The Visual Arts in French Society, IFS, spring 2007
Thursdays, 9:45-12:15, 302 Silver Center

Kenneth E. Silver (Office hours: Thurs. 1-3)

Objective: This course is designed as an intensive survey of a little over a half-century of art-making in France (primarily painting and sculpture, as well as architecture and decorative arts) c. 1895-1950, with a special emphasis on representations and constructions of French identity.

Course requirements: regular attendance, class participation, extensive reading, museum visits; culminating in a 10-15 page term paper (which will be read and commented upon by entire class).

Schedule of classes and reading assignments (all readings listed are due to be read for that date—all readings are available on Blackboard)

January 18: Why the visual arts, why France? Introductory remarks

January 25: Visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 20th-century permanent galleries (Wallace Wing): we will meet at the information booth, main entrance of the museum, at 10:20. From 10:30-11:45, we will first look briefly at fin-de-siècle French decorative arts on our way to early 20th-century Parisian painting and sculpture. We have a group reservation, but if you are late get a button on your own and then look for us in the Wallace Wing.

February 1: Imagining the Nation: The Look of the Third Republic


February 8: Landscape, Regression and the Avant-Garde

MoMA reaction papers assigned


February 15: We Modern Primitives
February 22: Cubism, Nationalism, and Modernity


March 1: About Face: Art and La Grande Guerre

MoMA reaction papers due, in class


March 8: Post-War Purities


March 15: (spring break)

March 22: The Un-classical Body
[Term-paper topics due, in class]


March 29: Groups, Regions, and Self-Reference: Paris ‘37


April 5: Occupation and the Post-War Moment


**April 9: term-papers due: e-mail to all class members**

April 12: Round Table I: Discussion of term papers

April 19: Round Table II: Discussion of term papers (final class)

April 26: A synthesis and thoughts on future work in French culture