Course Description: The course addresses the biological bases of human artistic behavior. The acquaintance of the biological and neurocognitive underpinnings of artistic behavior may largely facilitate the understanding of this otherwise bizarre activity in natural terms, this in turn helping to contextualize art in the frame Natural Selection. The approach provides a suitable basement to face questions on the possible evolutionary origins of art, its development, as well as its major milestones along human evolution. Although the course is mainly focused in visual art, much of its content can be applied to other forms of artistic behavior.

Exams: There are 15 multiple-choice tests, a test for each week. Each question counts equally. The exams comprise all (100%) of the undergraduate grade in the course. For graduate credit, the exams count 75% and a 10–15 page (APA format) term paper, on a pre-approved topic, counts 25%.

Grading Policy, Criteria, and Scale: Your grade will be determined by weekly exams, each of which will cover the primary reading material (15 short online overview lectures) plus additional readings expanding on the week's topic. Your final grade will be determined by the number of points that you receive out of a possible 300 points, noting that the bottom 10% in each category may be awarded a minus, and the top 10% in each category may be awarded a plus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exploring the motifs in human art I: Sex, drugs, and animals</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Exploring the motifs in human art II: The Savannah Hypothesis</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Art as a source of pleasure: Rewarding systems of the brain involved in visual art</td>
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<td>Perceptual mechanisms exploited by art I: Constancy and abstraction</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Perceptual mechanisms exploited by art II: Visual primitives</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>A comprehensive definition of art: Symbolic, figurative art vs. ornamental, “non-utilitarian” art</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Art by pre-modern humans</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Art by non-human primates and other animals. Symbols in non-human primates</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Perception as part of the puzzle: Visual perception in human and non-human primates</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Musculoskeletal systems involved in art (I): human vs. non-human primates</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Musculoskeletal systems involved in art (II): pre-modern vs. modern humans</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Neural motor control systems involved in art: non-human primates, pre-modern, and modern humans</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Embodied human cognition: perception equates action, theory of mind, and mirror neurons</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Pleasure in own and others’ actions: visual art and beyond (dancing and music)</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Social evolutionary pressures and art</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
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As an **undergraduate** student, your final grade will be determined by the number of points that you receive out of a possible 300 points on the quizzes:

- **A** 270-300 Points
- **B** 239-269 Points
- **C** 224-338 Points
- **D** 209-223 Points
- **F** 000-208 Points

As a **graduate** student, your final grade will be determined by the number of points that you receive out of a possible 400 (300 points on the quizzes, plus 100 points awarded for the research paper):

- **A** 360-400 Points
- **B** 319-359 Points
- **C** 299-318 Points
- **D** 279-298 Points
- **F** 000-278 Points

**Readings**

**Wk. Readings**


Komar and Melamid's “The Most Wanted Paintings on the Web": http://awp.diaart.org/km/


Critical reading of the article in Wikipedia about Art (concept, styles, classification, purpose): http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art


Watch these videos:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asQcyG4Qedl
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAvJEILFAEQ
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_PjV8rRgcU


**Extra Credit:** Extra credit is not offered in this course.

**Graduate Requirements:** Graduate students will complete a 10–15 page research paper on a topic approved by the professors by the specified due date.

**Due Dates and Deadlines:** The syllabus in Blackboard contains the deadline for each unit and specifies the dates by which the test must be completed. For each deadline, you have until 11:59 PM on the deadline day. Remember, these are DEADLINES. You are encouraged to stay well ahead of these deadlines. The sooner you complete the work, the sooner you'll be done with the course.

You must complete each unit by the specific date in the Blackboard version of the syllabus. Once that date has passed, you can still access the material in the unit, but you can no longer take the test associated with that unit. For example, if Unit 3 must be completed by Thursday,
September 16, if you don’t take Test 3 by 11:59 PM on September 16, you will receive a 0 for that test.

Prof. Martin-Loeches’ Expectations of You: During completion of this course, you must abide by the UCCS Student Conduct Code. This code specifies what is considered proper and improper student conduct, including matters such as cheating and inappropriate behavior. Students who do not abide by the code can receive sanctions ranging up to expulsion from the course or the university.

Remember that this is a 3 credit-hour course. Please plan on spending a lot of time working on just this class. This time will include reviewing lesson plans, completing online lectures, reading from your textbook, answering practice problems, verifying your work, and completing test. We suggest that you plan to spend at least 10 hours per week on average. Of course, the amount of time spent does not guarantee you any particular grade. Your letter grade will reflect the amount of material that you learned, as reflected in your test scores and the overall quality of your contributions to the course.

Solving Technical Difficulties: When you’re having technical difficulties (pages not loading, connectivity problems, not able to view images, things not working as they should, etc.), please contact the Blackboard Helpdesk toll-free at 877.654.8309 or online at the UCCS Blackboard Support page. The Blackboard Helpdesk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please note this service is separate from the UCCS IT Helpdesk.

Help Understanding Course Material: When you have questions regarding course policies, grading criteria, test administration, or course content, please email your professor for assistance.