ART (Div I)
GRAD ART
Director: Professor Marc Gotlieb

- Esther S. Bell, Lecturer in the Graduate Program in Art History
- Victoria Brooks, Visiting Lecturer in the Graduate Program in Art History
- Michael Conforti, Lecturer in the Graduate Program in Art History; affiliated with: Art Department
- Marc Gotlieb, Director of the Graduate Program in Art History and Class of 1955 Memorial Professor of Art; affiliated with: Art Department
- Olesya Ivantsova, Visiting Lecturer in the Graduate Program in Art History
- Murad K. Mumtaz, Assistant Professor of Art; affiliated with: Graduate Program-Art History
- Paul C. Park, Senior Lecturer in English; affiliated with: Graduate Program-Art History

MASTER OF ARTS IN ART HISTORY

Requirements

To qualify for the Master of Arts degree in art history, candidates complete a minimum of twelve courses for graduate credit plus two winter study periods, the latter comprising an international Study Trip in the first year (normally in January) (ARTH 51) and preparation of a Draft Qualifying Paper in the second (ARTH 52). Students must also demonstrate reading proficiency in two foreign languages, one of them German (for more specific information on the language requirements, see below, after the listing for ARTH 597/598). At the end of the second year, all students present a shortened version of the Qualifying Paper in the annual Graduate Symposium.

At least eight of the twelve courses must be graduate seminars. Included among them are four required of all students: ARTH 504, “Methods of Art History,” to be taken during the first semester; ARTH 506, “Graduate Art History Writing Workshop” and ARTH 507, “Object Workshop,” to be taken in the second; and ARTH 509, “Graduate Student Symposium,” to be taken in the fourth.

Students must also fulfill a distribution requirement by undertaking coursework in three of six areas:

- East Asian, Indian, Islamic art
- Ancient Near Eastern, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman art
- Early Christian, Byzantine, and Western Medieval art to 1400
- Western art, 1400 to 1780
- Western art, 1780 to present
- Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas (Pre-Hispanic or Native American cultures)

Students may petition the Director to apply a thematic or non-period specific course toward the distribution requirement by demonstrating substantial work in an appropriate area.

Undergraduate Courses and Private Tutorials

With permission from the Director and the individual instructors, students may take up to four undergraduate courses for graduate credit, with the understanding that research papers submitted in such courses meet a standard commensurate with those prepared for graduate seminars.

In addition to regularly offered seminars and classes, students may arrange up to two private tutorials (ARTH 595/596) by submitting petitions to the Director describing the substance of their projects, including bibliography, and the nature of the work they will submit for evaluation. The petitions must be co-signed in advance by both the students and their faculty supervisors.

Of the minimum requirement of twelve courses, the combined number of private tutorials and undergraduate courses applied to the degree may not exceed four.

The Qualifying Paper

The Qualifying Paper is normally a revision of a seminar or private tutorial paper produced in one of the previous three semesters, expanded and refined over the second Winter Study term and a portion of the fourth semester. Students submit the topic of the Qualifying Paper in writing to the Director by the final day of exams of their third semester. Before this, students must obtain their original faculty supervisor’s agreement to be engaged in the Qualifying Paper process.
On the first Friday of their fourth semester, students submit drafts of their Qualifying Paper, including illustrations, to three faculty readers (generally the original faculty supervisor, the Director, and the Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow). Although a draft, this version of the paper should be brought to a high level of completion.

Early in the fourth semester, students and their readers meet together to discuss the drafts. Within six weeks of these discussions (at a date determined by the Director), students submit their Qualifying Papers. Qualifying Papers should not exceed 8,000 words, including footnotes and bibliography.

The Graduate Symposium
All second-year students speak in the Symposium, presenting 20-minute talks developed from their Qualifying Papers. Each student has an ad hoc committee to give advice in preparing these presentations (ad hoc committees comprise, but are not limited to, the Director, one additional faculty mentor, one first-year graduate student, and one second-year graduate student). Preparations include at least three practice sessions for each student. Speakers present the first and third of these run-throughs to the ad hoc committee, the second to the other second-year students in a workshop scheduled by the Director.

Grades and Academic Standing
The Program uses the following grading system:

- A+ = truly exceptional (4.33)
- A = outstanding (4.00)
- A- = excellent (3.67)
- B+ = good (3.33)
- B = satisfactory (3.00)
- B- = barely adequate (2.67)
- C = inadequate (0)
- E = failing (0)

Courses in which students receive a grade below B- do not receive graduate credit.

Letter grades are used in all seminars except ARTH 507, 509, and 563. These and the Winter Study courses (ARTH 51 and 52) are Pass/Fail. Grades in language courses are converted to Pass/Fail on the Williams transcript and are not calculated in the GPA. The Director reviews students’ records at the end of the first year; those with GPAs of 3.00 or lower may be asked to resign from the Program.

Course instructors set the deadlines for coursework. If students seek and receive extensions that result in semester grades of Incomplete, they must hand in their work by the instructor’s revised deadline, which will be no later than the second Monday of the next semester’s classes. Extensions beyond this date will be solely at the discretion of the Director (in consultation with the instructor).

Students who resign from the Program may, after a period of at least one year, petition to the Director for re-admission. Such a petition must include evidence that deficiencies have been remedied and that the student is capable of completing the course of study without further interruption.

The M.A. requirements are designed for completion in two consecutive academic years in residence. There is no credit for coursework done prior to matriculation in the Program. The Program is full-time, requires students to live in Williamstown or its vicinity, and does not normally admit students on a part-time basis.

Language Courses
The Graduate Program’s degree requirements include reading competence in two languages (other than English) of scholarly and academic relevance to the history of art. One of the two languages must be German. Many students select French as the second although, with permission of the Director, other languages may serve. The Program offers dedicated courses in reading French and German for art history. Other language classes at Williams are listed in the course catalog, although the coordination of undergraduate and graduate schedules can be challenging.

Incoming students’ language preparation is assessed through exams administered at the outset of the semester. In French and German, scores attained on SAT II reading examinations determine placement within the two-semester language course sequence.

French: If students attain a minimum score of 700 on the French placement exam, they are exempted from further coursework in that language. With a score between 500 and 700, they are placed into the graduate course of readings in art history, French 512. With a score below 500, they enroll in the introductory course, French 511. In the case of a second language other than French, arrangements will be made on an individual basis.

German: With a score below 450, students enroll in the introductory course, German 515. Students who score between 450 and 500 are placed into German 516. With scores between 500 and 700, students enroll in the advanced reading course, German 513. Students attaining a minimum
score of 700 on the German placement exam are exempted from further coursework in that language.

**ARTH 500 (F) Clark Visiting Professor Seminar: writing TO art**

**Cross-listings:** ARTH 400 ARTH 500

**Primary Cross-listing**

In this seminar, we will think about writing TO art and for it, rather than merely about it; but first, we will think about how we think. I intend that we read essays and stories that confront the ways in which we think. That might sound abstract, but in fact it is rather concrete: we bring to works of art our predilections or tastes, psychologies, politics, habits of mind, in short, our subjectivity. We are not blank slates, art is not, either. Art is layered with its own history, and histories, criticisms, reactions, rejections, movements. Art is not static. How do we writers move with art, confront our reactions, and ask why we have them. To me, one of the most important aspects in writing is judging one’s own reactions, for instance, in the choice of words. To that end, that of confronting our thinking, we will read, among other things: Adorno’s “Coming to Terms with the Past;” Joan Scott’s “The Evidence of Experience;” Kafka’s “Josephine the Mouse Singer and the Mouse People,” and “The Hunger Artist;” Freud’s “Notes on War and Death,” and Craig Owens’, “On Speaking to Others” and “Feminism and Post-Modernism.” We will also read some of my anti-art art criticism, or what I call stories written in relationship to art. Some of these employ fictions, some not. We will read a few of my "Madame Realism" pieces, as well as essays on Warhol and some other contemporary artists. We will do some writing. We will visit with or be visited by critics and/or artists. We will look at art in galleries, and write about what we have seen.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** writing assignments, participation

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 16

**Expected Class Size:** 16

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** (D1)

**This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:**

ARTH 400 (D1) ARTH 500 (D1)

**Fall 2019**

**SEM Section:** 01  T 1:10 pm - 4:00 pm  Lynne Tillman

**ARTH 501 (S) Museums: History and Practice**

**Cross-listings:** LEAD 301 ARTH 303 ARTH 501

**Primary Cross-listing**

Art museums not only express the political, economic and cultural values of their period of formation, but the evolution of those values that have resulted in the institutions of our time. The seminar will focus on museums past and present internationally as it also considers the future of museums, doing so as it examines governance and management policies and practices, the role of architecture and installation in interpretation and experience, guidelines in the accessioning and deaccessioning works of art, and issues associated with the repatriation and restitution of cultural property. The course will consider current trends in exhibition, public education and other programming in art museums that range in size and type from the "encyclopedic" or "universal" to newly established contemporary arts institutions and alternative spaces. Class discussions will have a special focus on how museums strive to balance their scholarly and artistic roles with their civic and social responsibilities doing so while maintaining financial stability in the increasingly market-driven, metric-conscious, not-for-profit environment of our time.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** oral presentations and discussion in class and one seminar paper (with class presentation) at the end of the semester

**Prerequisites:** undergraduates should email michael.conforti@williams.edu to schedule a discussion before registering for the course

**Enrollment Limit:** 10

**Enrollment Preferences:** graduate students, then senior art history majors, then other undergraduates

**Expected Class Size:** 10
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Unit Notes: satisfies the seminar requirement for the undergraduate Art History major

Distributions: (D1)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
LEAD 301 (D2) ARTH 303 (D1) ARTH 501 (D1)

Attributes: AMST Space and Place Electives LEAD Facets or Domains of Leadership

Spring 2020
SEM Section: 01 T 1:10 pm - 3:50 pm Michael Conforti

ARTH 503 (S) Clark Visiting Professor Seminar: Ethics of Abstraction

Cross-listings: ARTH 403 ARTH 503 ARTH 400 ARTH 500

Primary Cross-listing

The course will interrogate abstraction as a strategy in 20th and 21st century art around the globe, and its manifold implications for political projects of being, seeing, and knowing together. We will look at how various artists turn to non-representation as a means for thinking differently about issues as divergent as flatness, vision, progress, decay, identity, violence, solidarity, negation, and protest. How might we read acts of judgment performed by abstract artists, i.e., separating what is alien from that which is intrinsic, as ethically activated? How do we account for the ways abstraction has figured centrally not only in modernist art histories, but also in economic and political theories (as in the abstraction of use into exchange value)? How, too, have representation and figuration (as ostensible opposites of abstraction) been positioned as ethical tactics? We will take an object-oriented approach that foregrounds the complexity of movement between “thing” and abstract “effect,” examining divergent valences from postwar abstract painting up to contemporary abstraction as it supports coded meanings, eccentricities, and alternative (feminist, queer, marginal, racialized) formations.

Requirements/Evaluation: research paper, class presentations

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 16

Enrollment Preferences: second-year graduate students, then first-year graduate students, then advanced undergraduate students; places for 8 undergraduate and 8 graduate students assured

Expected Class Size: 12

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
ARTH 403 (D1) ARTH 503 (D1) ARTH 400 (D1) ARTH 500 (D1)

Not offered current academic year

ARTH 504 (F) Proseminar in Research and Method

The Graduate Program Proseminar on Research and Method explores key topics in contemporary interpretation and practice through readings and classroom discussion with visiting scholars. Each week we will read work authored and/or selected by our class visitor, particularly with an eye to the larger methodological and historiographical issues as they arise from the readings, and more generally in the visitors’ field. Visitors will include Clark Fellows, Graduate Program faculty, and others. Students enrolled in the Proseminar will also participate in workshops directed to professional art-historical practice, including research strategies and methods, critical reading, and expository writing.

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation, writing assignments

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: none

Enrollment Preferences: limited to and required of first-year students in the Graduate Program in the History of Art

Expected Class Size: 12

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

ARTH 506 (S) An Expository Writing Workshop
A common and depressing consequence of too much education is how our writing tends to devolve, as the task of saying what we mean is complicated by new anxieties: trying to impress our potential employers, intimidate our competition, claim our place in an intellectual community, and generally avoid looking like fools. In many professions, bad prose tends to proliferate like some disgusting disease, as scholars, trying above all to avoid mistakes, become tentative, obscurantist, addicted to jargon, and desperate to imitate other bad writers. In this course we will try to relearn the basic skills of effective communication and adapt them to new and complicated purposes. In class we will go over weekly or bi-weekly writing assignments, but we will also look at the essays you are writing for your other courses, to give them an outward form that will best display their inner braininess. Among other things, I am a fiction writer, and part of my intention is to borrow the techniques of storytelling to dramatize your ideas successfully.

Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 14
Enrollment Preferences: limited to and required of first-year students in the Graduate Program in the History of Art
Expected Class Size: 14
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

ARTH 507 (S) Object Workshop
Meeting for six sessions over the semester, this workshop is designed to introduce first-year graduate students to technical, material, and connoisseurial perspectives relevant to the study and analysis of art objects. We will draw on local collections and expertise for our case studies.

Requirements/Evaluation: participation
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: none
Enrollment Preferences: limited to and required of first-year students in the Graduate Program in the History of Art
Grading: pass/fail option only
Distributions: (D1)

ARTH 508 (S) Art and Conservation: An Inquiry into History, Methods, and Materials
This course is designed to acquaint students with observation and examination techniques for works of art, artifacts, and decorative arts objects; give them an understanding of the history of artist materials and methods; and familiarize them with the ethics and procedures of conservation. This is not a conservation training course but is structured to provide a broader awareness for those who are planning careers involving work with cultural objects. Sessions will be held at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center, Williams College, the Clark Art Institute, and the Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza Art Collection in Albany. Examination questions may be formulated from exhibitions at these locations. Six exams will be given. Exam scores will be weighed in proportion to the number of sessions covered by the exam (e.g., the paintings exam, derived from six sessions of the course, will count as 25% of the final grade).

Class Format: slide presentations, lectures, gallery talks, hands-on opportunities, technical examinations, and group discussions
Requirements/Evaluation: attendance is required at all sessions; the course grade is based on exams given throughout the semester; there is no final exam

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 14

Enrollment Preferences: Graduate Program students, then students in art history or studio art

Expected Class Size: 14

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Attributes: EXPE Experiential Education Courses

Spring 2020

SEM Section: 01  MR 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm  Thomas J. Branchick

ARTH 509  (S) Graduate Symposium

This course is designed to assist qualified fourth-semester graduate students in preparing a scholarly paper to be presented at the annual Graduate Symposium. Working closely with a student and faculty ad hoc advisory committee, each student will prepare a twenty-minute presentation based on the Qualifying Paper. Special emphasis is placed on the development of effective oral presentation skills.

Class Format: symposium

Requirements/Evaluation: each student will present three practice runs and a final oral presentation at the symposium

Prerequisites: successful completion and acceptance of the Qualifying Paper

Grading: pass/fail option only

Unit Notes: limited to and required of second-year students in the Graduate Program in the History of Art

Distributions: (D1)

Spring 2020

SEM Section: 01  TBA  Marc Gotlieb, Emmelyn Butterfield-Rosen

ARTH 510  (F) Approaches to Drawing from Connoisseurship to Conceptualism

This course will consider the art of drawing as a pedagogical tool and cultural practice from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. Creative and commercial forces over four centuries have fostered different types of and reasons for production: presentation drawings in sixteenth century Italy, an increased market for drawings in seventeenth century Holland, a fashion for powdery pastels in eighteenth century France, and the critical promotion of drawing as a form of autographic thinking in the nineteenth century. Drawing has enjoyed a resurgence in the last fifty years as Minimalism and Conceptualism have pushed the medium's boundaries. Equal consideration will be given to the history of collecting and to materials from the invention of the Conté crayon to the deteriorating effects of acidic paper. The seminar will coincide with a major loan exhibition at the Clark of over one hundred drawings from the Renaissance through contemporary: Drawing in Depth: Master Drawings from the Thaw Collection. The class will be held in the Manton Study Center for Works on Paper and the Clark galleries with visits to the Williams College Museum of Art.

Requirements/Evaluation: involved class participation, several short presentations, one short paper, and a final paper approximately 20 pages

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 14

Enrollment Preferences: Graduate Program students and then to senior Art History majors

Expected Class Size: 8

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year

ARTH 512  (F) Why Look at Animals? Some Contemporary Positions
This seminar, named for a 1977 essay by the art critic John Berger, considers a recent tendency in contemporary art to see nonhuman animals less as objects for human delectation—to be owned, eaten, or symbolized with—than as subjects, endowed with specific forms of intelligence, agency, and/or cross-species kinship. We will take as case studies the work of artists such as Francis Alÿs, Xu Bing, Sue Coe, Coco Fusco, Pierre Huyghe, Jochen Lempert, Chris Marker, and Lin May Saeed, among others. Readings will come in part from the rapidly growing, multidisciplinary field of animal studies. In the process, we will consider concepts such as animacy; animal ethics; animalization; the anthropocene; biopolitics; and posthumanism. This seminar anticipates two exhibitions concerning animals at the Clark in Summer 2020.

Requirements/Evaluation: active class participation, presentations, writing assignments

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 14

Enrollment Preferences: MA students, then advanced Art History undergraduates

Expected Class Size: 12

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Fall 2019

SEM Section: 01  W 2:00 pm - 4:40 pm  Robert Wiesenberger

ARTH 515  (F) Creating Whiteness: Racial Taxonomies in 'American' Art, 1650-1900

Cross-listings: AMST 355  ARTH 515

Primary Cross-listing

"What is race?" "How is a race created?" "What are the racial histories and subsequent political implications of 'American' art?" These are the central questions of our exploration. Drawing on two centuries of making in the Americas—from 17th century casta paintings of New Spain to the pictorialist photographs of Fred Holland Day—this object-based seminar for graduate students (and undergraduates with instructor's approval) draws upon area collections (including WCMA and The Clark Art Institute) to make the argument that racial ideologies have always been sutured to definitions of an American canon. Our approach is the case study; devoting one or two class meetings to the exploration of eight specific moments/artists in order to engage with the intersectional ideologies of personal and collective identity, e.g., self and the Divine; portraiture and the nation, armed conflict, and the constructed mutabilities of gender and sexuality. Additional artists and topics include: the Stuart family’s images of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson; advances in photographic technology vis-a-vis the amputated bodies of Civil War veterans; gender fluidity in John Singer Sargent; and the equation of homoeroticism and black bodies in pictorialism. Designed to provide breadth and specific moments of depth, we will be covering processes of making across multiple mediums and time periods. An elementary reading knowledge of French, Latin, Portuguese, and/or Spanish will not go amiss.

Requirements/Evaluation: research paper, presentations

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 16

Enrollment Preferences: second-year graduate students, then first-year graduate students, then advanced undergraduate students

Expected Class Size: 12

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

AMST 355 (D1) ARTH 515 (D1)

Not offered current academic year

ARTH 519  (S) Architectural Theory and Modernity, 1750-1968

Why do buildings need words, or do they? For most of the world and most of history, buildings are made without the benefit of formal architectural thought. But at various times, ideas about the aesthetics of buildings, their cultural and philosophical meaning, and their underlying principles, have been matters of great public interest. And architectural theory—in the form of treatises, manifestos, and critical reviews—has exercised an enormous
effect on building. This theory can be prescriptive, presenting categorical rules for making good buildings; it can be descriptive, looking at how buildings perform in the real world; and it can be radical, seeking to change the essence and definition of architecture. Theory seemed very important to architects twenty years ago, but no longer. Why is that? We will investigate. Students will give short presentations on key theorists, such as Vitruvius, Alberti, Palladio, Laugier, Boulée, A. W. N. Pugin, Viollet-le-Duc, Gottfried Semper, Le Corbusier, and Robert Venturi. The semester will conclude with a 15- to 20-page seminar paper, based on comments and discussion following a classroom presentation.

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation, writing assignments
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: none
Enrollment Preferences: MA students, then advanced undergraduates
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Spring 2020
SEM Section: 01 W 1:10 pm - 3:50 pm Michael J. Lewis

ARTH 521 (S) Islam and the Image in Indian Painting, c.1450-c.1750
This seminar will explore Indian painting made for Muslim patrons from the medieval period to the early modern era. The course considers how paintings produced for an elite Indo-Muslim audience can be situated within the frameworks of "Islamic art," a loaded historiographical term that has been questioned in recent times. The seminar will also address some of the major problems that continue to haunt Indian art scholarship. For most of its history, the academic study of Indian painting has seldom considered contemporaneous literary voices that shed light on the motivations behind artworks. Furthermore, the historiography, deeply entrenched in its colonial and orientalist roots, has largely isolated images from their supporting texts-a curious oversight in light of the fact that miniature painting is primarily an art of the book. These biases have affected the way museums have collected, displayed and interpreted miniature paintings. Western museums continue to place paintings made for books and albums in their "South Asian" collections while textual manuscripts and calligraphic specimens made for the same Muslim audiences—even at times bound in the same albums—are categorized as "Islamic art." What does this isolation of text from image imply about prevailing views of Islamic art? In order to understand the various intended functions of miniature painting and its possible role as an "Islamic" art, the seminar will explore ways to conceptually reintegrate images and texts belonging to key manuscripts and albums that were dispersed during the colonial and post-colonial periods. To better understand the cultural, historical and religious context surrounding artworks students will read primary literature ranging from autobiography to devotional poetry, often written by the very patrons and subjects of the paintings to be discussed.

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation, writing assignments
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: none
Enrollment Preferences: MA students, then advanced undergraduates
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Spring 2020
SEM Section: 01 R 1:10 pm - 3:50 pm Murad K. Mumtaz

ARTH 523 (S) Heaven’s Gate:The Romanesque Sculpted Portal and the Creation of Sacred Space Through Art
Cross-listings: ARTH 523 ARTH 424
Secondary Cross-listing
During the course of the eleventh century, the designers of European churches fashioned a new architectural language that we now label “Romanesque.” One of the most innovative and dramatic aspects of this new language was its assimilation of monumental sculpture, absent in Europe since the fifth century. The focus of attention in this regard was the portal, which marked the threshold between the profane realm of the outside world
and the sacred space of the church. Often characterized as the "marquee of the Middle Ages," the Romanesque sculpted portal, with its startling juxtaposition of the spiritual and the physical, of ecstatic visions of the heavenly realm and writhing, biting monsters, constitutes one of the true high-points of creativity in medieval art. Through the lens of modern scholarship, this seminar will investigate the antecedents and origins of the Romanesque sculpted portal and examine in detail its most renowned manifestations. Emphasis will be placed on understanding these often complex sculptural schemes within their original functional and material contexts, especially in terms of how they helped to create the sacred space of the church behind. Students will then have the opportunity to develop their own research projects, informed by what we have learned in the seminar, but focused on an example of sacred threshold art of their own choosing.

Requirements/Evaluation: class discussion/participation, oral presentation, and a 15- to 20-page research paper

Prerequisites: permission of instructor

Enrollment Limit: 14

Enrollment Preferences: Art majors and graduate students

Expected Class Size: 8

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

ARTH 523 (D1) ARTH 424 (D1)

Attributes: ARTH pre-1800 Courses

Spring 2020

SEM Section: 01    F 1:10 pm - 3:50 pm     Peter D. Low

ARTH 524 (F) The Watchful Object

What is implied by an object that "watches"? Is it sentient? Animate? Through what apparatus does it gain the power to perceive and in turn generate some type of action? Watchful objects--sometimes known problematically as 'fetishes,' 'dols,' and 'totems'--have existed in numerous material cultures in Africa over time and have often been saddled with titles and labels that largely reflect colonial-era notions of primitivism linked with non-Western objects, spaces, and peoples. Even today, many of these objects are still inappropriately connected to systems of the occult rather than being recognized as crucial cogs in the socio-political, cultural, and spiritual mechanics of lived experience on the continent both past and in some cases present. The purpose of this seminar, thus, is to unpack the multiple identities that these objects have experienced as a way of understanding 1.) the circumstances and situations that catalyzed their production; and 2.) how their various material and metaphorical components function as power-producing elements that enable these forms to become 'watchful' presences in society that operate in accordance with their 'observations' of the human condition. This course will also address how the psychological agency of many of these material traditions has prompted their inclusion and absorption within contemporary artistic practices as well, often in the form of productions and performances that provoke unsettling and often transformative experiences in viewers.

Requirements/Evaluation: in-class presentations, class discussion, and a final research project

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 16

Enrollment Preferences: second-year graduate students, then first-year graduate students, then advanced undergraduate students

Expected Class Size: 12

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year

ARTH 527 (F) Acquiring Art: Selecting and Purchasing Objects For WCMA

Cross-listings: ECON 227    ARTH 327    ARTH 527

Secondary Cross-listing

How do museums acquire art? Factors considered in selecting objects include: the museum's existing collection, its mission, the availability of suitable objects, evaluation of the art historical importance of potential purchases, and the available budget. How can objects be identified and obtained at the
most reasonable cost? How do auctions work and what strategies are best for purchasing works at auction? Is it more economical to purchase art at auction or to work with dealers or (for contemporary works) directly with artists? Do museums consider value in the same way as private collectors? What role does an object's history and condition play in the evaluation process? In this course students will work as teams to identify and propose objects for addition to the collection of the Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA). A significant budget will be made available for the acquisition. We will discuss approaches for identification, acquisition and evaluation of objects. Student teams will be responsible for identifying a set of objects that would make appropriate additions to the WCMA collection, and a strategy for acquiring one or more of those objects. Working with the advice of WCMA curatorial staff, one or more of these objects will be acquired using the agreed strategy, and the object will become part of the WCMA permanent collection. Graduate students will participate in all aspects of the class but may be required to undertake different assignments.

Requirements/Evaluation: three papers of 10-15 pages each and class participation; student teams will make proposals for objects; each student will be required to submit three papers, dealing with the objects, the likely cost, and the best strategy

Prerequisites: ECON 110 or permission of instructor

Enrollment Limit: 20

Enrollment Preferences: senior majors in Art History, Economics and Political Economy; graduate students will be admitted only by permission of instructors

Expected Class Size: 20

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

ECON 227 (D2) ARTH 327 (D1) ARTH 527 (D1)

Fall 2019

SEM Section: 01 MR 1:10 pm - 2:25 pm Kevin M. Murphy, Stephen C. Sheppard

ARTH 530 (S) Demigods: Nature, Social Theory, and Visual Imagination in Art and Literature, Ancient to Modern

Cross-listings: CLAS 236 ARTH 530

Primary Cross-listing

Embodied in satyrs, centaurs, nymphs, and other demigods is a vision of an alternative evolutionary and cultural history. In it, humans and animals live together. The distinction between nature and culture is not meaningful. Male and female are equal. The industrial revolution never happens. This course traces the history of demigods from its origins in ancient Greek art and poetry until today. We pay special attention to three points: the relationship between mythology of demigods and ancient political theory about primitive life; evolving conceptions of the environment, and the capacity of the visual arts to create mythology that has a limited literary counterpart. The first half of the course examines the origins and character of the demigods, in works of ancient art, e.g. the François vase and the Parthenon, as well as ancient texts, including Hesiod's Theogony and Ovid's Metamorphoses. We examine relevant cultural practices, intellectual history, and conceptions of nature, in texts such as Euripides and Lucretius. The second half of the course investigates the post-classical survival of demigods. We consider the "rediscovery" of demigods in the work of Renaissance artists such as Botticelli, Michelangelo, Dürer, and Titian. We consider in detail the important role played by demigods in the formation of Modernism in art and literature. Key texts include Schiller, "Naive and sentimental poetry," Nietzsche, Birth of Tragedy, Mallermé, "L'Apres midi d'une faune," Aby Warburg, and Stoppard's Arcadia. Problems include the relationship between nymphs and prostitutes in Manet, and the meaning of fauns and the Minotaur in Picasso. We conclude with demigods in popular culture such as the Narnia chronicles or Hunger Games.

Requirements/Evaluation: attendance, participation in discussion, one short presentation on a demigod in ancient art, one longer presentation on demigods in early modern, modern, or contemporary art, and a 20-page research paper

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 16

Enrollment Preferences: first year graduate students, then second year graduate students, then advanced undergraduates

Expected Class Size: 12

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

CLAS 236 (D1) ARTH 530 (D1)
ARTH 535  (F)  The Medieval Object

Cross-listings:  ARTH 535  ARTH 435

Secondary Cross-listing
After years of focusing on theory, scholars of medieval art have returned to an examination of physical objects. Distinctly strange and even monstrous, such small material things as reliquaries, liturgical vessels, game pieces, and textiles transgress the traditional categories of art, some made from precious materials and others of such base substances as bones and dirt. Even books were treated as tangible things, not only to be read as texts, but also to be looked at, paraded, and displayed with the Eucharist. Collected in church treasuries during the Middle Ages, exchanged, and reconfigured, medieval objects served simultaneously as earthly assets and spiritual investments. The seminar will focus on the making, function, and collecting of medieval objects. Each student will participate in weekly discussions stimulated by the instructor’s presentations and selected readings. Students will also conduct research on an object available for study, will present an analysis of it for discussion by the class, and submit a 15- to 20-page term paper taking into account any comments and criticisms.

Class Format:  three hours per week
Requirements/Evaluation:  class participation, oral presentation, 15- to 20-page research paper
Prerequisites:  none
Enrollment Limit:  16
Enrollment Preferences:  Art majors and Art History graduate students; 16 (8 undergrad, 8 graduate)
Expected Class Size:  14
Grading:  no pass/fail option,  yes fifth course option
Distributions:  (D1)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
ARTH 535 (D1)  ARTH 435 (D1)
Attributes:  ARTH pre-1800 Courses
Not offered current academic year

ARTH 536  (S)  Charles and Maurice Prendergrast in WCMA Collections

This seminar will investigate the careers of Maurice and Charles Prendergast, who occupy curious positions in American art. Students will work closely with the art and archival collections of the Prendergasts at WCMA, which is the largest repository of their work in the world. Maurice's Post-Impressionism placed him at the forefront of American modernism in the first decades of the twentieth century, culminating with his inclusion in the infamous Armory Show of 1913. Charles, a leading frame maker before adapting techniques of his craft to create incised panels, intersects with the Arts & Crafts Movement, Symbolism, and vernacular material culture. While the brothers are firmly canonical, they are often regarded as isolated from major formal and iconographic concerns of their peers. Scholarship, much of it produced at WCMA, has often focused on their subject matter. Participants in this class will consider new material and theoretical approaches to the brothers’ work that may (or may not) prove productive in resituating their place in American art.

Requirements/Evaluation:  class participation and writing assignments
Prerequisites:  none
Enrollment Limit:  none
Enrollment Preferences:  MA students, then advanced art history undergraduates
Expected Class Size:  12
Grading:  no pass/fail option,  no fifth course option
Distributions:  (D1)

Spring 2020
SEM Section: 01  W 10:00 am - 12:40 pm  Kevin M. Murphy
Among all the portraits produced during the modern period, some have been painted or, more recently, photographed in prison. Portraits in prison exist at a crossroad of politics, law, and identity; they offer a great opportunity to think about art and society. Artists themselves have made self-portraits during their own imprisonments, or sometimes a portrait of one of their fellow prisoners. More often it was the prisoners or their relatives who commissioned an artistic record of their detention. The idea of commemorating such a moment, or to evoke it as a claim to fame, seems surprising at best, outrageous and provocative at worst. But there has been, since the 16th century, an enduring tradition of portraiture in prison with its masterpieces and its pantheon, a tradition that fits into the wider pictorial attention to the prison itself. With the French Revolution, the nature of prison changed. It became a tragic symbol of political "debates." Within a few years, a terrifying series of portraits appeared that would nurture Western political thought and visual culture until now. Since the 18th century, these portraits have become more concerned with ideas that stretch beyond the individual and into the realm of social justice, mass incarceration, and the prison-industrialization complex.

Requirements/Evaluation: oral and written assignments
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 16
Enrollment Preferences: graduate students, then upper level undergraduate Art History majors
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

This interdisciplinary seminar examines the rise of evolutionary biology, a new explanatory paradigm that solidified in Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century, and its ramifications in art and aesthetic theory in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We will consider how natural histories of creation, and corresponding reclassifications of the human as a species category, went hand in hand with a reconceptualization of the aesthetic faculties, and the processes of art's production and reception. A core component of this seminar will be the close study of key texts by Charles Darwin, and two thinkers who were among the most radical in extending his key insights into the domain of aesthetic theory—the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, and the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. These primary texts will provide points of departure for studying the work of a number of innovative practitioners working across a range of media, among them the composer Richard Wagner, the Neo-Impressionist painter Georges Seurat, the architect Adolf Loos, the choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky, and the art historian Aby Warburg. Methodologically a major aim of this seminar is to think together critically about the nature of art's relations to other domains of cultural production such as science or philosophy, and to interrogate what it means, both practically and epistemologically, to pursue "interdisciplinarity" as a strategy for art history.

Requirements/Evaluation: seminar presentations, research paper
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 16
Enrollment Preferences: graduate students, then advanced undergraduate students
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)
Attributes: PHIL Related Courses
Not offered current academic year

The use of the body—be it the artist's or those of willing and unwilling participants—is among art's most significant developments internationally since the 1960s. In Latin America between the 1960s and 1980s, activating the body not only was a strong conceptual strategy to escape object-based practices; it was also a potent way for artists to disobey and confront forms of violence and control exerted by repressive regimes. But the body too
was a forceful medium by which artists could subvert heteronormative frameworks, through the visualization and performance of feminist critiques and queer identities. This seminar will explore the role of the body in Latin American conceptual art through localized case studies, elucidating the body's particular strength as a vehicle for political and institutional critique, as well as its potential to unlock alternate narratives of conceptual practices in the region.

Requirements/Evaluation: active participation and weekly assignments, leading class discussion, three short responses, and final research paper

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 12

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year

ARTH 543  (F)  Color, High and Low

Why should color in prints be controversial? For most of the nineteenth century—even as technical advances encouraged a flowering of color in woodcut, intaglio, and especially lithographic production—entrenched voices in the art establishment continued to insist on printmaking as an art of black and white. Drawing upon a wide variety of examples from the Clark's collection, this course will explore the range of associations that attached to color prints, along a broad spectrum from highbrow preciousness and subtlety to lowbrow commercialism and bad taste. Color lithography was a particular lightning rod for controversy: although chromatic experiments in this medium enabled striking aesthetic innovations, the extreme complexity of the process also meant that the designer of a print became farther and farther removed from its actual production. This was just as true for the delicate and exquisite suites produced in limited editions by Pierre Bonnard, Edouard Vuillard, and Maurice Denis as it was for the large-scale, brightly-colored lithographic posters of Jules Chéret and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, used to advertise popular urban entertainments. Alongside the close examination of original works of art, a set of critical and theoretical readings will help us navigate the paradoxes of printed color. Apart from the standard requirements, including a research paper and class presentation, students will have an option to participate in a summer 2020 exhibition based on the course findings. This course will take place in the Manton Study Center for Works on Paper at the Clark.

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation and writing assignments

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: none

Enrollment Preferences: MA students, then advanced Art History undergraduates

Expected Class Size: 12

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Fall 2019

SEM Section: 01    M 10:00 am - 12:40 pm     Anne R. Leonard

ARTH 544  (S)  Women Artists in Paris, 1850-1900

In this seminar, we will examine the historically undervalued contributions of women in the art of the later nineteenth century. During this period, leading artists from around the world, including many women, were drawn to the academies, museums, salons, and studios of Paris. While women were largely excluded from formal training, many nonetheless navigated the complex systems of artistic production. We will focus on this multinational group of talented women (including Marie Bashkirtseff, Rosa Bonheur, Anna Ancher, Mary Cassatt), and we will assess their work against contemporary sociopolitical thought and aesthetic theories. Readings will draw upon early critical reviews of public exhibitions, biographical materials, studies of pedagogical and institutional practices, and social histories of art. In and through these materials, we will explore the marginalizing narrative that was created for women artists in Paris, and, most importantly, we will reconstruct an alternative history through our discussions and class presentations.

Requirements/Evaluation: seminar presentations and research paper

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 14
Enrollment Preferences: preference given to graduate students and then to senior Art History majors

Expected Class Size: 14

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year

ARTH 545  Architectural Theory in Crisis

Why do buildings need words, or do they? For most of the world and most of history, buildings are made without the benefit of formal architectural thought. But at various times, ideas about the aesthetics of buildings, their cultural and philosophical meaning, and their underlying principles, have been matters of great public interest. And architectural theory—in the form of treatises, manifestos, and critical reviews—has exercised an enormous effect on building. This theory can be prescriptive, presenting categorical rules for making good buildings; it can be descriptive, looking at how buildings perform in the real world; and it can be radical, seeking to change the essence and definition of architecture. Theory seemed very important to architects twenty years ago, but that is not the case today. Why? We will investigate. Students will give short presentations on key theorists, such as Vitruvius, Alberti, Palladio, Laugier, Boulée, A. W. N. Pugin, Viollet-le-Duc, Gottfried Semper, Le Corbusier, and Robert Venturi. The semester will conclude with a 20-page seminar paper, based on comments and discussion following a classroom presentation.

Class Format: presentations

Requirements/Evaluation: several short presentations and a final 30-minute presentation, to be followed by a 20-page paper

Prerequisites: permission of instructor

Enrollment Limit: 11

Enrollment Preferences: Graduate students

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading:

Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year

ARTH 546  Texere: The Material Philosophy of Print and Textile, ca. 1500-1900

It is a commonplace in the literature on textiles that the words for both text and textile derive from the Latin texere: to weave. As this etymological root indicates, the action of making cloth provides the metaphoric structure by which we conceive of language from the threading of thought to the weaving of prose and poetry. In the recent theoretical writings of Tim Ingold, among others, the processes of weaving-textility-offer a model against which to conceive of the dominant hylomorphic conception of matter and form as a process of imprint. Instead, textiles illustrate a world that is created through forces in motion, never imprinting, but moving against and within one another. This seminar will use these questions as the starting point to examine the interaction between printed matter (embodies a hylomorphic process) and textile (a material challenge to hylomorphism). The Clark Art Library contains a preeminent collection of textile material, and this seminar will dive into the Mary Ann Beinecke collection to examine histories of gender and labor, figuration and ornament, mobility and place, and finally, form and matter. The case studies will range from sixteenth-century needlepoint model books to twentieth-century kimono design.

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation, writing assignments

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment: none

Enrollment Preferences: MA students, then advanced Art History major undergraduates

Expected Class Size: 12

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Fall 2019

SEM Section: 01  R 10:00 am - 12:40 pm  Caroline O. Fowler

ARTH 547  The Studio, The Bedroom, & the Tomb: Artists and Artistic Biographies in the 19th Century&Beyond
How was the vocation of the artist thematized in the European cultural imagination in the Romantic age and its aftermath? Even more, how did artists themselves articulate, experience, and reproduce that sense of vocation?—What were its mythologies and poetics, at once as they were circulated in visual culture, but also as they were lived, experienced, and reproduced by artists themselves? We will explore such question across three historically, psychologically, and tropologically configured "sites": the artist's studio, the artist's desire, and the artist's death. Readings by Freud, Balzac, Kris and Kurtz, along with scholarship largely centered on the visual arts of the 18th and 19th centuries. With instructor permission, students may undertake research projects in any field of the history of art.

Requirements/Evaluation: presentations, research paper
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 16
Enrollment Preferences: graduate students, then advanced Art History major undergrads
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)
Not offered current academic year

ARTH 548 (S) Landscape, Theory, Ideology
To use the term "landscape" is to imply and assume a subject position. Unlike the categories of "nature," "wilderness," "vista," or "ecology," a landscape is something invented and experienced (or observed, or represented, or cultivated) solely by human agents. The term "landscape" is variously deployed in the service of a range of political and philosophical positions. This seminar explores "landscape" as a fruitful agitation in critical theory and aesthetic discourse over the past thirty years. The course will interact with the artists and photographic works on view in the exhibition, Landmarks, a 150-year survey of landscape photography in WCMA's collection. We will examine i) how landscape as medium and as genre moves from literature to painting to photography; ii) how to read and employ contemporary theory in the service of artwork from bygone eras; and iii) we will ask who exercises the agency and privilege to name, to invent, to denote a space or a view as worthy of sight.

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation, writing assignments
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 16
Enrollment Preferences: MA students, then advanced art history undergraduates
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Spring 2020
SEM Section: 01    R 10:00 am - 12:40 pm     Horace Ballard

ARTH 549 (F) Art, Biology, Beauty
This interdisciplinary seminar is offered in conjunction with the upcoming RAP Colloquium scheduled for March 2020, "Beauty, Sexuality, Selection: Darwinian Revolutions in Aesthetics." (Seminar participants will be expected to attend.) Our theme will be Charles Darwin's controversial theory of "sexual selection" as both an aesthetic and experienced response to beauty, and as a theoretical concept that is back in play in current evolutionary thinking. Readings will be drawn from ancient philosophy, current science, art history, the history of science, and other fields, to engage the following questions: how did the existence of difference in the organic world—gender difference broadly but also more specifically racial difference in the human species—motivate Darwin's theory of an "aesthetic evolution" driven by animal and human perception of visual beauty? How did philosophical aesthetics contribute to Darwin's biological theory of beauty, and how did Darwin's biological theory of beauty unsettle the discipline of philosophical aesthetics? In which ways did the arts and visual cultures of Europe and elsewhere shape Darwin's aesthetic assumptions? How did, and how does, the concept of sexual selection destabilize the concept of "art" as a human cultural activity? How might "sexual selection" complicate historical and current delineations drawn between nature and culture, between the innate and the arbitrary?

Requirements/Evaluation: seminar participation, presentations, research paper
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: none
Enrollment Preferences: MA students, then advanced Art History major undergraduates
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Fall 2019
SEM Section: 01  T 10:00 am - 12:40 pm  Emmelyn Butterfield-Rosen

ARTH 550 (S) The History, Theory, and Problem of Connoisseurship
The museum and market have long relied upon the "talent" of a chosen few "connoisseurs," whose abilities (i.e. "the expert eye")-shrouded in mythology and vagueness-have profoundly influenced the interpretation of objects. This seminar will interrogate the problematic construct of connoisseurship in the market (Duveen), in the museum (Pope-Hennessy), and in the academy (Beronson). Through readings about the history and theory of the practice from the sixteenth century to the modern day, we will reassess the meaning, and validity, of connoisseurship in visual culture. And, through conversations about authorship, working methods, and artistic intent, we will question what we learn from close looking. This seminar will include case studies using objects in the Clark's permanent collection, focusing on in-depth discussions of materials, techniques, attribution, quality, and the burgeoning field of conservation science. Students will be asked to conduct their own rigorous object-based research.

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation, writing assignments
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: none
Enrollment Preferences: MA students, then advanced art history major undergraduates
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Spring 2020
SEM Section: 01  M 10:00 am - 12:40 pm  Esther Bell

ARTH 554 (S) The Matrix and the Market: Printmaking and Photography in the Nineteenth Century
During the last half of the 19th century, technical, commercial, and aesthetic approaches to printmaking and photography experienced dramatic paradigm shifts. Etching, for example, simultaneously functioned as a reproductive medium and one that carried experimental, vanguard associations. Practitioners of lithography strove to distance themselves from denigrating commercialism and raise the medium's status to a respected art form. Photography, in turn, negotiated the boundaries between "documentary" and "artistic." This seminar will address the complex issues that swirled around printmaking and photographic matrices, critical responses to the various processes, artist-driven initiatives, and the formative role of the art market and book trade in shaping popular opinion. We will consider these topics across political and geographic borders from Europe to the United States, reading both primary and secondary sources. The class will be held in the new Manton Study Center for Works on paper with visits to Chapin library and the Williams College Museum of Art likely.

Class Format: seminar
Requirements/Evaluation: students will be responsible for readings and involved class discussion; several short and one long presentation; and a final paper (20-25 pages)
Enrollment Limit: 12
Enrollment Preferences: Graduate Program students and then to senior Art History majors
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year
ARHT 562  (F)  Art of California: Pacific Standard Time

Cross-listings:  ARTH 562  ARTH 462  LATS 462  AMST 462

Secondary Cross-listing

In this course, we will study the visual arts and culture of California after 1960 and consider the region's place in modern art history. We will focus on a series of recent exhibitions organized as part of a Getty initiative entitled Pacific Standard Time. Diverse in scope, these shows explored important developments in postwar art in California, including feminist art, African American assemblage, Chicano collectives, Modernist architecture, craft, and queer activism. In this seminar, we will pursue research projects directly related to the art exhibitions we study, and examine southern California conceptualism, photography, performance, painting, sculpture (including assemblage and installation), and video by artists both canonical and lesser known. Student projects will analyze the critical responses to the exhibitions, while also exploring the roles of archives, art criticism, and curatorial practice in contemporary art history. In fall 2017, a new Getty PST initiative focused on Latin American and Latino art will commence and this class will consider these exhibitions as well.

Requirements/Evaluation: several short writing and research assignments, oral presentations, class participation, and a final research paper of 16-20 pages written in stages over the course of the semester

Prerequisites:  ARTH 102

Enrollment Limit:  15

Enrollment Preferences:  senior Art major and senior Latina/o Studies concentrators

Expected Class Size:  15

Grading:  no pass/fail option,  no fifth course option

Distributions:  (D1)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

ARTH 562 (D1)  ARTH 462 (D1)  LATS 462 (D2)  AMST 462 (D2)

Attributes:  AMST Arts in Context Electives  AMST Space and Place Electives  LATS Comparative Race + Ethnic Studies Electives

Not offered current academic year

ARHT 563  (F)(S)  Contemporary Curatorial Workshop

Bi-weekly workshop for graduate students working on contemporary art and curatorial projects. Under the direction of the chair, students will present on-going curatorial projects, undertake studio and site visits, host local and visiting curators for presentations, and explore key topics in modern and contemporary art and curatorial practice.

Class Format:  workshop, meets all year

Prerequisites:  graduate art students

Enrollment Limit:  25

Enrollment Preferences:  only open to graduate students

Expected Class Size:  25

Grading:  pass/fail option only

Distributions:  (D1)

Fall 2019
  SEM Section: 01  TBA  Victoria Brooks

Spring 2020
  SEM Section: 01  TBA  Victoria Brooks

ARHT 567  (F)  What is Art Criticism? Current Debates, Past Precedents

Taking as its point of departure recent debates concerning a purported "crisis" of art-criticism, this seminar considers traditions of writing about the work of living artists in modernity. We will begin with current literature and then pivot back to the eighteenth century, tracing a sequence of episodes in art criticism's evolution as a genre by looking at key works of art as mediated by their first critics. Emphasis will be placed on close readings of primary historical texts as prompts for thinking through the following broad questions, among others: What is critique, and what is art criticism? Is the art critic a
judge, a historian, a partisan, a participant, or an artist in her own right? How do forms of distribution impact the content of art criticism, and how does art criticism impact the form and content of art? What is the relationship, if any, between taste, assessment of value, and interpretation of meaning? Artists considered include, among others, Boucher, Friedrich, Whistler, Seurat, Pollock, Piper.

Class Format: seminar

Requirements/Evaluation: two short writing assignments, twenty page final paper

Grading: no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year

ARTh 573 (S) Modern and Contemporary Art from the Middle East and North Africa

This is an exciting time for art from the Middle East and North Africa. Contemporary artists are exhibiting in international shows and biennales, and the global art market has responded to collector interest and crowned its favorites. The visibility and celebration of these artists, however, does not take into account the larger historical arena of cultural production and artistic practice from which they emerge. In terms of the discipline of art history, the field of modern painting and contemporary visual practice in the region is in its first generation of formation and definition. Drawing on very recent scholarship in art history and visual anthropology, we will explore the "history" of modern and contemporary art in the Middle East and North Africa (from the 1920s-the present). We will pay particular attention to how key terms and categories such as: modern, contemporary, Islamic, and Arab, have been constructed, deployed and debated by artists, institutions and scholars in the field. We will explore the role of museums, art schools, archives and biennales in the region, the creation of art publics and communities, and how the international market has responded to contemporary production. And perhaps most importantly, we will study work by artists that identify with the region and engage and complicate constructions of race, gender, religion, environment, autonomy and community.

Class Format: seminar

Requirements/Evaluation: short response essays and a culminating research paper

Enrollment Preferences: graduate program students and then senior Art History and Arabic Studies majors

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year

ARTh 575 (F) Regression as Modern Fantasy: Archaism, Primitivism, Prehistory

This course analyzes the implications of European modernity’s engagement with cultural artifacts it wanted to classify beneath the prefix "pre." We take as our object an aesthetic strategy employed with increasing frequency by modern artists in Europe after 1800: the self-conscious mobilization of visual forms thought to telegraph priority to later advancements, whether historically or developmentally. Our inquiry, beginning with the German Nazarenes and extending into the early twentieth century around the moment of WW1, foregrounds such strategies as key to grasping new notions of temporality and geography that emerged in European modernity. We will inquire into the historical and intellectual contexts that sustained chronological and cultural primitivisms, including the history of colonialism, discoveries of Paleolithic cave art, and the emergence of the modern disciplines of archeology, anthropology, ethnography, child psychology, and psychoanalysis. Alongside close visual scrutiny of some of modernism’s most canonical and problematic objects, including key works by Picasso and Gauguin, we will examine the literature that proliferated in this period devoted to the art of peoples deemed “primitive,” including the Greeks in the pre-classical period, non-Western peoples, and children.

Requirements/Evaluation: seminar presentations, research paper

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 16

Enrollment Preferences: graduate students, then advanced undergraduate students

Expected Class Size: 12

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year

ARTh 586 (F) Japanese Popular Visual Culture
Cross-listings: ARTH 286  ARTH 586  ASST 186  COMP 186

Secondary Cross-listing

The phrase "Japanese popular culture" often calls to mind comics and animation, but Japan's earliest visual pop culture dates back to the 17th century and the development of arts like kabuki theater and woodblock prints that could be produced for a mass audience. This course traces Japanese popular culture through a range of visual media: kabuki and puppet theater, premodern and postmodern visual art (ukiyo-e, Superflat), classic film (Ozu, Mizoguchi, Kurosawa), manga/comics (Tezuka, Otomo, Okazaki), and animation (Oshii, Miyazaki, Kon). We will focus on developing visual reading skills to come up with original interpretations of these works, and on comparing different media to make them shed light on one another.

Class Format: discussion

Requirements/Evaluation: attendance, participation, two 5-page papers, final exam

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 35

Enrollment Preferences: students majoring or considering a major in a related discipline

Expected Class Size: 15

Grading: no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

ARTH 286 (D1) ARTH 586 (D1) ASST 186 (D1) COMP 186 (D1)

Fall 2019
LEC Section: 01 MR 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm Christopher A. Bolton

ARTH 587 (S) Crash! The Car Accident as Myth and Metaphor in American Art and Visual Culture

A year after MoMA elevated machinery to high art in 1934, Grant Wood painted Death on The Ridge Road (Williams College Museum of Art), a depiction of the deadly side of the streamlined modern machines that Alfred Barr might have presented at MoMA. A generation later, Andy Warhol's Death and Disasters series multiplied gruesome images of crushed cars and bodies to numbing effect. During the ensuing years, both Jackson Pollock and David Smith (among others) became traffic fatalities. Roughly bookended by the Great Depression and the 1960s, but also considering works of art and visual materials before and after those parameters, this seminar will explore the stakes of car crash imagery for American artists and culture. Readings may include topics in trauma studies, automotive technology, physics, posthumanism, law, and object oriented ontology as well as grounding participants in American art and history of the middle third of the twentieth century. Participants in the course will also have the opportunity to help shape the content, themes, and narrative of an exhibition on car accidents in American art being organized by WCMA.

Requirements/Evaluation: oral presentations and written assignments

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 16

Enrollment Preferences: graduate students, then advanced undergraduate Art History majors

Expected Class Size: 12

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year

ARTH 595 (F) Private Tutorial

Students may petition to take a private tutorial by arrangement with the instructor and with permission of the Graduate Program Director.

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D1)

Fall 2019
IND Section: 01 TBA Marc Gotlieb
ARTH 596 (S) Private Tutorial
Students may petition to take a private tutorial by arrangement with the instructor and with permission of the Graduate Program Director.

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Spring 2020
IND Section: 01

ARTH 597 (F) Undergraduate Lecture Course Taken for Graduate Credit
Undergraduate Lecture Course Taken for Graduate Credit

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Fall 2019
IND Section: 01 TBA Marc Gotlieb

ARTH 598 (S) Undergraduate Lecture Course Taken for Graduate Credit
Undergraduate Lecture Course Taken for Graduate Credit

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Spring 2020
IND Section: 01 TBA Marc Gotlieb