Unit 06: Early Christian and Byzantine Art and Architecture

Content Area: **Fine Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**
Length: **6-8 sessions**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Art History Part 1 will provide students with an introduction to college coursework in art history. In this course, students will examine major forms of artistic expression from Ancient to Medieval times as well as those of Non-European cultures. Their explorations will enable them to develop an understanding and knowledge of architecture, sculpture, painting, and other art forms within diverse historical and cultural contexts. It will also provide an opportunity for Cranford High School students to explore an area that is only cursorily explored through other curricula in more depth. They will learn to look at works of art critically, with intelligence and sensitivity, and to analyze what they see. Students may continue with the coursework by electing to take Art History Part 2.

No prior experience in art history or fine art is required. Students who are successful and enjoy other courses in the humanities, such as history and literature, or in any of the arts, are strongly encouraged to enroll. While the course does not assume prior training or seek primarily to identify students who will major in art history in college, it does require a high degree of commitment to academic work and to the purposes of a program designed to meet college standards.

In this unit, students will explore art and architecture as an expression of spirituality in the early Christian and Byzantine eras. They will understand the history and contributions to the development of art and architecture that came out of these eras. They will also understand the origins of the religious iconography used during these eras.

Revision Date: July 2024 - Samantha Berk.

Essential Questions/Enduring Understandings

In what ways was early Christian art affected by the various cultures and religions of the era?

Why are the images of humans in early Christian and Byzantine so primitive in comparison to those of earlier cultures?

What significant innovations early Christians and Byzantines made in art and architecture?

In what ways did the design of early Christian and Byzantine religious architecture serve the faithful and evangelize to outsiders?

Early Christian art was in part an evangelical tool that incorporated iconography of pagan sects.

Religious beliefs forced a shift from naturalism to symbolic representations of the human form in art.

Early Christian and Byzantine architecture was designed to enhance the spiritual experience of the worshiper and to glorify and publicize the new religion.

Individual aesthetic and empathetic awareness developed through engagement with art can lead to understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world, and constructed environments. Visual arts influences understanding of and responses to the world.

How do life experiences influence the way you relate to art? How does learning about art impact how we perceive the world? What can we learn from our responses to art? What is visual art? Where and how do we encounter visual arts in our world? How do visual arts influence our views of the world?

Through artmaking, people make meaning by investigating and developing awareness of perceptions, knowledge and experiences.

How does engaging in creating art enrich people's lives? How does making art attune people to their surroundings? How do people contribute to awareness and understanding of their lives and the lives of their communities through artmaking?

Students Will Know

- Basic vocabulary of early Christian, and Byzantine art and architecture (basilica, nave, apse, pendent, domed basilica, mosaic, icons and iconoclasm, monastery, etc.)
- Major art materials and mediums used by the culture and/or during the time period.
- The basic history of the time period being explored.
- The characteristics unique to each structure.
- The geographical sites being explored.
- The identification information of selected works of art from the culture/time period.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

- Answer the essential questions.
- Completion of homework and in class assignments derived from classroom activities (such as but not limited to: Readings, study guide activities and worksheets on Early Christian and Byzantine Art and Architecture. Written Assignment: How can architecture enhance worship? List the major structural and ornamental elements of St. Marks (Venice). Beneath your list, relate how the elements help the building function as a sacred space. 10 minute AP essay writing.)
- Ongoing notes, sketches, handouts, and reflections compiled in notebooks.
- Participation in classroom activities such as: class discussion, Q and A sessions, cooperative group projects, role-playing, critique sessions, etc.
- Quiz: Early Christian and Byzantine Art and Architecture
- Self and teacher assessment using teacher generated rubric.

Learning Plan

- • Byzantine Art in Ravenna, Constantinople, and Venice: the rule of Justinian." o Handouts related to topic of discussion. o Discussion o Homework reading and study guide activity related to next class period topic.
- • Homework debriefing and presentation "The evolution of the Roman Basilica: St. Peter's Basilica; the shift from naturalism to symbolism in mosaic and ivory carving." o Handouts related to topic of discussion. o Homework reading and study guide activity related to next class period topic.
- • Homework debriefing and presentation "The transformation of the figure from naturalism to symbolic representation; the significance of architectural site and belief reflected in structure and ornament." o Handouts related to topic of discussion. o Discussion and Activity o Homework reading and study guide activity related to next class period topic.
- • Homework reading and study guide activity related to next class period topic.
- • Preview the essential questions and connect to learning throughout the unit.
- • Unit Quiz
- • Written Assignment: Written Assignment: How can architecture enhance worship? List the major structural and ornamental elements of St. Marks (Venice). Beneath your list, relate how the elements help the building function as a sacred space.

Materials

Google Slide Deck, Google classroom, textbooks, handouts, Edpuzzles, quizlet, kahoot, videos, art reproductions, Flash Cards, Notebooks, Vocabulary Sheets, Khan Academy, Smarthistory

Suggested Strategies for Modifications

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1whirPHhSur-WY5EGTzfLHayWczAu0O9Svu-0ggxyXFY/edit#gid=1426178898