

To: AP Art History Students (2011 – 2012 school year)

From: Deb Sumpter, APAH teacher

Re: The class, the summer reading, expectations, etc.

Hello! I am VERY pleased that you decided to take this exciting class for several reasons:

- There is much value to be found in discovering the relationship between art and the society in which it is made. We will explore and examine various cultures, from ancient times up to our current age.
 - There will be opportunities to make connections between history, geography, politics, religion, languages, literature and the visual arts – and these connections will increase your understanding of ALL of these subjects!
 - One stated “purpose” of taking this class is to prepare students for success when taking the AP Art History exam in the spring. . . there is the possibility that you will earn college credit if you receive a qualifying score on the AP Art History exam - - - which could translate into you saving time AND money in college!
 - The study of art history is not only interesting; it is fun!
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The following class Text will be provided to you on the first day of class (and then you will keep this “8 pound monster” at home – no carrying back and forth!):

TEXT: Kleiner, Fred S., Christin J. Mamiya, and Richard G. Tansey. *Gardner's Art Through the Ages*, 11th ed. San Diego: Harcourt College, 2001.

Two Summer Assignments: due first day of class

NO extensions will be granted

1. Although the primary text for this class is *Gardner's Art Through the Ages*, **there is another book I would like for each student to purchase this summer** to help prepare you for the class: ***The Annotated Mona Lisa***, by Carol Strickland. It is an entertaining book that gives a “crash course in art history from Prehistoric to Post Modern”. It is a fun and “easy way to become more familiar with some of the subjects and specific language used in studying art history. Read as much of the book as you can ahead of time . . . and bring it to class with you on the first day.

****Reading this book will also inspire you in selecting the artworks for the second part of your summer assignment!***



The Annotated Mona Lisa takes art history out of the realm of dreary textbooks to a world of dynamic design, succinct page-length essays, and instructive sidebars. These graphic devices heighten the reader's ability to retain an impressive amount of information, even through a cursory reading. A brief runthrough of the book's captions and sidebars provides a mini crash course in art history. Incorporating more than 300 illustrations (one-third in full-color), *The Annotated Mona Lisa* draws on the very elements of art—composition, movement, balance, color, and design—to achieve a visual and textual approach to the subject that no ordinary textbook could approximate. From Stonehenge to the Guggenheim, from Holbein to Warhol, the language of art is clarified through five sections.

Strickland, Carol, PhD, *The Annotated Mona Lisa: A crash Course in Art History from Pre-Historic to Post Modern*, 2nd edition, Andrew McMeel Publishing, 1992.

***Note: the paperback edition is cheaper and many used copies are available online for below \$10**

2. “Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.” - Pablo Picasso

This year in AP Art History, there will be discussion of history, new vocabulary, analysis of context and artistic intent...all of this is necessary to the program and to the exam itself. However, no matter how much learns *about* art, there will always be the central question: “Do I like this?” Our emotional response and inner thoughts about a work of art are what gives it its essential meaning. I can tell you that one work of art is more important than another, but within your own *aesthetic* you may disagree. (PLEASE read over the attached handout which explains 3 different criteria for judging whether art is successful or not!)

The second part of your summer assignment is also due the first day of class: COLLECT a set (of copies) of eight artworks that literally “move your soul, stay in your mind, appeal to some essential “likes” or “dislikes” that are part of your nature.” . . . and PRESENT them to me in a creative way – explaining WHY these 8 pieces “touch” you.

You may find these works in books, on the web, or at an art museum you visit over the summer (now THERE's a great idea!). In addition to the “classical” arts of sculpture, drawing & painting, you may also choose from photography, ceramics, textiles, graphic arts, or jewelry. I will be looking for examples of your personal aesthetic, rather than any specific style of artwork.

***Be sure to be “creative” in the way you present these; in a handmade folder, a scrapbook, a poster, or some other way you find interesting. Don't forget to include the name of the artist, the title, and any other information you think is pertinent – (ie: size, where the original is now, media, year created, etc.)**

Need to contact me over the summer?

Email me at deb_sumpter@gwinnett.k12.ga.us or Call my cell: (770) 365-3050