

“Basic Introduction to Historical Periodization”

Historical, literary, and many other areas of study rely on “periodization” and “canonicity” to make generalizations and ascribe general characteristics about the periods listed below.

Periodization charts progressive time as understood in the West. Canonicity is derived from “canon” which means, “a general rule, principle, or criterion by which something is judged.” In other words, canonicity refers to what each period deemed valuable, and worthy of exalting.

While the periods below represent gross generalizations, they will help frame our class discussions.

Historical Periodization

Pre-Columbian/Medieval (c. before 1492)

Renaissance (c. 1492 to c. 1600s)

Baroque (c. 1600s to c. 1700s)

Romanticism (c. 1800s)

Modernism (c. 1800s c. mid-1900s)

Postmodern (c. mid-1900s to Present/2000s)

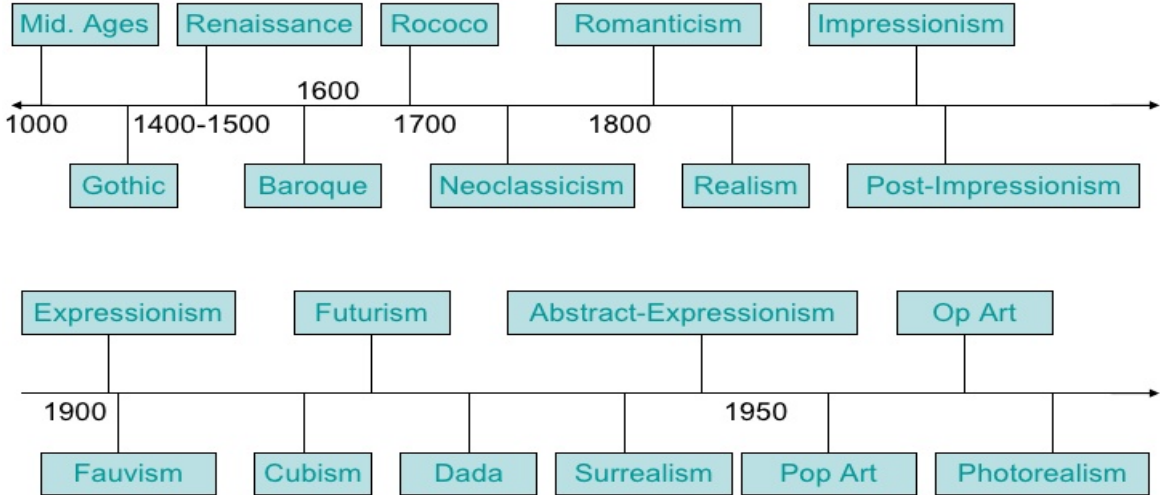
“Canonicity”

As noted, canonicity refers to what each period deemed valuable, and worthy of exalting.
-Can you guess what our current historical moment deems values and worthy?

-How are the examples you came up with different from previous periods? Why do you think that is so?

Examples of periodization in the field of Art History:

Timeline



(Visual 1: rendering of art historical “periods” and styles)