



## KIIS Prague Summer 2022

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### HON 300: Diversity Through Visual Culture

**Professor:** Dr. Zbynek "ZB" Smetana

**Email:** zsmetana@murraystate.edu

**Instructor's office hours:** on site and by appointment

*Syllabus subject to change*

**Course Description:** An interdisciplinary exploration, in study-abroad settings, of the visual arts, architecture, music, and theatre. Classes will consist of lectures, discussions, and presentations based on cultural experiences of the fine arts abroad, with related readings. Research and critical writing will be emphasized. Assignments will include class excursions, museum visits, and attendance at concerts and plays (as available on site).

The course provides students with bases of a largely contextual understanding of how various historical periods have expressed their world-views artistically. Students will better understand the diversity of political, economic, religious, social, and aesthetic traditions which are the foundations of arts, thus giving students a sense of the history of ideas.

*Honors colloquia are interdisciplinary in nature, and emphasize student-directed learning. Students participate in and lead discussion on various aspects of the broad topic, and select specific issues on which to base analytical writing projects.*

### 2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

**3. Course Objective and Specific Learning Outcomes:** This course will introduce students to a basic artistic vocabulary and the fundamental concepts that underlie the way arts interpret

the world (i.e., stylistic differences and the properties of various media); students will develop vocabulary with which to discuss art; the course will clarify the role of art and its function within society (i.e., changing critical standards and the cultural context in which art has been made) and its relationship to literature, philosophy, science, economics, as well as the changing role of an individual.

Because of the location (Prague) the so-called Western tradition will be emphasized. A variety of art forms from different historical periods will be studied. By understanding how various cultural influences throughout history have expressed their world-views artistically, student will better understand the diversity of political, economic, religious, social, and aesthetic traditions which are the foundation of art.

**4. Major Topics Covered in the Course:** Arts and visual culture are presented in a combination of thematic and chronological formats from Gothic to the present.

**5. Fulfillment of General Education Requirement:** This course is an equivalent of a standard course providing general visual literacy in all curricula using Gen. Ed. requirements

**6. Required Readings and Materials:** There is no specific textbook assigned. Rather the students will explore *Smarthistory* and *Khan Academy* online resources in combination with the onsite resources (handouts in museums etc) and provided short readings. Because of the experiential emphasis of the course, Reading equivalents of the "Place as a text" format are employed. As such, the class will take full advantage of the sites and exhibitions in Prague and excursions in the Czech Republic. The online resources will provide the bases for the on site lectures and on site discussions. Short essays and small creative projects are assigned to enforce an active learning through critical thinking about the addressed issues, and to reinforce the analytic skills taught in other general Humanities and Western Civilization courses.

**7. Grading Procedures:** This course maintains high academic standards by requiring the successful completion of the following:

Three essay exams at 100 pts each (two midterms and final)

The exams focus on the demonstration of the ability to analyze and synthesize the acquired knowledge in broader terms, as well as on the demonstration of objective knowledge: recognition and identification of major works of art or artists, styles, artists' methods and materials, and general terminology (Issues from your assigned readings as indicated below on syllabus may appear on the exams even if not specifically discussed in the class, e.g., terminology, definitions, etc).

Active creative exercises:

MEME based on students' photos: 50 pts

Photoessay (or videoessay) documenting students experiences: 50 pts

The exams will be based on readings, discussions, and lectures and the available site visits. They are designed to show the students' thorough knowledge of the material. The specific nature of individual exams will be discussed in class. Active participation in the class is expected.

## **8. Attendance Policy:**

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual to and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

## **9. Disability Accommodation:**

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, [maria.canning@wku.edu](mailto:maria.canning@wku.edu), to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, [haley.mctaggart@wku.edu](mailto:haley.mctaggart@wku.edu), if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

## **10. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:**

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Deborah Wilkins (270-745-5396 / [deborah.wilkins@wku.edu](mailto:deborah.wilkins@wku.edu)) or WKU's Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / [michael.crowe@wku.edu](mailto:michael.crowe@wku.edu)) or Joshua Hayes (270-745-5121 / [joshua.hayes@wku.edu](mailto:joshua.hayes@wku.edu)). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/eo/titleixbrochure2020.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.