ARTS CAN BE OF GREAT BENEFIT for students to learn about history. This article presents results of a three-year research project at the university level on the use of specific examples from the arts for a variety of courses in U.S. and European history as well as a course on history methods. All the examples we used consisted of images (painting and photography), film, and music. We know that many students are visual and aural learners, and that the arts can prompt emotional engagement with a subject, which in turn can enhance learning.¹ It is thus a basic premise of this article that visual and/or aural examples can often improve students’ understanding about historical events or movements, in part because the arts can help provide meaning to what students are learning.² Images and/or sounds, we believe, can further serve as mnemonic devices to improve students’ retention of facts. In trying to understand how the arts can be of benefit in teaching history, we sought to develop methods and tools that teachers can apply in the classroom to help students learn about historical events, movements, and ideas.
Objectives and Research Methods

Two main objectives have been at the core of this project from the outset. The first objective was to understand how teachers have used the visual and performing arts in their humanities courses in the past, with a focus on painting, photography, film, and music. Scholars have long realized that images (painting and photography) can make a difference in learning. Likewise, much research has been done on the use of documentaries and feature films in the classroom. Comparatively less work has been done on the use of music in the classroom, despite the fact that songs and instrumental music can be very effective in teaching history. We thus sought to find out which arts could be best applied to specific periods or events, noting in each case the importance of the arts and/or artists in countries or eras that we taught.

The second objective was student-centered: to understand which specific art forms and examples students themselves found most helpful in learning about a particular historical period or event. This objective demanded the testing of a variety of art forms (painting, photography, film, and music) while teaching students about a historical era or event. We were especially interested in discovering art examples that tend to reinforce students’ ability to retain information, or to memorize facts about a particular era or event or person. This second objective not only required student feedback, but also sought to get students to think creatively about the field of history. If the arts indeed “provide alternative perspectives on historical events,” then they can be a catalyst for approaching the subject matter that does not rely solely on texts. Ideally, according to theorists on memory, the inclusion of creativity can help students retain more information in the long term. A primary goal of the project, therefore, was for students to think both constructively and creatively about historical themes, events, and movements.

The principal methods of this research project were both theoretical and practical. Through a study of the secondary literature on theoretical approaches to arts, education, and memory, we first sought to determine the best approaches to adopt in emphasizing the arts in the teaching of history. The second method was experiential. In combining theory with practice, we wanted to answer several questions. Which approaches work best for students to understand
history through the arts? Why are some approaches better than others? How do the visual and performing arts aid in the retention of facts? In surveys we created, students first ranked their responses to different art forms on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, and could then write in their responses in more detail (see Appendix A). The use of the survey format formed a critical part of the project; rather than simply relying on anecdotal evidence in the classroom, the surveys gave us both quantitative and qualitative data to assess impact (see Appendix B). As Yonghee Suh noted, “empirical studies on how art is actually incorporated into history classrooms are scarce.” This research project aimed to help resolve that problem.

Of benefit in this project was Barbara Ormond’s three-level guide method as a precursory example. Drawing on Harold Herber’s three-level guides for students’ textual interpretation, Ormond applied Herber’s method to historical images through her emphasis on teachers’ written statements, along with written evaluations from students. Our research methods concurred with Ormond’s assertions that the “[t]eaching of context and content alongside interpretation can be largely controlled by the teacher.” However, we recognized the bias of this control throughout this experimental stage, and attenuated it through frequent collaborative meetings for each survey—its outline, research, assembly, correspondent lecture, and participants’ feedback. We thus sought to understand the importance of each artist or artwork highlighted in a given survey and to try to communicate that importance and context to students.

Our project’s second objective of critical and creative engagement required us to recontextualize Ormond’s method regarding students. That objective expected undergraduate students to look at and interpret the art forms in each survey, and to demonstrate language and historical competency beyond “develop[ing] statements.” As with potential biases, we were aware of the similar risks with language hindrances. Yet we agreed with Ormond’s conclusion that “[i]n creating circumstances where what is seen and what is known is intricately interwoven, the visual culture of any given historical period can be better understood.” Just as Ormond bridged Herber’s guides from the textual to the visual, so too did our project extend this approach to include a wider sample of visual and performing arts sources.

By implementing various art forms, and then gauging their impact through a series of student surveys, this project thus aimed to provide
a model for the use of the arts in teaching history. We typically distributed the surveys immediately after presenting the art forms, although in several instances, where indicated, we gave the surveys two to four weeks afterward in order to test longer-term memory. All of the art forms discussed below received high marks from students in terms of improving their learning (each art form received a 4 or 5 on a Likert scale of 1 to 5), so their comments were indicative of overall student response rather than merely being anecdotal. We will share some of our findings and point to possible avenues for further research in the conclusion to this article.

Images

In general, students enthusiastically responded to both paintings and photographs. For example, two paintings in a course on the French Revolution and Napoleon were well-received: Nanine Vallain’s Marianne or Allegory of Liberty (1792) and Jacques-Louis David’s The Death of Marat or Marat Assassinated (1793). One student commented, “the Allegory of Liberty fascinates me because this image resembles the United States Lady Liberty,” whereas “The Death of Marat is a very captivating and striking image. This image shows just how gruesome and chaotic France was during this period.” An advantage of these illustrations is that they are primary sources, thus prompting discussions about the value of visual art in propaganda for a movement. Such images helped students gain insights of the struggles of those who lived during these times, thereby encouraging empathy in the subject. “Images are the ultimate primary source for early modern History,” wrote one student. As another student wrote in their response to the Allegory of Liberty, “[t]he Jacobin hat that she is wearing, the tree as a symbol of life and the pages that she is holding, portray her as a symbol of the Revolution.” Another noted how the painting provided “an understanding of the way that the citizens dressed and expressed themselves with the Revolutionary hat.” Further, “Marianne’s elegance and pose of both power and symbolic strength is extravagantly well done to encapsulate what the Revolution hopes for.” Another student concluded that the “Allegory of Liberty contains a wealth of relevant symbolism,” whereas “The Death of Marat is a great example of French propaganda.” This latter comment underlined a key aspect of the French Revolution:
Figure 1: Nanine Vallain’s *Marianne* or *Allegory of Liberty* (1792). Image available at Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vallain-liberty.jpg>.
Figure 2: Jacques-Louis David’s *The Death of Marat or Marat Assassinated* (1793). Image available at Wikimedia Commons,<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Death_of_Marat_by_David.jpg>.
the importance of images in reaching a largely illiterate population and in persuading them to support the revolution.

For a class on Modern Europe, in discussing the change in fortunes of Napoleon and the Revolutionary Army after the disastrous invasion of Russia in 1812, we had much success with a painting by Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier, *Campaign of France, 1814* (1864). In this image, Napoleon and his troops are returning to France after losses at the Battle of Laon in March 1814. One student claimed that “[t]he symbolism in the images [was] very clearly depicting the mood, perspective and narrative the artist was trying to capture. The posturing specifically added a layer of emotion that was helpful in evaluating the tone.” Another student agreed: “It is much more clear in what it is trying to portray as far as tone goes. Napoleon is much less grand than he is depicted in other paintings, [and] for me that drives home just how devastating this was for him.” Although Meissonier created this work fifty years after the invasion itself, *Campaign of France, 1814* helps serve the purpose of discussing how the French themselves viewed the event and so reflected their own understanding of the past.

**Figure 3:** Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier, *Campaign of France, 1814* (1864). Image available at Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Meissonier_-_1814,_Campagne_de_France.jpg>.
Figure 4: Dorothea Lange’s “Migrant Mother #6” (1936). Image available at Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lange-MigrantMother02.jpg>.
As with paintings, photographs can also be useful primary sources in learning about an event or era. For a course on U.S. cultural and intellectual history, two primary source images that helped bring the Dust Bowl “alive” were Dorothea Lange’s “Migrant Mother #6” (1936) and Arthur Rothstein’s “Farmer and Sons in Dust Storm” (1936). Before presenting these images, we began with a discussion of the impact of the Great Depression on the country, and then focused on the Dust Bowl and its impact on farmers and rural towns. As one student explained, “[t]he photographs have influenced my understanding of the Dust Bowl in that one can vividly see the
struggles and hardships that are associated with [it]. Photographers such as Lange help to put into context the experiences that normal people had during the Dust Bowl. You can’t help but to see the disappointments and sorrow in their eyes.” Similarly, another student wrote that “Arthur Rothstein’s and Dorothea Lange’s photographs offered an opportunity to compare and contrast the ways in which both photographers depicted the Dust Bowl. Moreover, all the photographs reinforced the idea/metaphor of ‘human erosion.’” Such comments emphasized the importance of visual imagery in sparking student interest and empathy in often distant historical themes and ideas. The vital sense of “being there” was a common result of viewing such photographs.

Films

As with paintings and photographs, there were several films that students felt aided them in learning about specific subjects. We used both feature films and documentaries; interestingly, documentaries tended to do better overall in the surveys than feature films. Although scholars have written widely about using feature films to enhance empathy or interest among students, documentaries can provide special insights into historical eras or themes that feature films cannot.13

In a course on history methods titled “Approaches to History,” during a section covering environmental history, we used the documentary Surviving the Dust Bowl (1998) from the PBS series, American Experience.14 After an extended discussion about the origins and impact of the Dust Bowl, we showed the entire documentary, and a highlight of this film consists of interviews or personal impressions by those who survived the Dust Bowl. One student wrote that “the film offered visual sources to emphasize the powers of the dust and the strong winds that carried it. It helped display how families were affected and their reactions as well.” Another student appreciated how the documentary “really helped with understanding the emotional toll it took on these people,” noting “how the dust clouds looked and the reason behind it with health issues it caused.” Similarly, a student liked how the “film added personal accounts of the event that went beyond what a photograph provides. Being able to see the dust clouds provides a deeper understanding
of what that meant beyond descriptions.” Thus, the visual power of the images was combined with oral histories with actual survivors, leaving a powerful sense of understanding not just the reasons for the Dust Bowl, but also how it affected those who witnessed it. As one student wrote, “The film concisely summarized the events… from primary sources of descendants to the chronological progress of the drought and reactions,” with the result that “the film provides wonderful breadth on the subject.”

Students also responded well to a documentary we showed in its entirety for a class on Medieval and Renaissance Europe. Titled *The Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance* (2004), the film proved very popular among students. Significantly, we gave the arts survey about one month after students had seen these materials, so the survey tested longer-term memory concerning specific art examples. Referring to the effort by the Pazzi family in Florence to displace the Medici family, a student found that the film memorably depicted “the Pazzi scandal as well as the overall effect of Lorenzo [the Magnificent] as a ruler.” Yet the student especially appreciated that the film primarily “helped with the understanding of [reformer Girolamo] Savonarola as the counter [figure] to Lorenzo.” Another student remarked, “The film gave a good visual representation of what the Renaissance was like because we could see a rendition of the kinds of clothes, behaviors, and speech patterns that existed during that time.” Echoing these responses, a student responded that “the documentary helped [me] understand the social environment, both humanist and reactionary (Savonarola). I also like how it went into detail about the Medici’s close relations to artists.”

Another film that students appreciated was the documentary *The Campaigns of Napoleon: 1812 - Napoleon’s Road to Moscow* (2003) in the French Revolution and Napoleon course, for which we showed a clip about the Battle of Borodino (September 7, 1812). Most students noticed the chaos of the battle that was depicted throughout the film excerpt. As one student wrote, “[t]he film gave a clear understanding of the Napoleonic Wars, of the strategies his army took and the kind[s] of weapons they used. It also shows the number of casualties and how familiar the Russians were in the battlefield, which gave them an advantage.” Others applied knowledge they gleaned from the course. One student recalled “how Russia was [the] sole country to succeed in standing up to the French and
Napoleon. How so many generals were lost and replaced on [the] spot.” However, another remarked how “[t]he film was helpful for my understanding of how it would have looked, but I did not find it the most helpful because of how Napoleon acted and the look of his uniform, being so clean.” The attention to material culture in that response was noteworthy, which the student aptly connected to their critique of the documentary. Overall, as another student remarked, “[t]he visual of a Re-enactment allows for a better understanding of the Battle. Likewise the miniscule [part] of Napoleon’s forces being left is also helpful.”

Although we had less success with feature films, one film that students strongly valued was a musical, Zoot Suit (1981), based on Luis Valdez’s 1978 play of the same name and directed by Valdez himself. An excerpt from this film was shown for a class on the history of Los Angeles; after discussing zoot suiters of the 1930s and 1940s and the Zoot Suit Riots, we played a scene from the film, titled “The Saturday Night Dance” (Act I, Scene 6). One student wrote that “Zoot Suit shows the culture of Los Angeles during WWII as diverse, yet many minorities in the area are still targets of racism.” Another student found that “being able to see the clothing, dance, and hear the music all together put things into perspective,” whereas a further student noted that “Zoot Suit gave me an understanding of the dialect, music, clothing and image of LA during WWII. It helped show me the perceived bad behavior of pachucas [female gang members]. We also got to understand the appeal of those dances and how they drew a crowd.” Further, a student felt that the film “fully showed the styles for men and women, and highlighted both tensions with white Americans and tensions between different Mexican social groups. It provided a visual example of the readings and illustrated the music and culture.” The same student recalled a memorable line from the film, “Don’t hate the raza more than you love the gringo,” which “highlighted the struggle between new patriotism and racial identity.”

**Music**

In terms of music, the results were somewhat surprising. The primary author of this article uses music frequently in his classes: classical music, jazz, folk, and rap, among other musical forms. Yet
it was a challenge to find works to which students readily responded. The piece that proved most helpful to students in this study was used in the course on the French Revolution and Napoleon: Pyotr Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture* (1880), a work of classical music. The subject was Napoleon’s invasion of Russia in 1812, focusing on the Battle of Borodino and how Napoleon’s army and the Russian army fared during and after the invasion. After this discussion, we played a recording of the famous finale of the overture (about four minutes out of a work that is about fifteen minutes long). The primary author had used this piece earlier in a different course on modern Europe in discussing Napoleon’s campaigns, and it surprisingly did less well: several students in the surveys expressed confusion over the piece’s themes or how it fit with the other art forms we used. However, this time we tried to give more historical context to the work, recommended what specifically the students should listen for (church bells, cannon fire, the French national anthem “La Marseillaise,” etc.), and asked students to consider how these sounds sought to describe the battle. The overall response was remarkably different.

Commenting on the overture, one student noted the highly illustrative nature of the music, stating that it “was helpful in showing the deaths [in] the Battle, as each cannon and bell ring shows a death [sic] of Russians for their country.” Another respondent agreed, appreciating the juxtapositions between the church bells and cannon fire: “In 1812 the French technically won but the Russians were not defeated completely. This shows how they [the Russians] were hopeful, looking in retrospect.” Another student brought their own prior knowledge to the music sample, which appeared to further enrich the context with which they placed it: “I know the song well because I have played it before in a band. Knowing the meaning behind the song and what is happening during the song brings a greater understanding for me in understanding what is happening during this time period.” These kinds of student responses suggest that music that incites the imagination of the students has a greater chance of success in getting them to think about historical themes and events.

Regarding the context in which an art form is presented, a study by Laura Renninger, Michael Austin, and Karen Pugsley may be helpful. They constructed a paired-course research experiment about music and literature’s interconnectivity alongside history and art. Renninger and her colleagues found that their “[p]articipants...
earnestly affirmed their understanding of the influence music and literature have on each other.” Above all, the students “felt they learned more about history and art” and “responded very positively to the ways in which the course content was linked.” From those results, the study further asserted that “the cross-disciplinary approach to intellectual history…used in the linked courses required the instructors to include materials from disciplines other than music and literature, specifically, history and art. We had similar experiences in that the inclusion of music in history courses appears to work best when studied in conjunction with other cultural forms, such as literature and/or art, so that students can benefit not only from a larger context, but also from understanding the interconnectivity of these fields in students’ analysis of visual and aural sources.

As illustration of this point, one music example to which students in our surveys responded well was Buffy Sainte-Marie’s song accompanied by acoustic guitar, “Now That the Buffalo’s Gone” (1964). We used this piece in a discussion of the American Indian Movement (AIM) in the 1960s in a course on U.S. cultural and intellectual history. Students viewed examples of visual culture of the movement (such as flags, pins, photographs, etc.) along with lyrics to Sainte-Marie’s song and literature on the movement. These connections appeared to work well. “Now That the Buffalo’s Gone,” wrote one student, “influenced my understanding of AIM by better understanding the erosion of Native American independence. Now Native Americans were more than ever dependent on American support.” With the buffalo gone, the student continued, “so was the ability for Native Americans to fully support themselves.” Another student asserted that the “song’s lyrics demonstrated the international nature of the 1960s Social Movements with its comparison between U.S. treatment of Indians and U.S. treatment of Germans post WWII. It also explained how the Buffalo were a significant component of Indian culture.” Moreover, the survey was given two weeks after the presentation of the material, so it helped to illustrate the students’ longer-term retention of facts.

A further option is to use a type of music with which many students are familiar: rap and hip-hop. The primary author has created raps for courses in the past, such as on World War I or the French Revolution. For this research project, the primary author wrote a rap for a course on Medieval and Renaissance Europe, highlighting main themes of
the course (religious fervor, the bubonic plague, the Crusades, etc.). The text of the rap was posted on Blackboard (a learning management system we typically use), and we conducted the survey a week after performing the rap. This approach of course demands some creativity on the part of the instructor rather than merely playing recordings; we will discuss below the theme of creativity as a pedagogical tool. Regarding the rap, one student wrote that it “took the core events and put them in order and can be a useful study guide,” and another student agreed, noting that the “rap was very helpful as an overall reminder of many of the topics and ideas of the course.” Another respondent claimed, “I really liked the rap. I was able to create a visual and hearable timeline.” Indeed, some of the most enthusiastic comments in the music section of the surveys overall appeared when students referred to this rap.

Creativity

Finally, one aspect that we have begun to explore is the use of creativity. In a set of surveys in an upper-division class entitled “Topics in European History,” we invited students to write a short narrative, poem, rap, or song: in other words, to create their own response that integrated all of the other art forms. The subject for the first survey concerned the Beatles, their film *A Hard Day’s Night*, and 1960s youth culture. The response was very encouraging. Students enthusiastically crafted short stories, raps, or poems that showed a clear connection with the material. One student even wrote a diary entry on what it may have been like to see the Beatles for the first time, which we’ll give here in its entirety:

20th of April, 1964

Dear Diary,

You won’t believe what happened today… [a friend told me] the Beatles would be in the city to do some recording but I agreed to skip school with her. Papa definitely wasn’t happy especially since he hates the Beatles. He thinks the music and the clothes are corrupting. So I sure am in trouble. But never mind that he’s just part of the establishment. Anyway after we ditched our uniforms we saw them wending towards the train station. I couldn’t help it. I screamed and suddenly everyone was running.
For the course on the French Revolution and Napoleon, one student took the creative writing opportunity to heart to wax eloquently:

Liberty descended upon the Lord & the Lady and sat upon the great pyramid. “With your eyes, you will see my wordless message,” and they saw with their eyes the red, white, and blue colors of Liberty. “With your tongue, you will speak my word…With your ears, you will hear it. With Blood and bone and sinew and the struggle to come—you will bind these senses and become me.” The Lord and Lady saw the symbols of Liberty, spoke her word in the court of Law, and Heard her word in the slient [sic] rumnations [sic] of Reason & Logic.

Creativity, we believe, is a much under-utilized pathway for the study of history. Many students are creative, but at the university level appear to have little opportunity of expressing it, which is certainly true in standard history courses. Although we have only begun this process of including it in the surveys, it would appear that such responses encourage empathy and interest by students in the material, and thus can provide a foundation for exploring other, related themes in the course.

**Conclusion**

Based on results from our surveys, there is no doubt that students appreciate the use of the arts in the classroom, which came across repeatedly in all the surveys we implemented. Although some art forms naturally scored better than others or received more enthusiastic responses, we frequently received responses in the comments section of the survey that the arts helped them to learn the material. One student wrote, “I personally believe that art NEEDS to be used in teaching history [emphasis in original]. It keeps students engaged and interested in the topics being discussed, while also prompting the use of different memories and different parts of the brain helping to form connections and long term memory.” Or, as another student put it, “[p]ictures, art, songs and readings really help someone understand what is going on. It’s very helpful.” Another student readily agreed: “Lovely work and really appreciate the time to hear this new info to aid me in this class. Gracias!”
This study further provides a way forward in terms of exploring a systematic method of including the arts in history courses. The surveys, with the use of a Likert scale in responding to specific art works in addition to allowing students to comment on those works, can offer a quantitative way of understanding student response to the arts, as well as a qualitative approach. One aspect that arose during the three-year project is the value of creativity—to allow students themselves to become creative in their use of the art forms. We were especially excited about results from the open-ended creative section of the surveys that we added it to some of the most recent surveys of the project for the “Topics in Modern Europe” and “French Revolution and Napoleon” courses. Students told stories integrating all three art forms, or historical narratives, or poems, and one student even wrote a diary entry. It showed a sense of fun, but also a different way of interacting with the material. We believe this aspect will remain an important part of any future surveys on history and the arts in the classroom that we conduct.

Our findings, moreover, corresponded with those from Renninger, Austin, and Pugsley’s paired-course research experiment about music and literature’s interconnectivity alongside history and art.\(^{23}\) Although our project’s focus did not directly encompass paired-course instruction, it nonetheless arrived at similar conclusions. The point Renninger and her colleagues made—that students “responded very positively to the ways in which the course content was linked” and thus “felt they learned more about history and art”—is worth exploring further in future studies of this kind.\(^{24}\) An interdisciplinary approach has much to offer in the teaching and learning of history.

Above all, the surveys enabled us to put theory into practice. We wanted to know which art examples made the most impact and why. Although all courses provided opportunities to introduce different art forms, some courses seemed better attuned to this approach by the very nature of the material; for example, results from the course on the French Revolution and Napoleon were well-represented in this study in part because the visual and aural arts were essential components in communicating revolutionary ideals in France during this period (1789-1815). Finally, for several surveys, we wanted to know how various art forms enabled students to learn about and retain historical facts by testing longer-term memory.
In summary, key points that arose thus far from this project are as follows:

1. Students respond positively to the inclusion of art because it offers them an opportunity to engage emotionally with course material in applying their skills in historical analysis.

2. Incorporating art into history is important for those learners who do not identify solely as verbal learners or history textbook learners, and helps those students who may not be proficient readers to connect to course materials and content.

3. When prompted to think creatively about the arts, such as through a written narrative, poem, rap, or song, students enthusiastically connect with the material in ways that rarely arise in standard history classes.

4. Students find the incorporation of images and music helpful in their ability to recall content knowledge; in other words, the use of these art forms can enhance and support student success in the classroom.

This study suggests not only that students have an interest in the arts, but also that the arts can be a useful way of explaining, and remembering, different historical periods. Our survey findings help demonstrate that students were able to frame and recall the course material by referencing the use of art and film—a result that has rarely been systematically studied previously. We may intuitively know that images and films can leave an impact, but student voices through the surveys reinforce this implicit understanding. Context here is key; we have found that the pedagogical benefits that students gain from a given art form tend to be directly proportional to the degree of context that the instructor provides. It also seems important to use art forms with which most students can make an emotional or intellectual connection, which can further aid with understanding the context. Art works that lacked this emotional connection simply tended to be less effective and typically scored lower in the surveys. The more these aspects form part of the use of arts in teaching history, the more likely the art forms will be of value in the course and, hence, in improving student learning.

Ultimately, different art forms speak to different people. Therefore, it seems imperative to choose from a broad array of art forms in teaching a given event, era, or social or political movement to
support both visual and aural learners. An area for future research is to analyze how students can best respond creatively to the material, such as writing a rap, song, or diary entry related to the historical theme being studied. Certainly, the use of different art forms can improve empathy in the student and, hence, a closer emotional or intellectual connection to the subject. In terms of actual impact, we sought to determine to what degree the arts can make a quantifiable difference in student perception of a historical event or theme, rather than being merely an appendage or another form of entertainment. The results from this study strongly support the idea that the arts do indeed make a difference in learning history.
Notes

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12. Ormond, “Enabling Students to Read Historical Images,” 188.


18. Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *1812 Overture* (1880). There are many recordings of this work; see, for example, Marinsky Theatre Orchestra, conducted by Valery Gergiev, from the album, *The Art of Valery Gergiev: Maestro* (Decca Records, 2006).


Appendix A: Sample Student Survey

HSTY 436: FRENCH REVOLUTION AND NAPOLEON
SPRING 2019

May 16, 2019

Art Evaluation

1) Which of the following art forms do you feel were helpful in understanding the subject of the Napoleonic Wars?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art Form</th>
<th>Not helpful</th>
<th>Very helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Image
Explain in a few sentences how the painting, *Campaign of France, 1814*, influenced your understanding of the Napoleonic Wars. Include facts you remember from the image.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3) Film
Explain in a few sentences how *1812 - Napoleon’s Road to Moscow* influenced your understanding of the Napoleonic Wars. Include facts you remember from the film.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
4) Music
Explain in a few sentences how the *1812 Overture* influenced your understanding of the Napoleonic Wars. Include facts you remember associated with the music.

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

5) Create
In the space below, combine all three forms (images, film, and music) in a narrative format in 4-5 sentences. It can be a mini-historical narrative, story, poem, or rap.

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

6) Comments
Please add any other comments you might have about the use of these art forms in the teaching of history:

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________
Appendix B: Art Forms and Student Responses

Examples of art forms used in the surveys, with student responses (the course in which the art form was used is given in brackets):

**Images**

Dorothea Lange, “Migrant Mother #6” (1936) and Arthur Rothstein, “Farmer and Sons in Dust Storm” (1936).

Regarding these photographs, 5 out of 7 students (71%) found them to be “very helpful” and a total of 6 students (86%) found them “helpful” to “very helpful” in understanding the Great Depression. [“Topics in U.S. Cultural and Intellectual History”]

Nanine Vallain, *Marianne or Allegory of Liberty* (1792) and Jacques-Louis David, *The Death of Marat or Marat Assassinated* (1793).

Reacting to these two works, 5 out of 7 students (71%) found them to be “very helpful” in understanding the French Revolution. [“French Revolution and Napoleon”]


Reacting to this painting, 8 out of 13 students (62%) found it “very helpful” and 10 students (77%) found it to be “helpful” to “very helpful” in understanding Napoleon’s Russian Campaign. [“Modern Europe”]

**Film**

*Surviving the Dust Bowl* (directed by Chana Gazit, PBS, 1998).

After viewing the entire documentary, 7 out of 8 students (88%) found it “very helpful” in understanding the Dust Bowl in terms of environmental history. [“Approaches to History”]


Responding to the clip, 11 out of 14 students (79%) found it “very helpful” and all 14 students (100%) found it “helpful” to “very helpful” in understanding the history of Los Angeles during and after World War II. [“History of Los Angeles”]

*The Medici: Godfathers of the Renaissance* (directed by Justin Hardy, PBS with Lion Television and Devillier Donegan Enterprises, 2004).

In response to viewing this source, 12 out of 17 students (71%) found it “very helpful” and 15 students (88%) found it “helpful” to “very
helpful” in understanding the Italian Renaissance. [“Medieval and Renaissance Europe”]

The Campaigns of Napoleon: 1812 - Napoleon’s Road to Moscow (directed by Chris Gormlie, Kultur Video, 2003).

Upon viewing a clip from the documentary on the Battle of Borodino, 3 out of 5 students (60%) found it to be “very helpful” in understanding the battle within the context of Napoleon’s Russian Campaign. [“French Revolution and Napoleon”]

Music

Pyotr Tchaikovsky, 1812 Overture (1880).

In hearing the finale of the overture (about 4 minutes out of a work that is about 15 minutes long), 4 out of 5 students (80%) found it “very helpful” and all 5 students (100%) found it “helpful” to “very helpful” in understanding Napoleon’s Russian Campaign. [“French Revolution and Napoleon”]


In listening to the song and reading the text, 4 out of 6 students (67%) found it “very helpful” and 5 students (83%) found it to be “helpful” to “very helpful” in understanding some of the goals of AIM (American Indian Movement). [“Topics in U.S. Cultural and Intellectual History”]

Kenneth Marcus, “Medieval Rap.”

A rap written by the primary author of this article, it synthesizes the main themes of the course (such as religion, the bubonic plague, the Crusades, etc.), and the text to the rap was posted on the university’s learning management system, Blackboard. 12 out of 17 students (71%) found it “very helpful” and 15 students (88%) found it “helpful” to “very helpful” in understanding the history of medieval Europe. [“Medieval and Renaissance Europe”]
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