**

#### **Science and Natural History Museums**

Art and craft of indigenous cultures

#### **Churches/Museums/Spiritual Spaces**

Observe the grounds, the building, the purpose of space, how people move about, etc.

#### **Airport Art**

If you are traveling by air, these transitional spaces often include exhibits

**3. Compose a 500+ word typed, double-spaced, 12-point Arial font response to your visit that**

- a. Defines art or architecture and offers your own personal criteria for what makes it “good”
- b. Explains whether or not what you saw should be considered “good” art
- c. Selects one example from your visited location/s that best represents your criteria for “good” art and one that definitely does not. Then explain why.
- d. Provides any suggestions as to how the museum or area could alter its layout/displays to provide a more meaningful or enjoyable viewing experience. If no suggestions apply, comment on what the museum or area did well.
- e. Utilizes principles and suggestions discussed in the “Guide to Writing About Art.”

**Grades:** Your paper will be graded on how thoughtful, reflective and thorough it is. It should be clear that you spent time looking at the art and architecture. It should be clear that you addressed the prompts listed above. Accuracy is not as important at this stage; this is an attempt to jump into analysis the best you can. By the way, I am also an English teacher.

**4. Sketch two objects, paintings, buildings, or detailed areas of the buildings.**

- You may use loose paper for this, or begin your sketchbook.

*Note: for this class you will need a full sized, 8x11 (approx) sized sketchbook with 50 pages minimum... spiral or hard-bound is best. They run between 10 and 20 and you can buy them online, at an art store, Fred Meyer, Target or office supply stores.*

**5. Summer Email: (Early Due Date! By August 1, Please!)**

- Tell me about yourself. What are your interests, hobbies, goals, favorite or not-so-favorite subjects. What is your favorite food? Where are you from? How do you identify? What pronouns do you use (I use she, her, hers) Do you have siblings? What are your plans for the summer? What worries you? Do you have any questions about the course?

Ms. Suehiro's email: [jsuehirowilsonhs1@gmail.com](mailto:jsuehirowilsonhs1@gmail.com)

**AND - There is also a PURELY OPTIONAL SUMMER READING for Extra Credit!**

**Optional:** For those who want to get a better feel for the art world, or simply gain exposure to books that attempt to describe art, refer to the list of books about art. Assignment: 500-word+ enrichment reflection paper. Discuss your thoughts about the book; a little summary will help me as I may not have read the book you chose. Focus more on application and how the book could possibly relate to our class and maybe your history classes. Note how art and architecture are presented in the book; note the role of art and architecture in the development of the plot and setting, mood and tone.

Have a great summer! Email if you have a question. I am looking forward to meeting you next school year!

**P.S** Want even more info? Visit the course description page for AP Art History at AP Central. The exam for this course has changed over the past year. There are now only 250 mandatory works to know. (Much different from the last time I taught the course) It is not my intention to have you start studying these over the summer, but if you are interested in doing a bit of investigation, go to [khanacademy.org](http://khanacademy.org). We will be using this website A LOT next year, and all of the images are listed and discussed in detail. I have recommended a couple of prep books to students in the past -

Barrons and REA brands are both good. The first is very “test preppy” and the second is more narrative. Both are on amazon.com.

## AP Art History

### Summer Assignment Supplemental Reading List

#### The 50 Greatest Novels for Art Students

##### Classics

These classic novels will not only help you to be more well-read, but have a lot of insight to offer those in the art world as well.

1. ***The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde:** Enamored with his own portrait, one that allows him to indulge all of his darkest and most hedonistic desires without consequence, Dorian Gray sinks further into despair as his once idyllic life begins to unravel. Wilde showcases the power art can have over us and offers a cautionary tale for those who may become too wrapped up in the pleasures of life.
2. ***The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand:** While the novel focuses on an architect rather than an artist, the struggles he faces are universal to all that take on a creative and highly competitive career path, making this a great read for any aspiring artist.
3. ***Cat’s Eye* by Margaret Atwood:** Centered on a middle-aged painter who is taking a hard look at her past through a retrospective show of her work, this novel explores the forces that drive artists to create, whether they are good or bad.
4. ***Bluebeard* by Kurt Vonnegut:** Abstract painter Rabo Karabekian, a minor character from one of Vonnegut’s other novels, is at the center of this book. Full of satire, the novel pokes fun at the business of the art world and the various art movements it often puts so much stock in.
5. ***Narcissus and Goldmund* by Hermann Hesse:** A Westernized look at Hesse’s more famous novel, *Siddhartha*, this story follows a young man as he tries to figure out where he fits in, whether as a monk or as an artist – a journey all of us have to take as we grow up and into ourselves.
6. ***A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce:** This semi-autobiographical tale follows Stephan Daedalus as he faces some existential questions in life and turns to art as a means to express himself– whatever the consequences.
7. ***Of Human Bondage* by W. Somerset Maugham:** Philip Carey, the main character of this novel, is orphaned and deformed and struggling to come to terms with both. Readers can follow him as he travels to Paris to become a painter, later to become a doctor and falls in love with the engaging Mildred.
8. ***The Unknown Masterpiece* by Honore de Balzac:** While perhaps a bit short to be called a true novel, this story nonetheless is a great read for those interested in art. In it, readers will become enthralled by a painter who has the ability to make paintings seem to come alive.
9. ***The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* by Michael Chabon:** If you have any interest in the creation, origin or work that goes into comic books, this novel is an absolute must-read. Following two friends as they come from nothing to be some of the biggest names in the comic industry, it offers not only a compelling story, but an amazing amount of historical information as well.

##### Art Historical Fiction

Get inspired to create your own great works by reading tales based on the lives of some of the biggest names in art history.

1. ***The Painter from Shanghai* by Jennifer Cody Epstein:** This novel tells the story (albeit fictionalized a bit) of Chinese painter Pan Yuliang, a woman who escapes life as a concubine through her talent as an artist. She has her dreams tested as the Chinese Revolution looms on the horizon.

2. ***I, Juan de Pareja* by Elizabeth Borton de Treviño:** History often forgets about the smaller figures in art. This book attempts to right that, telling the story of Juan de Pareja, the slave to well-known artist Diego Velazquez. He was a painter in his own right, despite being banned from practicing the arts because he was a slave.
3. ***The Agony and the Ecstasy* by Irving Stone:** Based on the biographical events of Michelangelo's life, this novel showcases the artist in his full brilliance, passion and even, at times, fury.
4. ***Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Tracy Chevalier:** Now a major motion picture, this book offers insights into the life and work of Dutch painter Vermeer, suggesting that the model for one of his most famous works was his own beloved housemaid.
5. ***The Passion of Artemesia* by Susan Vreeland:** Artemesia Gentileschi succeeded as an artist at a time when women were barred from the art world. That doesn't mean it was an easy journey, and this novel, centered on her rape, the trial that followed and the art it spawned, details that in engaging prose.
6. ***Leonardo's Swans* by Karen Essex:** Filled with sex and political intrigue, this novel follows Isabella and Beatrice d'Este, two Italian sisters who are vying for power, love and a seat in front of one of the greatest Italian painters – Leonardo da Vinci.
7. ***Naked Came I* by David Weiss:** Rodin's *The Thinker* has fascinated art lovers for decades, and readers can get a closer look at the man behind the work in this novel detailing Rodin's life with great accuracy. Though perhaps a bit of artistic license — a compromise any artist would be sure to approve of.
8. ***Lydia Cassatt Reading the Morning Paper* by Harriet Scott Chessman:** Get a peek into the life of Mary Cassatt, one of the biggest names in Impressionist painting, through the eyes of her sister Lydia in this compelling fictionalized take on art history.
9. ***Tulip Fever* by Deborah Moggach:** A highly fictionalized tale about Dutch painter Jan van Loos, this book engages the reader with romance, art, the tulip trade and a plot hatched between two forbidden lovers.
10. ***Cupid and the Silent Goddess* by Alan Fisk:** Focusing on the painting *Allegory with Venus and Cupid*, this novel takes a look at not only the artists who created the work, but the models who sat for it and the political atmosphere that shaped the work of Italian Renaissance artists.
11. ***As Above, So Below* by Rudy Rucker:** Learn more about the life of Pieter Brueghel in this fictionalized tale, with each chapter focusing on one of his famous paintings and the events of his life which helped to shape it.
12. ***The Painted Kiss* by Elizabeth Hickey:** This novel explores the romance between Klimt and his protege, the young Emilie Floge, who would become the model for his famous work *The Kiss*.
13. ***Lust for Life* by Irving Stone:** The life of Van Gogh was tragically short, cutting off his brilliant work much too soon. In this wonderfully written novel, art students can get a glimpse into the artistic genius of Van Gogh and the demons that tormented him throughout his life.
14. ***The Painter* by Will Davenport:** In an old country house, a woman discovers a journal that documents a year in the life of a great artist (who is later revealed to be Rembrandt) as he battles a poet for the love of a woman.
15. ***I Am Madame X* by Gioia Diliberto:** This work takes a look at the woman behind John Singer Sargent's well-known painting *Portrait of Madame X*, bringing her to life by detailing her loves, loses and rather unconventional attitudes that may have motivated her to stay anonymous.

### **An Artist's Life**

From dealing with fame to accepting a complete lack of it, these novels weave fictional stories about the lives of artists, some of which are sure to resonate with aspiring artists.

1. ***My Name is Asher Lev* by Chaim Potok:** Sometimes the art an artist creates doesn't always match perfectly with the world view of those around him. In this story, readers will follow a Hasidic Jew who is devoted to his faith, but still feels compelled to create imaginative artwork – even if it borders on blasphemy.
2. ***The Bird Artist* by Howard Norman:** Following an artist who has come to terms with never being a big name, this story will engage you with descriptions of the natural world, interesting characters, and, of all things, a murder perpetrated by the artist himself.
3. ***The Great Man* by Kate Christensen:** Artists are often known for their scandalous private lives as much as for their work. In this story, a great painter has died, and two biographers are attempting to piece together the story of his life with help from his wife and his mistress. As you would imagine, conflict isn't far behind.
4. ***Landscape with Fragmented Figures* by Jeff Vanderhaar:** Things can't seem to get worse for Ray Casper, an artist and professor, who is central to this novel about art, love, brotherhood and more.
5. ***Notes from an Exhibition* by Patrick Gale:** Detailing the relationship between mental illness and creativity, Gale paints an artist so consumed by her work she fails to see the strength and struggles of her family.
6. ***The Horse's Mouth* by Joyce Cary:** Gullery Gimson is an artist unconcerned with creating conventional works or being conventional at all, for that matter. Despite his scorn for the outside world and questionable morals, he is a great artist, and readers will be inspired by his dedication to the creative process.
7. ***The Vivisector* by Patrick White:** Hurtle Duffield uses the imperfections of those around him as inspiration for his art, yet when he encounters someone within whom he sees himself, he takes a new and brutally honest look at the creative experience.
8. ***Moon and Sixpence* by W. Somerset Maugham:** Breaking away from societal norms, the main character quits his job and abandons his family to take up painting. Based very loosely on the life of Gauguin, it takes a hard look at what it means to be an artist, a human being and to live in society.
9. ***The Underpainter* by Jane Urquhart:** Painting and the creation of art can be a very emotional experience, something showcased in this compelling novel centered on an artist who paints over his canvases – just as he tries to repress memories of those he has loved in his life.
10. ***The Serpent Garden* by Judith Merril:** This historical romance is set in 16th century France and England. A young widow and painter gets involved in Henry VIII's political scheming and ends up as a royal court painter. Supernatural elements augment the tale, though it is rich with historical detail.
11. ***An Artist of the Floating World* by Kazuo Ishiguro:** This prize-winning novel is much more than a simple story of a Japanese artist. It spans generations and explores the gap between a father and his daughters– neither of which can understand the other.

### **The Art Business**

The art business is a cutthroat one, and makes the perfect subject for a wide range of novels, including these that touch on issues like competition, passion and less-than-honest sales.

1. ***The Tragic Muse* by Henry James:** Written by literary great Henry James, this novel showcases the conflict between the art world and the real world, following a man who gives up a political career to pursue his true love: painting.
2. ***Exiles in America* by Christopher Bram:** This novel examines the idea of being an exile, whether because of political unrest, sexual orientation or a range of other factors, and is full of drama, unexpected romance, jealousy and intrigue.

3. **Headlong by Michael Frayn:** The starring role in this novel isn't a character per se, but a painting by Breugel. Found in a run-down home by a unscrupulous art historian, the painting is at the center of this entertaining commentary on the dealings of the art world that also serves as an amazing art historical lesson on iconography and Dutch painting.

### Mystery and Intrigue

From stolen works of art to mysteries found in medieval paintings, these novels are sure to keep readers on the edge of their seats while teaching them a thing or two about art.

1. **The Name of the Rose by Umberto Eco:** Eco is well-known for his work as an medieval art historian, but in this work he creates a fictional whodunit set in a medieval monastic library. While fictional, it offers an amazing insight into the world of patrons, books, the church and more in medieval times.
2. **The Flanders Panel by Arturo Perez-Reverte:** At the center of this novel is Julia, an art restorer who discovers a strange inscription on a Flemish painting and becomes drawn into a solving the mystery that it poses.
3. **Chasing Vermeer by Blue Balliett:** This kids book follows two precocious youngsters as they attempt to track down a thief who has stolen a valuable Vermeer. While meant for younger readers, it's still a fun read for adults.
4. **My Name Is Red by Orhan Pamuk:** Set in 16th century Istanbul, this novel focuses on the murder of a book illuminator commissioned by the sultan to create a book to celebrate his life and times. Readers must not only try to figure out the mystery, but what the work of the master artist might mean.
5. **The Portrait by Iain Pears:** It can be hard to take criticism, but this novel takes it to the extreme with an portrait painter luring an art critic to a remote island with designs to taking revenge for wrongs he feels were done to him.
6. **Theft: A Love Story by Peter Carey:** Filled with international crime, art forgery, dangerous love affairs and a passion for the creative process, this novel is a great and exciting read for art lovers.
7. **The Music Lesson: A Novel by Katharine Weber:** A lonely and depressed art historian escapes to Ireland to get away from her life, but soon becomes embroiled in a plot to steal a famous Vermeer.
- 7.5. I'm adding **The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt**

### Miscellaneous

From romance to fantasy, these novels use art and artists to weave a wide range of compelling tales.

1. **Memory and Dream by Charles de Lint:** Reading almost like a fairy tale, this story focuses on a talented young painter called Isabelle, who can create works that have a life of their own. This enables her to help a friend who is dead, but is calling out to her from the spirit world.
2. **The Cheese Monkeys by Chip Kidd:** Any art student will get a kick out of this novel, following two art students as they go through their first semesters in graphic design, building a friendship and meeting a professor who will change their outlook on art.
3. **The Birth of Venus by Sarah Durant:** 15th century Florence was a hotbed of great artistic activity, but it was also the seat of much political unrest and the threat of the plague. This setting is the backdrop for a coming of age story that is as educational on this amazing period of art history as it is compelling on a human level.
4. **The Chrysalis: A Novel by Heather Terrell:** At the center of this novel is a portrait, a work which links three different storylines: that of a Dutch artist, the latter owner of the painting and a lawyer defending an auction house against claims the painting was stolen by the Nazis.
5. **The Stone Carvers by Jane Urquhart:** During the tumultuous years of WWI, the main characters of this novel meet, fall in love and are separated by war.

**Suggestion: Why not use one of these for your English summer reading assignment?**

(List from [www.onlinecollegecourses.com](http://www.onlinecollegecourses.com))

<http://www.onlinecollegecourses.com/2011/07/06/the-50-greatest-novels-for-art-students/>