



## COURSE DATA

### DATA SUBJECT

**Code:** 34040  
**Name:** Prehistory of art  
**Cycle:** Undergraduate Studies  
**ECTS Credits:** 6  
**Academic year:** 2025-26

### STUDY (S)

Degree	Center	Acad. year	Period
1005 - Degree in History	Facultat de Geografia i Història	4	Second quarter

### SUBJECT-MATTER

Degree	Subject-matter	Character
1005 - Degree in History	Prehistory of art	ELECTIVES

### COORDINATION

AURA TORTOSA JOAN EMILI

## SUMMARY

Prehistoric Art is an elective course that aims to provide an updated panorama of graphic and symbolic expression of prehistoric societies. This course starts with the first evidence of symbolic graphic expression in the Palaeolithic and realizes the problems of the origin of it, the different forms of symbolic expression, the methods of study and the development and interpretation of prehistoric art from the Palaeolithic hunter-gatherer groups to the first Neolithic societies.

These contents are exposed with archaeological methodology and the principal aims are to interpret the meaning and function of the various forms of artistic expression (parietal and portable) or different media and techniques (painting, engraving, sculpture and modelled work in clay). All this treated according to the actuals currents of research of this discipline.

Study methods and systems of documentation are another points of interest, because they are related to the importance of valuing and preserving an archaeological heritage that by nature is perishable.

For historical and geographical proximity, this course pays special attention to the European geographical area, and particularly the Iberian Peninsula, although other significant regions in relation to the origin of symbolic expression and the graphic expression of the Neolithic societies are also considered.



## PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

### RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE SAME DEGREE

There are no specified enrollment restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.

### OTHER REQUIREMENTS

There are no specified restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.

It is highly recommended to have knowledge of more usual informatics programs, to know the Aula Virtual use and to find bibliographic references related with the subject of this matter.

To know concepts, methods and objectives of Prehistoric Art discipline.

To know archaeological documentation related with graphic and symbolic expression along the different periods of Prehistory (Palaeolithic and Neolithic).

Know how to differ

## COMPETENCES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Be able to comment, annotate or edit texts and documents correctly according to the critical canons of the discipline.

Be able to identify and appropriately use sources of information for historical research.

Be able to learn autonomously.

Be able to make abstractions, to analyse and to synthesise.

Be sensitive to environmental issues.

Show commitment to the principle of equal opportunities for men and women.

Show creativity.

## DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

### 1. Introduction

Limits and objectives of the subject. Chronological and cultural framework.

Discovery" of Art and intellectual context. Definition of Art. Prehistoric Art and Anthropology: Primitive Art. On the origin and meaning. Context and function: Art as communication. Evolutionary perspectives on the origin of prehistoric Art.



## **2. The origin of Art**

Art and symbolic material expression. Art and modern human behaviour.  
Geographical and temporal dispersion of evidence: non-functional objects, non-figurative themes, use of pigments, funerary practices. Singular objects: pendant-horns, sculptures.

## **3. The supports and techniques of Prehistoric art**

Art and symbolic material expression. Art and modern human behaviour.  
Geographical and temporal dispersion of evidence: non-functional objects, non-figurative themes, use of pigments, funerary practices. Singular objects: pendant-horns, sculptures.

## **4. The European Palaeolithic Art**

Parietal art: distribution, subject matter, characterisation and chronology.  
Portable art dispersion, subject matter, supports and chronology.  
Relative and numerical dating systems.  
Style as a basis for chronological and evolutionary classification.

## **5. Significance of Palaeolithic art**

First recognition and appreciation. From art for art's sake to magic-religion.  
A symbolic system: the structuralist vision. Functionalist and socio-ecological interpretations. Art and shamanism. Latest perspectives.

## **6. Evolution of Palaeolithic art: Europe and Iberia**

- a) Europe: regionalisation and evolutionary features. Pre-Magdalenian or ancient art. Magdalenian Art. Social networks and territories.
- b) Iberian Peninsula: general features and regional spheres: Cantabrian area, peninsular interior, Portugal and Mediterranean area.

## **7. The European Epipalaeolithic and Mesolithic art**

- Problems, phases and regionalisation. Support and themes.
- a) Southern Europe: Epipalaeolithic art in the Palaeolithic tradition: Azilian, Labourian, Epigravetian and Epimagdalenian art.
  - b) Northern Europe: Mesolithic movable art.
- Prehistoric hunter-gatherer art and the archaeology of death: a diachronic balance.



## 8. Art of Early Neolithic societies

a) The Near East: regional framework.

Background: Epipalaeolithic art of the Natufian.

Origins and characterisation of Neolithic art: new symbols.

Subjects and supports. The funerary world

b) Europe: regional framework

European Neolithic Art: continuity or rupture of the Mesolithic tradition?

Neolithic art in Mediterranean Europe. The funerary world.

## 9. Art of the Neolithic societies of Iberia

Continuity / Rupture with respect to Palaeolithic-Ep Palaeolithic / Mesolithic Art

Chronology and Context:

Macro-Schematic Art: definition and distribution.

Levantine Art: chronological problems and characteristics.

Schematic Art: definition and distribution

Art and Megalithic Art

Art of Productive Societies and the Archaeology of Death.

## 10. Documentation systems of Prehistoric art

Tracing as a reading. Different documentation systems and their evaluation. Computer processing and the presentation of the results. Art and Heritage: conservation and dissemination.

## WORKLOAD

### PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Theory	30,00
Other activities	15,00
Classroom practices	15,00
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>60,00</b>

### NON PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Attendance at other activities	0,00
Individual or group project	50,00
Independent study and work	40,00
Preparation of lessons	0,00
Preparation for assessment activities	0,00
Resolution of case studies	0,00
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>90,00</b>



## TEACHING METHODOLOGY

### TEACHING Methodology

The course is based in different learning activities including:

#### A) Classroom assistance.

1. Lectures at the classroom (30 hours). The teachers will expose the fundamental concepts of each subject, with available audio-visual resources for the students through the Aula Virtual. It is essential for students to read the manual or texts that they will be indicated, prior to the teacher exposure of each theme.

2. Practical classes (15 hours). Practical exercises will take place in established classes and will consist of comments of images of archaeological documentation related to the course. Its aim is to strengthen the identification of the existing graphic documentation, favouring the analysis thereof and its relation to the theoretical contents.

3. Complementary activities (5 hours). Student must participate in the complementary activities schedule, consisting in the Museum of Prehistory Art collection visit with the professor.

#### B) Tutorials (5 hours)

Student could make questions and resolve doubts related with the course during the schedule of tutorial assistance. Tutorial schedules are listed in Aula Virtual and on the information board of the Department of Prehistory and Archaeology.

## EVALUATION

### Evaluation

At the first call:



The evaluation of the theoretical part of the subject will constitute 70% of the final grade.

Practical assignments: these will account for 20% of the final mark.

Complementary activities: these will account for 10% of the final mark.

The final mark will be the proportional computation of the previous items. However, in order to pass the course, a minimum mark of 5 out of 10 must be achieved in each of the parts of the course.

Subjects of special attention will be the dominium of the evolution of the Prehistoric Art, the capacity of synthesis and the conceptual precision, as well as the clarity of exposition. Some student personal activity will be evaluated along the course

At the second sitting:

Students who have not passed any of the parts in the first call, will have the possibility of taking an exam of the theoretical part in the second call, whose score will be equivalent to 70% of the final grade, as well as recovering the practical part through a test or joint work of all the practices. Likewise, an assignment will be proposed for the evaluation of the complementary activities part.

In the event of failing any of the parts at the first sitting after having passed the rest, the marks of the parts passed will remain valid for the whole academic year 2023-2024.

The Complementary activity will be programed at the start of the course.



Final qualification is the result of the sum of the two preceding sections and activities. To pass the course it is necessary to reach at least 5 of 10 points in the written test.

Excepting Erasmus students, grammar and spelling problems will score negatively on the qualification of all written tests and academic works. Their accumulation may lead to a failing grade in the course.

## REFERENCES

- J. L. Sanchidrián. Manual de arte prehistórico. Ariel Prehistoria.
- D. Lewis-Williams. La Mente en la Caverna. Akal.
- D. Lewis-Williams. Dentro de la Mente Neolítica. Akal.
- M. Groenen. Sombra y luz en el arte paleolítico. Ariel Prehistoria
- A. Beltrán. Arte Prehistórico en la Península Ibérica. Diputación Provincial de Castelló.
- M. Menéndez, M. Martí, A. Mingo. El Arte en la Prehistoria. UNED
- M.S. Hernández & J. Soler (eds.). Arte prehistórico mediterráneo. Inst. Gil Albert, Alicante.
- Martínez Valle, R. (coord.) Arte rupestre en la Comunidad Valenciana. Generalitat Valenciana.
- M. Menéndez (coord), M. Mas, A. Mingo (2009) El arte en la Prehistoria. UNED-Madrid.
- E. Álvarez-Fernández, O. Rivero, A. Blanco (2020) Prehistoria de la Península ibérica. Universidad de Salamanca.