

Academic Year/course: 2021/22

28143 - Symbols, Arts and Beliefs in Prehistory

Syllabus Information

Academic Year: 2021/22

Subject: 28143 - Símbolos, artes y creencias en la Prehistoria

Faculty / School: 103 - Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

Degree: 418 - Degree in History

ECTS: 5.0

Year: 4

Semester: Second semester

Subject Type: Optional

Module:

1. General information

2. Learning goals

3. Assessment (1st and 2nd call)

4. Methodology, learning tasks, syllabus and resources

4.1. Methodological overview

The methodology followed in this course is oriented towards the achievement of the learning objectives. A wide range of teaching and learning tasks are implemented, such as lectures, practice sessions, autonomous work, study and assessment tasks.

Students are expected to participate actively in class throughout the semester.

Further information regarding the course will be provided on the first day of class.

4.2. Learning tasks

The course includes the following learning tasks:

- Lectures.
- Practice sessions.
- Autonomous work and study.
- Assessment tasks.

4.3. Syllabus

The course will address the following topics:

SECTION I: PALEOLITHIC ART

- Topic 1. The Discovery of Paleolithic art . From Altamira to Chauvet. Milestones in the research. The extension of Palaeolithic art. The three main areas of France: Dordogne-Lot, the Rhone and the Pyrenees. The Iberian Peninsula: Cantabrian coast. Mediterranean coast. Meseta and Portugal. Paleolithic art in Europe.
- Topic 2. Technologies: Systems of lighting and access. The engraving: incision, excision, staking, scraping. The sculpture, the bas-relief and the shaping. The painting: colours and pigments. The recipes. Pads and blowing. (Hand stencils). Combined techniques.

- Topic 3. Themes: zoomorphic, anthropomorphic figures and signs. Thematic Associations. Themes and topography. The organization of a Palaeolithic sanctuary. The representation of the seasonal variations.
- Topic 4. The chronology. Stylistic chronology: Abate Breuil's cycles and Leroi Gourhan's styles. Latest contributions to the old styles. Conventions of representation and their chronological value: The problem of Chauvet. The portable art: Villaverde and the documentation of Parpalló. Central European portable art. The absolute chronology: AMS dating, thermoluminescence and Uranium Thorium. Pollution problems. What are we dating? Nerja seals.
- Topic 5. The interpretation of art: Art for art in leisure time. Hunting magic and magic of possession. Hands with incomplete phalanges. Sexual interpretation: horses and bison, closed and open signs. The social interpretation. Dominant animals and aggregation sites. The dancer bison of Castillo cave. Shamanism.
- Topic 6. Topography. Sanctuaries of light and deep sanctuaries. Secret art and public art. The figure in your space. Use of natural reliefs, cracks and holes. Adapting to support in the portable art. The scenic composition of the great sanctuaries: Pech Merle, Rouffignac, Niaux and Altamira.

SECTION II: POST-PALEOLITHIC ART

A. Levantine Art.

- Topic 7. The Discovery. From Calapatá to the last findings in Aragon. Geographical distribution: Five zones of the Levantine art. The Levantine landscape. Accessibility, orientation, association to straits. Valltortas. Territorial markers? The deterioration by natural or human factors.
- Topic 8. The Techniques. Differences with the Palaeolithic art. The engravings of Barranco Hondo (Teruel). The painting: colours, stripes and spot colours. Analysis of pigments: Valdelcharco. Overlapping colours.
- Topic 9. The themes of Levantine art. The human as protagonist. Men and their ornaments. Women. The animals and their association. The big bulls. The deers. Goats and wild boars as victims. Other animals. Walkers scenes. Scenes of hunting with bow and boomerang. War scenes: parades, battles, execution, surrender and exclusion. Ceremonial scenes: the capture of living deer, dance scenes, exhibition scenes. Are there Farmers and Shepherds scenes?
- Topic 10. The chronology. Not a Palaeolithic art. The great debate: Mesolithic hunters or Neolithic farmers? Product of the confrontation between two economic systems? J. Fortea's three indicators: stylistic parallels with the portable art, stylistic overlays and archaeological deposits at the painted shelters. The Sarga overlappings between Levantine and schematic art. The styles of the human figure: a chronological proposal.

B. The Schematic art and Western art.

- Topic 11. Types of "schematic art". The "linear-geometric" of Fortea. The "macroschematic" or Petracos style. The schematic and its variants: Seminatualism and Abstraction. Distribution of schematic art in the Iberian Peninsula.
- Topic 12. Techniques. Schematic art painting. Colors.
- Topic 13. The themes of schematic art. Types of human and animal figures. The scenes. The signs. The themes of Western art and its chronological proposal.
- Topic 14. The chronological discussion of schematic art. The macroschematic art: an art of the Early Neolithic. Overlays. The deposits at the foot of the paintings. The chronology of schematic art. The parallels in the movable art: the painted pebbles of Chaves, ceramic decorations from the Neolithic of the Alicante area. The Chalcolithic parallels of Andalusian ceramics.
- Topic 15. Western art. Distribution in Europe. Iberian Peninsula. Baltic area. Val Camonica. Engraving techniques. Incision, staking and excision. The themes. Chronology. Megalithic art in Brittany (France) and Ireland.

C. Sahara Art.

- Topic 16. The climatic issue. Periodization. Themes, styles and conventions.

4.4. Course planning and calendar

Further information concerning the timetable, classroom, office hours, assessment dates and other details regarding this course, will be provided on the first day of class or please refer to the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts website (<https://fyl.unizar.es/>); academic calendar: <http://academico.unizar.es/calendario-academico/calendario>, timetable: <https://fyl.unizar.es/horario-de-clases#overlay-context=horario-de-clases>; assessment dates: <https://fyl.unizar.es/calendario-de-examenes#overlay-context=>