

Cultivating Virtue through Aesthetics: Exploring Practical Pathways for Integrating Ideological and Political Education into Art History Courses

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Abstract: Art history courses, grounded in the development of national art and culture, integrate artistic creation ideas, humanistic spirit, and artistic expression techniques with course teaching objectives, thereby fostering students' national cultural pride and awareness of cultural heritage while empowering ideological and political education. Designing thematic learning tasks based on aesthetic elements within art history courses allows for detailed teaching steps from perspectives such as artistic exploration, cultural heritage, and thematic reflection, cultivating students' enthusiasm for exploring art and ideological and political education. This paper analyzes the necessity of integrating ideological and political education into art history courses and explores practical methods to enhance course quality and promote ideological and political integration.

Keywords: Curriculum-based ideological and political education; Art history courses; Aesthetic elements

Online publication: August 31, 2026

1. Ideological and political education

Curriculum-based ideological and political education aims to promote the coordinated implementation of the fundamental task of fostering virtue and cultivating talent through a comprehensive educational layout involving all staff, processes, and courses. Art history courses incorporate elements such as the history of national art development and world art development, combining local artistic and cultural products with the global development of art to cultivate students' cultural pride and innovative spirit through a layout based on challenges, advantages, and prospects. Integrating ideological and political elements based on the development of art history, national art specialties, and art-themed activities can achieve a deep linkage between aesthetic education and ideological and political education, creating opportunities for students to learn art theory and explore ideological and political resources, thereby enhancing teaching quality.

2. Practical significance of integrating ideological and political education into art history courses

2.1. Promoting the construction of curriculum-based ideological and political education and achieving in-depth education

The concept of curriculum-based ideological and political education requires the organic integration of ideological and political education elements into various academic courses to achieve a unified approach to knowledge transmission, value leadership, and skill development, thereby realizing the core educational goals of ideological and in-depth skill-based education. However, in existing teaching practices, the issue of disconnection between course knowledge and ideological and political elements persists, with students lacking enthusiasm for ideological and political education. Integrating ideological and political education into art history courses can implement the educational philosophy of in-depth education ^[1]. On one hand, teachers can use the development history of art genres as an entry point to develop characteristic national cultural courses based on the local art system. In teaching practice, supported by educational modules such as painting, sculpture, and architectural styles in national art, students' cultural pride can be cultivated. From a macro perspective of integrating art history courses with ideological and political education, students' learning interests will be fully mobilized. On the other hand, based on the creative themes of artistic resources, teachers can guide students to explore the development history of national art from perspectives such as patriotism and dedication, achieving an organic combination of art education, history education, and ideological education. Integrating ideological and political elements into art history courses can implement in-depth education from perspectives such as cultural reserves, ideological education, and historical heritage.

2.2. Developing students' intrinsic qualities and achieving the goal of fostering virtue and cultivating talent

Art history courses incorporate elements such as artistic creation theory, national culture, and history, exhibiting strong comprehensive characteristics. Integrating ideological and political theory into art history courses can effectively implement the educational goal of fostering virtue and cultivating talent, creating an open environment for students to explore and learn ideological and political knowledge. For example, in exploring the development history of Chinese art genres, teachers can introduce learning tasks in layers around themes such as works, creative ideas, and genre characteristics, implementing ideological and political education from perspectives such as cultural appreciation and artistic expression. From the perspective of students' autonomous experience and learning, ideological and political education is gradually advanced through students' independent exploration and expression. Teachers can develop learning tasks layer by layer based on relevant theories in art history courses, such as local art creation and red-themed art creation, cultivating students' identification with and enthusiasm for art history courses, enabling them to actively explore and inherit ideological and political elements, and achieving the goal of fostering virtue and cultivating talent.

3. Practical pathways for integrating ideological and political education into art history courses

3.1. Combining ideological and political theory with courses to achieve immersive education

Traditional integration of ideological and political education into art history courses primarily focuses on

theoretical explanations. Based on the course content, teachers introduce elements such as ideological and political concepts and educational objectives, emphasizing the development of students' ideological and political literacy. However, this educational model disrupts the intrinsic connection between ideological and political education and art history courses, failing to ensure teaching quality. To achieve an organic integration of art history courses and ideological and political education, teachers should attempt to use ideological and political inquiry and theoretical learning as fundamental approaches, incorporating ideological and political theory into artistic works to implement comprehensive education^[2].

Promoting the organic combination of art history courses and ideological and political theory can effectively achieve the goal of fostering virtue and cultivating talent. During the construction of art history courses, teachers can initiate teaching activities from dual perspectives: exploring the history of art development and integrating ideological and political theory. In the pre-class preparation phase, teachers can develop inquiry units on national art history, using classic Chinese art genres and the history of art development as supports to drive students' autonomous learning. Taking traditional Chinese ink painting as an example, teachers can design research tasks, using the development history and outstanding works of Chinese art genres as focal points, encouraging students to develop resources such as AI animations and situational animations. In interactive sessions, with the theme of "National Spirit in Ink Paintings," teachers can guide students in inheriting national art and spiritual culture. Teachers can set learning themes such as "Landscape Paintings and China's Reverence for Nature" and "Figure Paintings and the Culture of Confidants." From the perspective of integrating ideological and political education, students are encouraged to explore the spiritual culture in national artworks, cultivating their enthusiasm for inheriting national culture. On the other hand, teachers can conduct thematic academic research activities and design related art projects. For example, "The Inheritance of Humanistic Emotions in Classic Artworks." In interactive sessions, using existing Chinese artworks and products as supports, teachers can create an open learning environment for students. With "Patriotic Education" as the theme, teachers can require students to collect paintings and sculptures related to Chinese history, such as "Eight Steeds" and "Along the River During the Qingming Festival." Based on students' interest expressions, teachers can explore historical traces in artworks, guiding students to conduct in-depth inquiries into national culture and historical development processes. In response to the teaching requirements of art history courses, teachers can design periodic ideological and political education plans, organizing students to conduct autonomous learning based on diverse themes such as exploring the history of national art development and national art genres, thereby effectively empowering teaching activities.

3.2. Combining practical activities with courses to promote ideological and political learning

To effectively integrate ideological and political elements into art history courses, in addition to developing unit-based learning plans, teachers should also attempt to design practical inquiry tasks for students, allowing them to explore national art, culture, and history through practice, thereby establishing a solid foundation for ideological and political education^[3]. By developing diverse practical interactive plans centered around art history courses, teachers can initiate teaching activities based on diverse objectives such as student experience and interaction, extracurricular practice, and expansion, thereby gradually stimulating students' learning enthusiasm. Relying on practical tasks to guide students in exploring ideological and political elements can implement the educational philosophy of autonomous learning and in-depth education,

stimulating students' enthusiasm for artistic inquiry and achieving comprehensive ideological education.

Taking the inquiry into "The Integration of Confidant Culture in Classic Artworks" as an example, teachers can design teaching activities such as research, practice, and achievement display, integrating ideological and political education elements in layers. Firstly, teachers can design research tasks for students, with the theme of "What is a Confidant," requiring them to collect artworks related to confidant culture. During interactions, teachers can present sculptures, paintings, and other artworks related to confidant culture for students, such as "The Friendship Between Guan Zhong and Bao Shuya" and "The Oath in the Peach Garden." From the dual perspectives of art history courses and the integration of ideological and political education, teachers can explain the meaning of confidants: two parties with the same aspirations and wishes are considered confidants. Secondly, teachers can introduce practical creation tasks. Based on the development history of Chinese art genres, using activities such as sculpture and painting as supports, teachers can create an open environment for students to express their emotions. During practice, teachers can incorporate ideological and political education elements. For example, with themes such as development, construction, and dedication, teachers can create opportunities for students to explore ideological and political elements. Based on the relevant requirements for integrating art history courses and ideological and political education, teachers can guide students to initiate special fieldwork activities on rural construction, using local county records and historical records as references, and applying different creative methods to showcase regional characteristics. For example, classic landscape paintings and ancient rural landscapes, modern oil paintings and modern rural construction, etc. While guiding students to explore art history, teachers can help them feel the great construction achievements of the Party and the country and interpret the creativity and fighting spirit of the people in the new era. Finally, teachers can process the outstanding works displayed by students and create a display area in the classroom to achieve the effective circulation of ideological and political elements in teaching activities. For the related works created by students, teachers should arrange them based on the history of art development and regional development history, allowing them to showcase the special educational value of spreading stories about the development of national art and showcasing regional development achievements, thereby achieving in-depth education in terms of ideology and art education. Based on the dual perspectives of exploring the history of art development and learning about ideological and political elements, teachers can gradually eliminate the gap between art history courses and ideological and political elements, achieving in-depth education in terms of ideology and skills.

3.3. Combining modern technology with courses to achieve ideological and political dissemination

The widespread application of modern educational technology provides new opportunities for teaching reform. In the practice of integrating ideological and political education into art history courses, teachers can attempt to disseminate ideological and political theories relying on modern technology and promote their take root through the design of characteristic topics and online student interactions. Compared to the monotonous narration by teachers, art history courses supported by modern technology possess unique characteristics of fun and interactivity, enabling students to explore the development history of national art and independently discover ideological and political theories based on relevant scenes in videos and images, thereby engaging in in-depth learning.

In the practice of integrating ideological and political education into art history courses, teachers can utilize modern technology to create diverse interactive platforms for teaching, self-study, and interaction.

In teaching practice, learning tasks are designed based on unit knowledge points. For example, in teaching the unit on “The History of Oil Painting Development,” teachers can use AI tools to create video materials explaining the origin of world oil painting and the development history of local oil painting. Coupled with case studies and scene resources in the videos, keywords such as “The First Chinese Oil Painter” and “The Development History of Chinese Oil Painting” are used to create learning and interaction opportunities for students. In teaching practice, the focus is on cultivating students’ cultural identity and respect through art history. During self-study activities, teachers can design teaching columns on the school’s official website or video platforms to provide students with opportunities to explore the development history of national and world art. Taking the teaching of “The Development and Evolution of Sculpture” as an example, modern technology can be used to create AI videos with chapters set from the birth of world sculpture art to the evolution of local sculpture art, enhancing students’ cultural reserves while developing their innovative qualities. Teachers can incorporate discussion questions during online interactions, such as “The Development History and Inspiration of Chinese Art Genres” and “The Internal Factors of Chinese Art Development,” focusing on China’s vast territory and large population base to develop students’ sense of national cultural identity and cohesion. In response to the requirements of ideological and political education, teachers can organize discussions around the influence of foreign cultures on the development of local art, cultivating students’ innovative consciousness and lifelong learning qualities. For unique topics proposed by students, relevant platforms can be used for integration and discussion, starting from the exploration of art history development and the inheritance of national art and culture, to cultivate students’ cultural pride and innovative qualities. Leveraging modern educational technology to promote the organic integration of art history courses and ideological and political education can create a new environment for students to explore ideological and political theories and learn about the development history of art.

3.4. Combining competitions with courses to extend teaching scope

Designing diverse competitive activities can stimulate students’ innovative consciousness and guide them to apply artistic skills, thereby cultivating their internal qualities such as patriotism, inclusiveness, and cultural confidence. To achieve the organic integration of art history courses and ideological and political education, teachers can develop competitive tasks centered around art history courses. During competitions, taking the development history of art as a starting point, the development process and innovative methods of national art are optimized to enhance students’ ideological awareness. Encouraging student interaction through competition can gradually extend the teaching scope, improve students’ knowledge reserves in art history, and drive teaching innovation.

During the development of competitive activities, teachers can incorporate ideological and political elements from two perspectives: art knowledge competitions and art creation competitions. In art knowledge competitions, students are required to explain the background, reasons, and impacts of the development of relevant art genres based on knowledge points in art history courses. During interactive sessions, teachers can design open-ended questions such as “Comparison and Development Differences of Sculpture Culture in the Tang and Song Dynasties” and “Representative Genres and Figures in Chinese Classical Painting.” Supported by competitive activities, students are required to independently collect relevant materials. To develop students’ cultural respect consciousness, teachers can design diverse competitive questions based on the development history of world art, such as “The Evolution of Foreign Art After Entering China” and

“Similarities Between Foreign Art Creation and Local Art.” During competitions, with inclusiveness and innovation as themes, ideological and political education is promoted. In art creation competitions, the development of art history takes precedence, supplemented by ideological and political education, creating an open interactive environment for students. Teachers design competition themes based on China’s classic scientific and technological and cultural achievements, combining art history and national development history. For example, “From the Great Northern Wilderness to the Great Northern Granary – Oil Painting Solicitation Activity” and “The Journey of China’s Modernization – Ink Painting Competition” guide students to explore the national development process while introducing creation tasks based on artistic achievements and genres at different local stages, effectively empowering teaching activities. From the perspective of competition support, students can independently learn about relevant knowledge and ideological and political theories in art history courses and showcase their learning outcomes in their works, thereby actively accepting the integration of ideological and political education into art history courses.

3.5. Integrating study tours with curriculum to innovate teaching approaches

The integration of ideological and political education into art history courses cannot rely solely on teacher guidance; rather, it should incorporate elements of independent learning and inquiry by students, thereby achieving innovative transformation of teaching plans. To drive the innovative development and empowerment of art history courses, institutions and teachers can attempt to design distinctive study tour activities, guiding students to simultaneously explore art history and ideological and political theories through study tour education ^[4]. By relying on the synchronous progression of practical and theoretical education to implement educational objectives, a distinctive practical educational plan can be constructed, enhancing the effectiveness of integrating ideological and political education into art history courses.

Taking the design of the “Local Folklore Exploration” study tour activity as an example, based on the objectives of integrating ideological and political education into art history courses, teachers can assign tasks such as research and independent learning to students. On one hand, using the development of regional art history as a starting point, teachers can organize independent learning activities for students. While designing learning tasks, teachers can use the origin and development process of the Central Plains art system as a starting point, encouraging students to explore the crystallization of national wisdom. Where conditions permit, teachers can rely on tasks such as research projects and academic paper studies to foster students’ cultural pride and promote the organic integration of art education with regional cultural education. On the other hand, incorporating elements of ideological and political education cultivates qualities such as patriotism and loyalty in students. Taking the construction of regional rural economies and characteristic industries as examples, teachers can require students to draw materials from local art genres, combining relevant artistic creation methods with the regional development process. Teachers can integrate ideological and political elements based on local cultural characteristics, such as encouraging students to visit local historical archives and art galleries. Through the organic integration of study tour activities with art history courses, students can be guided to feel the great achievements of the Party and the country, encouraging in-depth learning from multiple perspectives such as grassroots construction and the development of social moral culture. Innovating the path of integrating ideological and political education into art history courses through study tour activities enables students to feel the great power of the country in practice and promotes national unity education.

4. Conclusion

Integrating ideological and political elements into art history courses holds significant educational importance for innovating teaching models and developing students' ideological and political qualities. Under the new educational objective of cultivating virtue and nurturing talent, teachers should attempt to explore national art resources and design educational modules such as study tours, competitions, and online interactions based on the development process of national art. Constructing an open teaching plan centered around national art and promoting the organic integration of national art with practical teaching, classroom activities, and extracurricular inquiry tasks can create opportunities for students to learn ideological and political theories and explore artistic compositions, achieving in-depth education.

Funding

Project Title: Cultivating Virtue through Aesthetics: Exploring Practical Pathways for Integrating Ideological and Political Education into Art History Courses (Project Number: XSZ2026047)

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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