

## OLLI at DU On Campus Syllabus – Fall 2024

### Art in Germany Between the World Wars: Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity) -

Subject Area History and Economics

Monday Afternoons Online; Eight weeks

Instructor: Linda Susak

#### 1. **SUMMARIZE YOUR COURSE**

The introduction to the class will present the historical setting and *Zeitgeist* following 1918, the end of the great war (as it was called then). the instructor will give lectures accompanied by slides which will then continue with discussing the art movement called *Neue Sachlichkeit* and the artists who were a part of this. Readings and videos, as appropriate, will be discussed. Each class will continue a 10-minute *breakout room*, in which groups of 3-4 students will discuss a specific topic and then present their opinions to the entire class. Students are encouraged at every part of each class to add their comments, ask questions, and analyze works of art.

Students should gain a good understanding of Germany in the 1920s from a historical perspective and be able to recognize works of this art period and understand why the works were painted in such a fashion, as well as recognize names of some of the artists from this period. This class is for all students: both those who have a background in art history or German and those who have none; through this course, they will start to appreciate art movements and learn how to analyze a work of art.

#### 2. **BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE ORGANIZED BY CLASS SESSION:**

##### **Week #1 (September 16, 2024):**

Description of the social, historical and political setting after 1918 in Germany into which Gustav Hartlaub's *Kunsthalle Mannheim Exhibition* introduced the first works which he termed *Neue Sachlichkeit* in 1925; influences on the movement, definition if it and rejection of *Expressionism*; Johann Gottfried Fichte's definition of the subject/object continuum. Otto Dix, George Grosz and Max Beckmann as the main proponents of the movement, but their beginnings as *Expressionists*.

**Reading:** <https://www.britannica.com/art/realism-art>

##### **Week #2 (September 23, 2024):**

Otto Dix as the founder of *Neue Sachlichkeit* and the other *Verists* (the so-called left wing of *Neue Sachlichkeit*): George Grosz, Max Beckmann, Christian Schad, Karl Hubbuch, Rudolf Schlichter and George Scholz, Otto Griebel and Heinrich Maria Davringhausen; the motifs of

portraiture and *Old Master* techniques as an inherent part of the *Verist* artists, as well as sex murders.

**Reading: "Otto Dix's 'Portrait of Josef May'", by William H. Robinson from *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, Oct. 1987, Vol. 74, No. 8 (Oct., 1987), pp. 306-331.**

### **Week #3 (September 30, 2024):**

*Die Neue Frau (The New Woman)* and gender roles in the 1920s; Otto Dix' *Sylvia von Harden* as gender reversal; the *Bubikopf* (bob haircut), the monocle, sex in Berlin and homosexual sub-cultures; Eugen Steinach's *Institute for Sexual Science* in Berlin; Johanna Ey as art patron and example of *Die Neue Frau*; the sad case of Einar Wegener and the first transgender studies.

Artists of the so-called right wing of *Neue Sachlichkeit* (also called the *Neoclassicists* or proponents of *Magic Realism*): Carl Grossberg, Franz Lenk, Anton Räderscheidt, Alexander Kanoldt and Franz Radziwill.

Objects of still life paintings: technology and cacti.

**Reading: "New Women, New Men, New Objectivity", by Maria Makela in *New Objectivity: Modern German Art in the Weimar Republic 1919-1933*, edited by Stephanie Barron and Sabine Eckmann (Los Angeles County Museum of Art: 2015), pp. 54-61.**

### **Week #4 (October 7, 2024):**

Photography of *Neue Sachlichkeit*: August Sander and Albert Renger-Patzsch; photomontage as a technique (especially used by Christian Schad); still lifes (such as cacti and machines) used in photography and their significance; the Nazi rise to power and its effect upon *Neue Sachlichkeit*; examples of the ideal Nazi art (*Blut und Boden*) as it related to Kanoldt Radziwill and Schrimpf and the photographer, Albert Renger Patzsch, under the new heading of *Die Neue Deutsche Romantik (German Neo-Romanticism)*.

The "machine aesthetic" in the U.S. called *Precision and Machine Aesthetic* and examples; Charles Sheeler as the American *Neue Sachlichkeit* painter and his River Rouge Plant Series for the Ford Motor Company. The *Verists* appropriation by the German Democratic Republic as their inheritance; photorealism as an offshoot of *Neue Sachlichkeit*: Gottfried Helmwein's *Anbetung der Könige*.

**Reading: "August Sander" by Anne Halley from *The Massachusetts Review*, Winter, 1978, Vol. 4, pp. 663-673.**

**Week #5 (October 14, 2024):**

*Old Masters* technique in *Northern Renaissance* art (Albrecht Dürer, et al) and *Neue Sachlichkeit* pieces; how this overly realistic method of paintings became eerie and other-worldly and led to *Surrealism*;

**Reading: "New Objectivity. Male Subjectivity and Weimar Cinema", Richard W McCormick, *Women in German Yearbook*, 1994, Vol. 10 (1994), pp. 1-18.**

**Week #6 (October 21, 2024):**

Additional artists of *Neue Sachlichkeit*: Hans Baluschek, Gustav Wunddrwald, Otto Nagel, Ernst Fritsch, Hans Grundig, Carlo Mense, William Scharrenberger; motifs of the *object portrait*, technology and the objectification of the human being.

**Reading: <https://www.theartstory.org/movement/new-objectivity/>**

**Week #7 (October 28, 2024)**

The artists: Rudolf Dischinger, Bartel Gilles, Walter Ballhuse, Jeanne Mammen, Erich Wegner, Lotte Jacobi and Paul Kleinschmidt; photographers: Aenne Biermann and Hans Finsler; Hanna Höch and photomontage; discussion of Else Lohse-Wächtler and her feminist view of *Weimar Republic* culture; her association with Conrad Felixmüller, Lohse-Wächtler as a symbol of *Die Neue Frau*; symbolization of prostitutes evident in the works of Dix and Schlichter, et al.

**Reading: "Elfriede Lohse-Wächtler: A Feminist View of Weimar Culture", Brittany L. Salsbury, *Women's Art Journal* Fall-Winter, 2008, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 23-30.**

**Week #8 (November 4, 2024):**

*New Objectivity* artist Felix Nussbaum: his life, works and tragic end; the fate of *New Objectivity* professors at art academies in Germany in 1933; exhibition on *Entartete Kunst (Degenerate Art)* in 1937 in Munich; appropriation of *Neue Sachlichkeit* during the two German dictatorships after 1933: first in the *Third Reich* until 1945 and then in the GDR (East German) from 1949 to 1990, resulting in *Social Realism*.

**Reading: "Social Realism in East Germany", John R. Frey, *The German Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No 4 (Nov 1953), pp. 272-278.**