



## Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VII

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Justify visual arts in relation to history and culture.
  - 1.1 Evaluate the social and political ideas that gave rise to Neoclassical art and architecture.
4. Analyze artworks using the application of media, techniques, and processes.
  - 4.1 Identify the techniques, media, and themes of the Renaissance and Romanticism.
  - 4.2 Define the stylistic features and artistic concerns characterizing Realism, Impressionism, and Post-Impressionism.

## Reading Assignment

### Chapter 17:

Renaissance and Baroque Europe

### Chapter 21:

Late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

The below link contains an interactive audio that will further explain techniques used during the Renaissance using Perugino's *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter* as an example:

Pearson (n.d.). Technique: Renaissance perspective [Audiovisual webpage]. Retrieved from  
<http://closerlook.pearsoncmg.com/view.php?type=closerlook&id=559>

Click [here](#) to access the *Closer Look* video titled "Technique: Renaissance Perspective."

Click [here](#) to access the video transcript.

The below link contains an interactive audio that will further explain Post-Impressionism using George Seurat's *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* as an example:

Pearson (n.d.). A Sunday afternoon on the island of La Grande Jatte. [Audiovisual webpage]. Retrieved from  
<http://closerlook.pearsoncmg.com/view.php?type=closerlook&id=655>

Click [here](#) to access the *Closer Look* video titled "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte."

Click [here](#) to access the video transcript

## Unit Lesson

### Chapter 17: Renaissance and Baroque Europe

During the Renaissance, humanism challenged the religious fervor of the Middle Ages. People were not discarding theology, but they were supporting secular life through intellectual and scientific inquiry and rediscovering classical culture of Greece and Rome. The focus began to shift from God and the hereafter to humankind and current culture. Most of us think of the Renaissance as the most important time for religious art, and it was, but artists at that time were not making religious work because they were inspired. Most artists, if not all, were commissioned by the church to make the beautiful art that we see today (Frank, 2014c).

The Renaissance began in Italy. Florence had a flourishing economy, and wealthy Italian merchants competed with one another for the recognition and power that come with owning artwork (Frank, 2014c). At this time, artists were trying to integrate Christian traditions with rational physical life in earthly space. The study of anatomy and nature came from growing scientific concerns to investigate.



Masaccio. *The Holy Trinity*. 1425.  
Fresco. 21' 10-1/2" x 10' 5".  
Santa Maria Novella, Florence, Italy. © Studio Fotografico Quattrone, Florence.  
[Fig. 17-2]

(Frank, 2014a, slide 9)

Masaccio was the first painter of the Renaissance. *The Holy Trinity* began the Renaissance and was the first painting based on correct linear perspective (please see above image or page 281 of your textbook). Masaccio learned how to paint humans with actual presence from Giotto, but he far exceeded his teacher with linear perspective skills (Frank, 2014c). This painting is more than correct linear perspective; it shows us the layers of mortality in Christianity. Starting at the very top of the painting, we have God the Father being defined in humanist terms as human. In between God and Jesus we have the Holy Spirit represented by a dove. Christ is the bridge into the spiritual realm, and at his feet are the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist. Both Mary and John are shown in the spiritual realm because they are saints. Outside of the spiritual realm, we have the donors. It was very popular to commission paintings for a church (and have yourself featured in it) to show that you are the reason for the painting being in the church. Below the donors, we have a sarcophagus that reads, "What I am, you shall become." This phrase is about as mortal as you can get. As morbid as it sounds, we all die; we will eventually be what the skeleton is. In this one painting, we see the range from extreme mortality to extreme spirituality. Another interesting tidbit, the painting's linear perspective is so correct that if you were standing in front of the painting, it would look like an opening in the wall. The ceiling in the painting is the same ceiling in the room surrounding it!

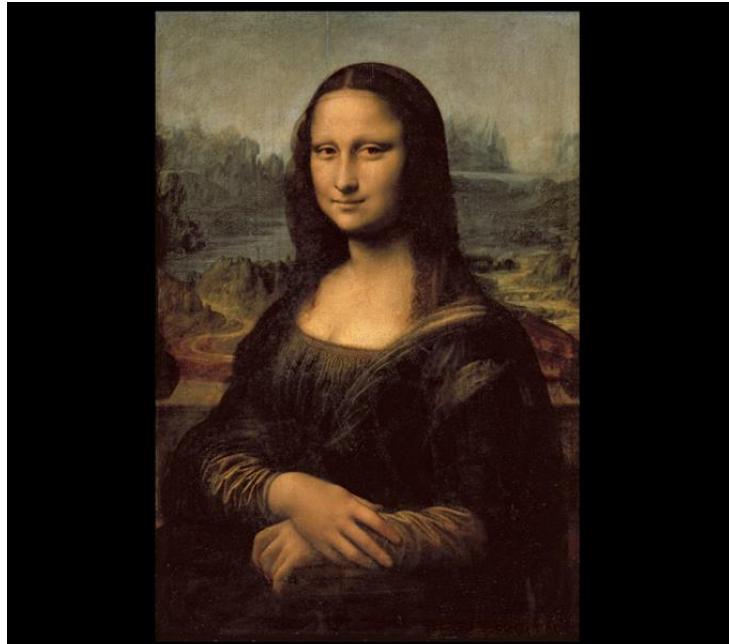


Donatello. *David*. c.1425-1430.  
Bronze. Height 62-1/4".

Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. © Studio Fotografico Quattrone, Florence.  
[Fig. 17.3]

(Frank, 2014a, slide 11)

During the Renaissance, we will see many Davids. David represents Florence, and anyone who commissioned a David is aligning with Florence and showing love for the city (Frank, 2014c). Keep in mind that only the extremely wealthy were able to afford commissioned art. David becomes the symbol of Florence as a reference to David and Goliath (Frank, 2014c). Florence was a small and wealthy city-state surrounded by stronger enemy city-states that wanted to conquer it. Many attacks were brought upon Florence, but in the end Florence always escaped.



Leonardo da Vinci. *Mona Lisa*. c.1503–1506.  
Oil on wood. 30-1/4" x 21".  
Musée du Louvre, Paris, France. RMN/Michel Urtado.  
[Fig. 17-7]

(Frank, 2014a, slide 19)

Leonardo da Vinci is one of the most popular artists of the High Renaissance. He felt that art and science were one in the same. If you could figure something out through drawing, you fully understood it. One of the most famous paintings that he created was *the Mona Lisa*, which is shown above and on page 284 of your textbook. He used a *sfumato* technique where everything is blurred (Frank, 2014c). If you do not see a sharp edge, your eye and mind creates one. He knew this and kept his edges blurred so that everything would seem perfect and correct. There are many theories on who the woman is, but a popular one is that she was a commissioned portrait of a banker's wife, which if this is true, would have been very unusual. There are many portraits of women at this time, but most were painted while the woman looks down or off in the distance. Women were not supposed to look men directly in the eyes, unless it was their husband, but here we have a woman looking right at us and starting to smile. The smile is the other difficult item he conquered in this painting, it is very hard to have a model pose for a long period of time holding a smile, much less paint one without it looking forced. In today's age of cameras it does not seem like a big deal, but to a painter who probably worked on this for months or years, it is a very big deal. He also accomplished the smile with *sfumato*. Although Leonardo da Vinci has many accomplishments under his belt, he also has many works left unfinished (Frank, 2014c). As soon as he would start a project, he would just as easily get sidetracked and start working on something else. He might have completed about 15% of everything he started!

Have you ever wondered how the thought "well, I am the artist, and what I say goes" started? In the Late Renaissance in Venice, Paolo Veronese began a commissioned painting in an eating hall used by a monastery. The monks had seen Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* (located on page 285 of your textbook) and wanted something similar in their dining hall to inspire them to higher spirituality while they ate. Veronese finished the painting, and the monks hated it. The painting was of a party—one where various nationalities are represented (some not sober) as well as "ladies of the night," dogs, wealthy merchants, and people just living it up. Ultimately taking him before the Inquisition, the church orders Veronese to repaint the painting to fit the *Last Supper*, and he refuses. He said he should be free to interpret any subject as he wishes. After the church threatens to excommunicate him, he decides to change the name to *Feast in the House of Levi* (Frank, 2014c).

## Chapter 21: Late 18th and 19th Centuries

In the late 18th century, the luxurious life of the French court was about to end. The people of France were tired of the king's extravagant ways, and they wanted a change. Their belief system had changed, and they no longer felt the king had their best interests in mind. Many people wanted France to be a republic.

Some artists at this time created art that was a call to arms for the people of France. They felt that the citizens of France wanted a change and should come forward to create the republic they desired. Since they wanted to be a republic, what better civilization to emulate than Rome? Rome was a successful republic, and many people involved in the revolution used and created Neoclassical art to spread the word. While Neoclassical art emulates Roman dress and standards, it still contains social ideas of the time. A rediscovery of classical (Greek and Roman) culture, as well as The Grand Tour (wealthy parents sending their children to study abroad) made the Neoclassical style very popular among everyone, not just revolutionists.



Jacques-Louis David. *The Oath of the Horatii*. 1784.  
Oil on canvas. 10' 10" x 14'.  
Musée du Louvre, Paris, France. RMN-Grand Palais/Gérard Blot/Christian Jean. [Fig. 21-1]

(Frank, 2014b, slide 6)

*Oath of the Horatii* by Jacques-Louis David (as shown above) is a perfect example of Neoclassicism. It plainly shows detached rationality and clear idealism. The subject matter is clearly Roman and shows the style of Roman military. The painting shows the beginning scene of a Roman legend of the virtuous Horatii brothers. Rome and a nearby city, Alba, had fallen into a dispute and decided to settle the dispute in an unusual way. Instead of fighting a major war, Rome would send three of its best soldiers, and Alba would do the same. However, the three soldiers that Rome is sending are brothers—just like the soldiers from Alba. The story is more involved when we find out that the Horatii brothers have a sister that is married to one of the brothers from Alba. The brothers from Alba also have a sister, and she is betrothed to one of the Horatii brothers. In this painting, we see the father calling his sons to fight or die for Rome. The scene around them looks like it could be in Rome, but in the background, we see how women were perceived in society. They were to be seen and not heard, and this scene shows it was thought that women could not control their emotions. Despite the fact that the women are falling apart, the men swear an oath to Rome.

Surprisingly, this painting was commissioned by royal patronage. Some historians say that David never intended for it to be a call to arms based on the fact that the painting was accepted into the Salon (controlled by royal society) and that he had royal commissions after this painting!



Angelica Kauffmann.

*Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi, Pointing to Her Children As Her Treasures.* c.1785.  
Oil on canvas. 40" x 50".

© Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. 75.22/50669.2. The Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund. Photo: Katherine Wetzel. [Fig. 21-2]

(Frank, 2014b, slide 8)

Another Neoclassical painting (shown above) is *Cornelia Pointing to Her Children as her Treasures*. Angelica Kauffman, the painter, was trained by her father. Women at that time were banned from the academy classes because the classes used unclothed models. Successful women artists had to have private tutors. Although, even in private classes, they were not allowed to study anatomy. Even though she was not able to fully study the body, her figures in this painting look believable. By viewing this painting, we can see that the setting and figures look to be Roman, a Neoclassical trademark. The story this painting tells is a little different from *Oath of the Horatii*. Here, we have Cornelia, mother of the Horatii brothers, encountering a woman. The woman is showing off her jewelry and stating that they are her most prized possessions. Cornelia immediately points to her children and says that they are her most prized possessions and treasures. Instead of contributing to the popular belief that women are delicate creatures that need to be sheltered from harsh realities, this painting acts out a rebuttle to *Oath of Horatii*. It asks, "How could this woman be weak and delicate if she raised three of the most virtuous men in Rome?" Surely women are able to do more than sit around and try to control their emotions. They are raising the new generation of upstanding citizens.

For every new style that emerges, a counterpart style will present itself. Romanticism was nearly the opposite of Neoclassicism. Neoclassicism was clear and rational while telling a moral or virtuous story. Romanticism, on the other hand, favors intense emotion and sometimes feelings over facts. Not all Romantic paintings are lies, but some may have embellished just a little to intensify the viewer's emotions. At this time in art history, people feel like their art should serve a purpose. Art should tell a story, inspire feelings, and contain a moral truth. So, Romantic artists want to tell a story that inspires strong feelings and emotions.

Francisco Goya is well known for his political prints, and in 1814 he paints a scene from the French Revolution. Napoleon's army marched into Spain, telling the king they were just passing through, but that was not the case. Napoleon's army invaded and put Napoleon's brother, Joseph, on the Spanish throne. Spaniards rebelled, and on May 3, 1808 the French army captured all of the Spanish rebels and executed them in the streets. Goya's painting *The Third of May* is an indictment of organized murder. In this painting, we see a Spanish man surrendering, while the French army gets ready to fire. The line of people that will soon die leads endlessly into the background—among them a monk.

In this painting, Goya is not only calling out the French army, but also aligning the Spanish with Christian icons. The man surrendering in the center of the painting stretches out his arms as Christ did on the cross—basically sacrificing himself for the Spanish. If we look carefully, we can see evidence of stigmata wounds on his hands.

This painting changed the depiction of war in art. Normally, art at this time showed war as a bloodless act without a ton of emotion. Here, we have Goya showing all the gory details that happened to his countrymen.

#### References

Frank, P. (2014a). *Chapter 17: Renaissance and Baroque Europe* [PowerPoint slides]. Boston, MA: Pearson

Frank, P. (2014b). *Chapter 21: Late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* [PowerPoint slides]. Boston, MA: Pearson

Frank, P. (2014c). *Prebles' artforms: An introduction to the visual arts* (11th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson

### Suggested Reading

If you would like to study the content from the required reading further, consider reviewing the below PowerPoint presentations. The presentations include images of the artwork discussed in the chapter and explanations:

Click [here](#) to access the Chapter 17 PowerPoint Presentation. Click [here](#) for a PDF version of the presentation.

Click [here](#) to access the Chapter 21 PowerPoint Presentation. Click [here](#) for a PDF version of the presentation.

The following video will further explain impressionism using various examples. Additionally, this video further explains the historical context:

ashley5360. (2011). *Impressionism - A revolution in art* [YouTube video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/v/HYVs8bb1ux0&app=desktop>

The National Museum of Women in the Arts website includes an art museum focused specifically on women's roles in art. The site offers virtual tours as well as a collection of pieces to view:

<http://www.nmwa.org/>