

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

26/27

Department

SCAPVC - History of Art

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Otto Saumarez Smith

Credit value

30

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

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:

- Articulate knowledge and understanding of key works of British art and architecture of the period
- Analyse and evaluate the socio-economic structure of the art world during the inter-war period
- Demonstrate an ability to identify, analyse, and evaluate the connections between art practice and art criticism
- Compare and critically appraise differing manifestations of national and artistic identity within an informed historical trajectory

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 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	9 sessions of 3 hours (9%)
External visits	1 session of 3 hours (1%)
Other activity	2 hours (1%)
Private study	268 hours (89%)
Total	300 hours

Private study description

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

Other activity description

Revision session

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 A2

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
3,000 Word Essay Assessed essay	70%		Yes (extension)
Reassessment component is the same			
Assessment component			
Slide test (face to face) 2 hour exam	30%		No
Reassessment component			
Online examination			No

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback and dedicated feedback tutorials.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- THAA-V4P3 History of Art (Diploma)
 - Year 1 of V4P3 History of Art (Diploma)
 - Year 1 of V4P3 History of Art (Diploma)
- Year 3 of UHAA-V401 Undergraduate History of Art
- Year 3 of UHAA-V41P Undergraduate History of Art
- Year 4 of UHAA-V402 Undergraduate History of Art with Intercalated Year

- Year 3 of UHAA-V3R3 Undergraduate History of Art with Italian
- Year 4 of UHAA-V3R4 Undergraduate History of Art with Italian with Intercalated Year
- Year 4 of UITA-R3V3 Undergraduate Taught Italian and History of Art