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

- Annie Bourneuf, Robert Sterling Clark Visiting Professor of Art History
- Michael Conforti, Lecturer in the Graduate Program in Art History; affiliated with: Graduate Program in the History of Art, Art
- Ezra D. Feldman, Lecturer; affiliated with: English, Science & Technology Studies, Graduate Program in the History of Art
- Michael P. Gaudio, Robert Sterling Clark Visiting Professor of Art History
- Marc Gotlieb, Halvorsen Director of the Graduate Program in Art History; affiliated with: Graduate Program in the History of Art, Art
- Anne R. Leonard, Lecturer in the Graduate Program in Art History
- Will D. Schmenner, Lecturer in the Graduate Program in Art History
- Robert Wiesenberger, Lecturer in the Graduate Program in 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 (ARTH 51) and preparation of a Draft Qualifying Paper in the second (ARTH 52). Students must also demonstrate reading proficiency in one foreign language, though further study in primary-research languages is encouraged. At the end of the second year, all students present a shortened version of the Qualifying Paper in the annual Graduate Symposium.

At least seven of the twelve courses required for graduation must be graduate seminars. (Students are free to pursue additional courses beyond those required for the degree.) Among the twelve courses counted towards the degree, three are required of all students: ARTH 504, “Proseminar in Research and Method,” to be taken in the first semester of study; ARTH 506, “Expository Writing Workshop,” to be taken in the second; and ARTH 509, “Graduate Student Symposium,” to be taken in the fourth semester. Additionally, all students must complete ARTH 507, “Object Workshop,” which is pass/fail, in their first year of study. The optional Curatorial Workshop, ARTH 563, is also pass/fail. Neither ARTH 507 nor ARTH 563 counts among the twelve courses required to complete the degree.

Students must also fulfill a distribution requirement by undertaking coursework in two of four geographical areas and two of three chronological periods.

Geographical Areas:
1) Europe and the Mediterranean Basin
2) Asia and the Pacific
3) The Americas
4) Africa and the Middle East

Chronological Periods:
1) Prehistoric to 1200
2) 1200 to 1800
3) 1800 to the present

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

Undergraduate Courses and Independent Studies
With permission from the Director and the individual instructors, students may take up to five 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 one independent study (ARTH 595/596) by submitting petitions to the Director describing the substance of their projects and the nature of the work they will submit for evaluation. The petitions must be co-signed in advance by both the student and their faculty supervisor.

Of the minimum requirement of twelve courses, the combined number of independent studies and undergraduate courses applied to the degree
The Qualifying Paper

The Qualifying Paper is a substantially revised piece of academic writing produced in coursework at Williams 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 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.

Three weeks prior to the Friday before Spring Break, students submit the final draft of their Qualifying Paper, including illustrations, to three faculty readers (generally the original faculty supervisor, the Director, and the Associate Director). Qualifying Papers should not exceed 8,000 words, including footnotes and bibliography.

Before Spring Break, students meet with their three readers to receive critical comments on the final QP and discuss its transformation into a twenty-minute presentation.

The Graduate Symposium

All second-year students speak in the Symposium, presenting twenty-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 the Director, the Associate 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. The Graduate Symposium is scheduled for the Friday immediately preceding Commencement.

Languages

The Graduate Program's degree requires A2-level proficiency in one language other than English (or two college-level classes or equivalent) in a language of scholarly and academic relevance to the student's art-historical interests. This requirement can be fulfilled by college-level language coursework prior to matriculating at Williams, by language coursework at Williams College, by summer language study, or by other methods (such as language exposure at home). The requirement represents the minimum for graduation; the program supports and strongly encourages proficiency in multiple languages. Beyond the required languages, a maximum number of two additional language courses may be applied to the degree. Such additional language work may not count towards the seven required graduate seminars. Additional language work may be taken for a letter grade, pass/fail, or audit, subject to instructor approval.

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)

The Director reviews students' records at the end of their first year; those with GPAs of 3.00 or lower may be asked to withdraw from the Program. 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. 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 withdraw 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.
ARTH 500  (F) Clark Visiting Professor Seminar: Art, Media, and Politics in the Weimar Republic

Cross-listings:

Primary Cross-listing

In the fraught context of Germany between its defeat in the First World War in 1918 and the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, arguments about art, arguments about media, and arguments about politics were inextricably intertwined. Many saw the modernized city together with recently developed media such as film, radio, and the photographically illustrated magazine as transforming not only art, but also politics, sense perception, and the nature of subjectivity. In this course, we study signal works created in Germany during the Weimar Republic to understand the relations among aesthetics, politics, and media both old and new at this pivotal moment. The texts and films that we will examine will afford us a broad view of some of the most interesting and pertinent aspects of Weimar-era debates regarding the nature of gender and sexuality, the relation between the "German" and the "foreign," and the role in modernity of the artist and the work of art. We will study the writings of Walter Benjamin, Siegfried Kracauer, and Bertolt Brecht, writers who were formed by their participation in Weimar debates, then driven into exile by the rise of the Nazis, and whose texts have had a profound impact on contemporary thinking about art, media, and politics.

Requirements/Evaluation: active participation in discussions, weekly reading responses, and a research paper

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 14

Enrollment Preferences: places assured for 7 graduate students (second-years, then first-years) and 7 undergraduates (art history and studio art majors, then any interested student)

Expected Class Size: 14

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 500(D1) ARTH 400(D1)

Attributes: ARTH post-1800

Fall 2024

SEM Section: 01    M 1:00 pm - 3:50 pm     Annie Bourneuf

ARTH 501  (S) Museums: History and Practice

Cross-listings: LEAD 301

Primary Cross-listing

Art museums express the cultural, aesthetic and social ideals of their period of formation and many of those ideals remain embedded in the values and practices of institutions today. Comparing institutions past and present internationally, seminar participants will envision the art museum's future while addressing programmatic and organizational challenges at this moment of participatory civic engagement and social, political unrest. With growing skepticism of institutional collecting practices and authoritative narratives, art museums, especially those in the US, face internal and external pressure to "decolonize" as they attempt to alter their canon through both acquisitions, deaccessioning and repatriation initiatives. There is pressure, as well, to embrace a more active role in climate and social justice movements. It is a time also marked by calls for compensation transparency, participatory decision making, staff and trustee diversity, and greater scrutiny of funders. The seminar will consider this environment against past and current norms of governance, management and curatorial policies and practices. We will examine the traditional role of architecture and installation in interpretation and experience, prevailing and proposed guidelines in the accessioning and deaccessioning of works of art and both internal and external attitudes towards the repatriation and restitution of cultural property. Studying museums ranging in size and type, seminar participants will hear how museum leaders are dealing with challenges to current practice in weekly zoom sessions. Participants will consider how future museums might strive to balance the institution's traditional roles with new civic and social responsibilities, mindful of financial stability in a market-driven, metric-conscious, not-for-profit environment, while addressing, in proposed program and practice, the demands on museums emanating from a more ethically insistent internal and external world.

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: 14
Enrollment Preferences: graduate students in the history of art, then senior undergraduate 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:

ARTH 401(D1) ARTH 501(D1) LEAD 301(D2)

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

Spring 2025

SEM Section: 01  W 1:00 pm - 3:50 pm  Michael Conforti

ARTH 503 (S) Clark Visiting Professor Seminar: Fascism and Art

Cross-listings:

Primary Cross-listing

This course examines the complex and multifarious relations between art and fascism in interwar Europe, focusing on the cultural politics and the use of art in fascist movements and regimes, particularly in Germany and Italy. Exploring Walter Benjamin's dictum that fascism practices the "aestheticizing of politics" and Eric Michaud's argument that an "assimilation of work into artistic activity" lay at the center of the Nazi myth, we will also examine the role of art in fascist ideology as well as the problematic of artistic modernism and fascism. We will analyze fascist imaginaries of nation, empire, nature, technology, violence, gender, and race through the work of Ernst Jünger, F. T. Marinetti, Leni Riefenstahl, Le Corbusier, and Wyndham Lewis, among others. Early theories of fascism, including portions of Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* and Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, as well as the work of contemporary historians and art historians, will inform our discussions.

Requirements/Evaluation: active participation in discussions, weekly reading responses, and a research paper

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 14

Enrollment Preferences: second-year graduate students, then first-year graduate students, then advanced undergraduate students; places for 7 undergraduate and 7 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)

Attributes: ARTH post-1800

Spring 2025

SEM Section: 01  M 1:00 pm - 3:50 pm  Annie Bourneuf

ARTH 504 (F) Proseminar in Research and Method

In this graduate Proseminar on Research and Method, we will read a number of texts that form the foundation of art history as a discipline, including the writings of Plato, Panofsky, Lessing, Heidegger, Wölfflin, and Barthes (among others). We will study these works against the grain, considering how art history is currently transforming under the fields of ecology, disability studies, queer theory, and radical black feminism. Students will work closely with the collections of the Clark to theorize how absences are integral to institutional histories, and we will think about how we can, as historians, responsibly address voices that have been removed from the canons of art history. This course considers not only central writings of art historical methodology but also the limits for decolonizing art history and the museum, as we will examine how the formation of the discipline depended upon absenting critical perspectives and voices.

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation, writing assignments

Spring 2025

SEM Section: 01  M 1:00 pm - 3:50 pm  Annie Bourneuf
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 12
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)

Fall 2024
SEM Section: 01 T 1:00 pm - 3:50 pm Caroline O. Fowler

ARTH 506 (S) Expository Writing Workshop
This writing seminar for graduate students in the history of art will afford intensive full group discussions of writing skills and substantial one-on-one writing consultations. Group discussions will center on three kinds of texts: writing about writing, published writing related to the discipline of Art History, and student writing in progress. In six group discussions we will improve our vocabulary and method for discussing writing; we will learn to build better and more sophisticated sentences, paragraphs, and arguments; and we will practice anticipatory reading and writing in order to strengthen our control of both voice and structure. Each discussion will be supported with examples and exercises, and our watchword in all cases will be "revision." In one-on-one consultations (3-4 per person), the instructor will offer tailored critiques of each student's work, setting aside time as needed to troubleshoot sentences, paragraphs, or arguments together.
Requirements/Evaluation: Class participation, participation in consultation meetings, writing assignments
Prerequisites: None
Enrollment Limit: 12
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)

Spring 2025
SEM Section: 01 T 1:00 pm - 3:50 pm Ezra D. Feldman

ARTH 507 (F)(S) Object Workshop
This workshop engages graduate students in intimate observational study of objects through six sessions held over two semesters. Organized in conversation with experts on collections from the Clark Art Institute, the Williams College Museum of Art, and the Chapin Library at Williams College, each session will focus on close engagement with a particular type of object (e.g., painting, sculpture, print, photograph, building, book, furniture, etc.). There are no assignments or assessments for this course, but there may be occasional reading.

Class Format: in-person study of objects, outdoors, in the galleries, or in study rooms at the Clark, WCMA, the Chapin, or elsewhere, 3x/semester
Requirements/Evaluation: Attendance is required at all sessions. There are no assignments or assessments for this course, but there may be occasional reading.
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 14
Enrollment Preferences: required of first-year students in the Graduate Program in the History of Art
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: pass/fail option only
Distributions: (D1)

Fall 2024
SEM Section: 01 TBA Marc Gotlieb
ARTH 508  (S)  Art and Conservation: An Inquiry into History, Methods, and Materials

In this course students will learn to recognize the materials present in cultural heritage collections, understand the history of artists’ methods and techniques, and hone their observation and examination skills for working with material culture. Students will form a basis in art conservation and condition assessment vocabulary and will exercise handling and examination skills for a variety of materials and artworks. Students will explore cultural heritage through the lens of the art conservator and form a broader awareness of the ethics and procedures of conservation and preservation. An understanding of the vulnerabilities and condition issues of cultural materials and how to care for them will be developed as an impactful, practical resource for future careers in cultural heritage. A multi-disciplinary group of teachers from the staff at the Williamstown + Atlanta Art Conservation Center (W+AACC) will conduct lectures, practicums, discussions on conservation research literature, and visits to nearby art institutions. Sessions are held at the W+AACC Conservation Center in the Lunder Center at Stone Hill on the Clark Art Institute campus. Students receive a syllabus with session outlines and required reading lists. Required readings are available via GLOW and on reserve at the Clark Library. Three exams will be given throughout the course. Attendance is required at all sessions in lieu of a final exam (each exam and attendance are weighted at 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 three exams given throughout the semester; there is no final exam.

Prerequisites: None

Enrollment Limit: 12

Enrollment Preferences: Graduate students in the history of art, then undergraduate majors in art history or studio art and related disciplines.

Expected Class Size: 10

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

Distributions: (D1)

Attributes: EXPE Experiential Education Courses

Spring 2025

SEM Section: 01  Spring 2025
TBA  TBA  Marc Gotlieb

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: committee discussions, workshops, practice runs, symposium

Requirements/Evaluation: Each student will submit a Qualifying Paper, which will be revised into a presentation. Each student will then present three practice runs and a final oral presentation at the Symposium.

Prerequisites: Successful completion and acceptance of the Qualifying Paper.

Enrollment Limit: 12

Enrollment Preferences: This course is limited to and required of second-year students in the Graduate Program in the History of Art.

Expected Class Size: 12

Grading: pass/fail option only

Distributions: (D1)
ARTH 511  (F)  Interspecies beings: demigods and monsters in art and culture, ancient to modern

Cross-listings:  CLAS 436

Primary Cross-listing

Horse-men, cat-women, bull-men, mermaids, snake-people: interspecies creatures are everywhere in ancient Greek and Roman art and poetry. Embodied in satyrs, sphinxes, centaurs, nymphs, and other part-human, part-animal beings is an alternative evolutionary and cultural history. In it, humans and animals live as one. There is no distinction between nature and culture. Male and female are equal. The industrial revolution never happens. This course traces the history of interspecies beings from their origin in ancient Greek art and poetry until today. Three points are important: 1) the relationship between the imagery and ancient political theory about “primitive” life; 2) evolving conceptions of biology and the environment, and 3) the role played by interspecies beings in the conceptualization of what is possible in art. The first half of the course examines the origins and character of interspecies beings in works of ancient art such as the Parthenon, and in ancient writers including Hesiod and Ovid. We examine relevant religious practices, materialist conceptions of nature, and biological theories of speciation, in Empedokles, On nature, Euripides' Bakchai, Plato’s Phaidros, and Lucretius’ De rerum natura. The second half of the course investigates the survival of classical monsters in the work of early-modern artists such as Botticelli, Michelangelo, Titian, and Dürer, and the rediscovery of ancient materialist theory. We consider the role played by interspecies beings in the formation of late modernism in art and literature. Key texts include Rousseau and Hobbes, Nietzsche's Birth of Tragedy, Mallarmé's "L'Apres midi d'une faun," and Stoppard's Arcadia. Problems include the relationship between nymphs and sex-workers in Manet, the meaning of the Minotaur in Picasso, and the interest in interspecies beings in the work of women surrealists such as Leonora Carrington. We conclude with contemporary popular culture such as the Hunger Games.

Class Format: Lecture and discussion.

Requirements/Evaluation: The requirements of the course include: attendance and participation in discussion; preparing summaries/analyses of reading assignments for discussions; one presentation on a research project, and one 20-page paper on the research project.

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 15

Enrollment Preferences: Priority goes to graduate students in art history. If space is available, senior art-history majors, classics majors, and environmental studies majors may enroll.

Expected Class Size: 10

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

Unit Notes: This course will satisfy the seminar requirement in art history.

Distributions: (D1)

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

ARTH 511(D1) CLAS 436(D1)

Attributes: ARTH pre-1800

Not offered current academic year

ARTH 512  (F) Why Look at Animals? Animality in Contemporary Art

This seminar considers the so-called “animal turn” in contemporary art, in which more and more artists have taken nonhuman animals seriously in their work. Animals have long appeared in art as mere objects--to possess, consume, or symbolize with--rather than as subjects endowed with specific forms of intelligence, agency, or cross-species kinship. In this course we will analyze the work of artists who represent, emulate, or even collaborate with nonhuman animals, practices that take on particular urgency against the present backdrop of mass extinction. We will pay special attention to indigenous artistic practices and intersectional approaches to the burgeoning, multidisciplinary field of animal studies. Along the way, we will discuss animal ethics, the Anthropocene, and posthumanism, among other topics.

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

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 14

Enrollment Preferences: Graduate students in the history of art, then advanced art history undergraduates; by application if over-enrolled

Expected Class Size: 12

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

Distributions: (D1)
ARTh 513 (S) Contours of Abstraction in Modern and Contemporary Art

Abstraction, be it gestural or geometrical, was a protagonist of global modernisms and continues to be a powerful visual language in contemporary art. The term "abstraction" may first appear straightforward, but its associations are quite complex: in varying historical contexts, abstraction has signaled formalist rupture, revolutionary politics, appropriation, as well as racial, feminist, and queer critique. We will delve deeply into abstraction in global modern and contemporary art through myriad primary documents and theoretical frameworks so as to revise and expand its canonical contours and cartographies.

Requirements/Evaluation: Weekly presentations, response papers, final 20-page research paper
Prerequisites: Students at the undergraduate level must be seniors and Art History majors
Enrollment Limit: 12
Enrollment Preferences: Art History MA students and undergraduate Art History seniors
Expected Class Size: 10
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)
Attributes: ARTH post-1800
Not offered current academic year

ARTh 514 Art and the Body in Ancient China

What is the relationship between art and the body? In what ways can art be more than representation of the body, and body the subject and the beholder? What effects, if any, can art have on the body? While these questions pertain to art across different cultures and eras, ancient Chinese artworks offer a distinct and yet substantially untapped vantage point for contemplating the art-body relationship. Examining a wide range of materials, ranging from exquisite artifacts unearthed from tombs and Buddhist temples to the earliest examples of painting and calligraphy, in relation to the political, cosmological, and religious conceptualizations of the body in ancient China, this graduate seminar considers the capacities and limitations of how art engages with the body, particularly in ways beyond representation and looking.

Requirements/Evaluation: Attendance and active participation in discussions (30%); two research presentations (20-30 minutes each, 30%); a research paper (15-20 pages) accompanied by a presentation (40%).
Prerequisites: None.
Enrollment Limit: 15
Enrollment Preferences: Graduate students and advanced art history majors are prioritized.
Expected Class Size: 8
Grading:
Distributions: (D1)
Attributes: ARTH pre-1800
Not offered current academic year

ARTh 521 (F) Islam and the Image (DPE) (WS)

Cross-listings: REL 420

Primary Cross-listing

This seminar responds to a recent incident at a US liberal arts university where a professor was sacked for showing images of Prophet Muhammad as part of her section on Islamic art. Why is image-making so hotly contested in Islam? What is the history of figural depictions in this tradition? The seminar explores artworks made for Muslim patrons from the medieval period to the modern era, considering how paintings produced for Muslim audiences can be situated within the frameworks of "Islamic art," a loaded historiographical term that has been questioned in recent times. The
seminar also addresses some of the major problems that continue to haunt art scholarship in the field. For most of its history, the academic study of Islamic art 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 painting in Muslim lands has historically been primarily an art of the book. These biases have affected the way museums have collected, displayed and interpreted paintings. For example, Western museums continue to place figural depictions made for books and albums in "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? 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, short weekly writing assignments, final essay project

Prerequisites: Undergraduates wishing to enroll must have taken at least one art history course or one religious studies course. Undergraduates must email indicating their interest in the course prior to enrolling.

Enrollment Limit: 19

Enrollment Preferences: MA students, then advanced undergraduates

Expected Class Size: 12

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

Distributions: (D1) (DPE) (WS)

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

ARTH 521(D1) REL 420(D2)

Writing Skills Notes: Weekly writing assignments consisting of 300-500 words. Final papers 15-20 pages for graduate students. 12-15 pages for undergraduate students. 1-page abstract for the final paper due by mid-November. A 4-5 page project outline due right after Thanksgiving break. After receiving feedback and comments from the instructor, the final paper will be due in the last week of classes.

Difference, Power, and Equity Notes: Highlights a global art history that is underrepresented. The class focuses on pluralistic engagements with non-Western cultures and epistemologies.

Attributes: ARTH pre-1800

Not offered current academic year

ARTH 522 (F) Festivities in the Early Modern World

Cross-listings: HIST 422

Primary Cross-listing

In 1860, Jacob Burckhardt put festivals at the center of his influential study of Renaissance Italy. In the century and a half since, scholars have enriched and deepened our understanding of festivities across early modern Europe and the world during the era of early global interaction (ca. 1400—1800). In this seminar we will seek to establish why festivities were so intrinsic to early modern culture, and what work they did. To what extent was performing a form of knowledge? How did festivity mediate early global interaction? We will consider, moreover, the many ways in which ephemeral events were commemorated in paintings and prints, and to what extent historians can recapture the early modern festivity today. Beyond Europe, we will investigate how the festival cultures of the Americas, of Africa, and of Asia interacted with European festival traditions, whether in Goa, Pernambuco, or Mexico City. Ultimately, we will ask: what might an early modern cultural history focused on festivities reveal? We will approach this history through a combination of primary materials drawn from the holdings of Williams College's Chapin Library and secondary readings, which will range from classics in the field to the most recent scholarship. Students will take turns delivering presentations on preselected objects of the week. By semester's end each student will complete a 15-to-20-page research paper on a festival of their choosing.

Requirements/Evaluation: Engaged participation in discussions; in-class presentation; proposal and bibliography; research paper.

Prerequisites: For undergraduates, at least two prior courses in or related to History or Art History.

Enrollment Limit: 16

Enrollment Preferences: Priority for Graduate Art students. Four seats are reserved for undergraduates, with preference given to junior and senior majors in Art History and History. Undergraduates should email a brief statement of interest to ab24@williams.edu.

Expected Class Size: 16

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 522(D1) HIST 422(D2)

Attributes: ARTH pre-1800

Not offered current academic year

ARTH 525 (F) Japanese Art and Visual Culture: Private/Public/Pop (WS)
Cross-listings: ASIA 324 / COMP 324

Secondary Cross-listing

This tutorial offers a survey of Japanese art and visual culture across time and media, with particular attention to two areas: the links between different artistic media, and the relationship between art and its audience. We'll begin with early court diaries and related scroll paintings as examples of "private" art. Then we'll move through progressively more public visual media of the 17th through 21st centuries: Kanô screen painting; nô, kabuki, and puppet theater; premodern architecture; popular woodblock prints; turn-of-the-century photography; and finally some examples of contemporary popular culture like comics, animation, and/or film. We will focus on the specificities of each medium while simultaneously developing formal visual reading skills that can work across different media.

Class Format: Students will meet with the instructor in pairs or trios for 75 minutes each week. This tutorial is offered simultaneously at the 300 level for undergraduates and at the 500 level for graduate students: graduate students will be paired with other graduate students and undergraduates with undergraduates.

Requirements/Evaluation: For undergraduates: weekly participation, 5 short written assignments in alternate weeks (ranging from 1 to 5 pages), and several 1-page peer critiques. For graduate students: weekly participation and 3-4 short written exercises that build toward a final 15-page research paper.

Prerequisites: No previous knowledge of Japanese art or culture is required. Students with similar preparation and interests will be paired with one another.

Enrollment Limit: 10

Enrollment Preferences: Graduate Art students, followed by undergraduates majoring in Art History or Comparative Literature.

Expected Class Size: 10

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

Distributions: (D1) (WS)

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

ARTH 525(D1) ASIA 324(D1) ARTH 324(D1) COMP 324(D1)

Writing Skills Notes: Students will write several regularly spaced papers that build on one another by tackling similar problems from different angles. Students will receive detailed feedback from the instructor on each paper, addressing argument, organization, and style, as well as peer feedback. (See requirements for details about the number and type of assignments.)

Not offered current academic year

ARTH 527 (F) Acquiring Art: Selecting and Purchasing Objects For WCMA
Cross-listings: ECON 227

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 for acquisition.

**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:**

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

**Attributes:** ARTH post-1800

**Not offered current academic year**

**ARTH 529 (S) Muertos: Ancestral Mexican Arts of Mortality**

The Mexican Días de los Muertos, which coincides with the Catholic holy days of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day on November 1 and 2 of each year, numbers among the most recognized holidays practiced in contemporary Latin America. Available scholarly accounts of this holiday's historical origins, which tend to minimize the degree to which it reflects ancestral Indigenous Mexican religious practices, typically draw their earliest evidence from the Mexica (Aztec) capital of Tenochtitlan (present-day Mexico City) of c. 1300-1521 CE. However, the Mexica—well known for their practices of human and animal sacrifice, as well as other social practices that implicated mortality—were themselves the inheritors of a millennial tradition that venerated death. This course considers the theme and actual practice of death over the Mexican *longue durée*. It begins in the first two centuries CE, which saw a substantial population collapse in central Mexico that was followed soon thereafter by the first known mass-human sacrificial event in Mesoamerica. It then follows the social construction of death in Mesoamerica through early modernity when the importation of Eurasian pathogens into the Americas alongside the atrocities of European colonization led to the death of an estimated 90% of Indigenous Americans. The final weeks of the course will consider how modern artists have responded to ancestral artistic and historical precedents. Artworks to be considered include the Temple of the Feathered Serpent of Teotihuacan, the sarcophagus of Pakal the Great of Palenque, the Great Ball Court of Chichen Itza, and the novel *Pedro Páramo* by Juan Rulfo.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** readings (100-200pp/week), participation, paper proposal, mid-semester paper draft (10-12pp), final research paper (20-25pp)

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 14

**Enrollment Preferences:** graduate students in the history of art, then advanced undergraduate art history majors

**Expected Class Size:** 12

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

**Distributions:** (D1)

**Attributes:** ARTH pre-1800

**Spring 2025**

**SEM Section: 01** T 10:00 am - 12:50 pm  Trenton D. Barnes

**ARTH 531 (S) 19th-Century American Performance and Popular Culture**

This course will study a wide variety of performances and emerging popular culture in 19th-century America, many of which, although not unique to the United State, reflect the U.S. back to itself in complex ways. Topics will include blackface minstrelsy, circuses and humbugs, male impersonators and burlesque, ethnic caricature, allegorical paintings on tour, vast panorama painting, anti-slavery imagery, late 19th-century theatre and spectacle, wild west shows as well as other mythologizing of indigenous Americans and the American landscape, the birth of the American art museum, and representations of significant moments of popular resistance, from the Lakota to the Great Railroad Strike of 1877. The central questions animating this course will be around the nature of performance and the popular. What can these two concepts tell us about the nature of art?
**Requirements/Evaluation:** Reading/writing assignments and class participation  
**Prerequisites:** None  
**Enrollment Limit:** 18  
**Enrollment Preferences:** Grad students, undergrads must have approval from Professor Schmenner  
**Expected Class Size:** 12  
**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option  
**Distributions:** (D1)  
**Attributes:** ARTH post-1800

**ARTH 539 (F) The Matter of French Encounter (1564-1789)**  
The story of artistic production in the Ancien Régime usually focuses on painting and on Paris. In this seminar, we will chart an alternative history of early modern French art through a closer look at those materials forged in the cross-currents of armed trade, expansion, and colonial resistance between France and East Asia, India, the Ottoman Empire, North America, and the Caribbean. We will explore how luxury wares (such as porcelain, silver, and textiles), tools of observation (such as prints and drawings), and ornamental ensembles (such as furnished interiors and gardens) were all shaped by forces of circulation, appropriation, and extraction. Through these objects, we will ask the following questions: How did habits of production and consumption change in an era of pre-industrial globalization? How did material and visual culture construct notions of difference and hierarchy? What are the ethics of ascribing agency to inanimate things that emerged in an era of rampant dehumanization? Assignments will foster students’ ability to interpret and discuss artisanal and decorative objects that art history has traditionally kept at the margins. We will interrogate the utility of concepts such as turquerie, chinoiserie, and the “exotic,” and we will call upon both primary sources and contemporary theory to critically examine how alterity and subjectivity can be cultivated through things. Note: Final papers that address early modern intercultural encounters outside of France are welcome.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Participation in class, a short reading presentation (c. 5 minutes), a short creative writing assignment (3-4 pages), a final presentation (c. 10 minutes), and a final research paper (15-18 pages).

**Prerequisites:** None  
**Enrollment Limit:** 14  
**Enrollment Preferences:** Graduate students in the history of art, then undergraduate art history majors.

**Expected Class Size:** 12  
**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option  
**Distributions:** (D1)  
**Attributes:** ARTH pre-1800

Fall 2024  
SEM Section: 01 Cancelled

**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, Boullée, 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 552  (F)  Art and Enlightenment in Europe
Cross-listings:
Secondary Cross-listing
This lecture course traces the emergence of new modes of art- and image-making during two momentous centuries of European history that established the paradoxical foundations of our modern world. In this period, modern democracy was founded and determined by exploitative labor, the extraction of natural resources, and the rise of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Over two centuries from the founding of the French Academy in 1648 to the 1839 invention of photography, this course traces these tensions in art and intellectual thought, examining beauty and the sublime, rationality and madness, personhood and enslavement, natural history and extraction, democracy and tyranny. Often defined in terms of the "Enlightenment," this intellectual and artistic period engaged with freedom of religious thought, scientific experiment, and a belief that humanity was guided by reason and rationality. Yet these same discourses also laid the foundation for the invention of race, nationalism, and the expansion of European colonialism. Isolating a series of pivotal moments and emblematic figures in visual culture of this period, this course asks students to consider how art was implicated in Enlightenment, and, in turn, how Enlightenment was implicated in both newly liberatory and newly oppressive concepts of subjectivity and personhood. Particular emphasis will be placed on the history of science, and, relatedly, on the increasing global circulation of ideas, people, and goods. Artists in our purview include well-known figures like Velázquez, Rembrandt, Watteau, Hogarth, Goya, and Blake, as well as makers until recently left out of the art-historical canon, such as the Frankfurt-born botanical illustrator Maria Sibylla Merian, the Polynesian navigator and draftsman Tupaia, and the Guadeloupean neoclassical painter Guillaume Guillon-Lethière, the subject of a major upcoming exhibition at the Clark Art Institute. Designed for students with no prior experience studying art history, the course will work directly from objects in local collections, prioritizing methods of close looking and formal analysis. At the same time, the questions and methods of our inquiry will be fundamentally interdisciplinary. Readings will emphasize primary sources and recent scholarship. A separate discussion section will be offered for MA students.
Requirements/Evaluation: midterm exam; final exam; visual analysis paper (3 pages); final paper (10 pages)
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 50
Enrollment Preferences: art history majors
Expected Class Size: 50
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)
This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
ARTH 552(D1) ARTH 242(D1)
Attributes: ARTH pre-1800
Not offered current academic year

ARTH 553  (F)  New Ecologies in Contemporary Art
This seminar will consider a range of current artistic approaches to environmental questions, especially through the relational, systemic terms implied by ecology. As scholars have argued, where "nature" connotes that which is monolithic, ahistorical, and apart from humans, ecology reveals a situated and specific web of relationships, interdependencies, and power in which we are all implicated. Our seminar will pay particular attention to intersectional practices that acknowledge the ways extraction, exploitation, and dispossession have produced the environmental crises of the present, which also affect the most vulnerable and least responsible--both human and nonhuman--with greatest force. In addition to studying the work of emerging and established artists, we will read texts by the academics and activists with whom they are in dialogue, and welcome some of them as guests to our class. This seminar anticipates a group show on the subject at the Clark in summer 2023.
Requirements/Evaluation: seminar presentations; research paper (approximately 20pp)
Prerequisites: none
**Enrollment Limit:** 12

**Enrollment Preferences:** MA students first, then art history majors; By application if over-enrolled

**Expected Class Size:** 12

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

**Distributions:** (D1)

**Attributes:** ARTH post-1800

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**ARTH 555 (F)(S) It's About Time: The Many Temporalities of American Art**

The problem of history and the promise of the future have always shaped public discourse in the United States. This seminar explores the aesthetic and ideological operations of time in works of art and visual culture made in the U.S. context from the late colonial period through the present. From paintings of extinct animals and biblical disasters to expressions of a distinctly national art and Indigenous sovereignty, from visual records of territorial expansion and photographic motion studies to postmodern performance and Afro- and other futurist aesthetics, we will consider how ideas about time have shaped the iconography, materiality, and politics of visual representation in the U.S., with attention to the way time has been conceived in relation to concepts of progress, religion, nature, race, labor, and technology. We will explore how ideas about time are encoded in artworks through process, subject matter, and interpretation, and in relation to social systems such as slavery, settler colonialism, and capitalism.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Attendance and participation in discussion; weekly responses and/or short writing assignments; final research project (proposal; abstract and annotated bibliography; 10-min oral presentation; 15-20pp research paper)

**Prerequisites:** None

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**ARTH 558 (S) Circa 1850: Artistic Currents and Cross-Currents**

Although the history of nineteenth-century European art has often been narrated as a succession of "sms," the notion of discrete artistic movements following one upon the other is of course highly misleading. Despite common perceptions of Realism as the prevailing force at mid-century, many contradictory impulses were simultaneously at work. The Romantic strain in visual art continued, though sometimes in sublimated form, and historicizing and avant-garde perspectives alike jockeyed for influence in art criticism, sales rooms, and exhibition venues. Abetting this collision of styles was a proliferation of new media in visual culture more broadly. Focusing on European and American examples from the middle decades of the nineteenth century, this course addresses the emergence of new tendencies in art and the persistence or revival of old ones. We will explore a variety of topics, including the invention of photography and its impact on other image-making techniques; the opening of Japan and the vogue for Japonisme; medieval nostalgia in the face of rampant Haussmannization; and the role of tradition in vanguard art. On the American side, we will consider printmaking and photography as tools of documentation and self-fashioning during the Civil War era. This course will take place in the Manton Study Center for Works on Paper. Each session will engage directly with works from the Clark's collection, to be discussed and analyzed in conjunction with critical and theoretical readings.

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

**Prerequisites:** None

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**Enrollment Limit:** 14

**Enrollment Preferences:** Graduate students in the history of art, then undergraduate art history majors, then any interested student

**Expected Class Size:** 12

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

**Distributions:** (D1)

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**Fall 2024**

SEM Section: 01  R 10:00 am - 12:50 pm  Dina I. Murokh

**Spring 2025**

SEM Section: 01  Cancelled

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**ARTH 558 (S) Circa 1850: Artistic Currents and Cross-Currents**

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

**Prerequisites:** None

**Enrollment Limit:** 16

**Enrollment Preferences:** Graduate students first. Undergraduates must receive permission from the instructor.

**Expected Class Size:** 12
ARTh 559 (F) Photographing City Life: Diane Arbus/James Van Der Zee

Diane Arbus and James Vander Zee in Manhattan. In this seminar we will discuss two photographers of city life: Diane Arbus (1923–1971) and James Van Der Zee (1886–1983). So doing, we will also observe how life in New York changed during their years of great productivity. In the first part of the course, "Diane Arbus in Manhattan," we will talk about Arbus' relationship to New York--the city of her birth. For most of her career, Arbus worked in Manhattan; indeed, one could think of the city as another character in her work. Arbus' relationship to myth--to storytelling--was profound. A great reader throughout her life, she was drawn to those writers who saw cities as very individualized places. In addition to looking at Arbus' photographs of life in Manhattan in the nineteen fifties, sixties, and in 1970, we will read her published letters, and those authors who inspired her with their artistry, and fascination with myth, including Borges, and Kafka. In the second part of the course, "James Van Der Zee and the Black Village," we will discuss the great Black photographer whose archives were just purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art (where Arbus' archives are as well). Born in Lenox, Massachusetts, Van Der Zee settled in Harlem in 1916; there, he opened a photography studio where he became known for his portraits of Black life as it was lived uptown. Admired by Arbus and others, Van Der Zee's interest in and commitment to his community extended to all aspects of Harlem life, including death. To support our discussions of Van Der Zee’s Black village, we will read modernist classics, including Jean Toomer's "Cane," and Toni Morrison's "Jazz" that deal specifically with village life. Please note that seminar meetings will be held biweekly on 9/8, 9/29, 10/13, 10/20, 11/3, 11/17. The seminar will include several mandatory viewing excursions outside Williamstown. The dates of these excursions are TBD, but will be restricted to Fridays or weekends. Professor Als will hold office hours following the seminar at hours TBD. Application may apply.

Requirements/Evaluation: Class participation, graded writing assignments
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 12
Enrollment Preferences: Grad students only. Application may be required.
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)
Attributes: ARTH post-1800
Not offered current academic year

ARTh 560 (F) Repairing a Broken World: Intro to North African Contemporary Art (DPE)

Cross-listings: RLFR 360 / ARAB 360 / COMP 361
Secondary Cross-listing

How do artists respond to a world in crisis? How does visual art engage violent histories, injured bodies, social injustice and ecological disaster? In this course we will explore the political and ethical concept of repair as it emerges in the work of contemporary North African visual artists. Repair is both a material and symbolic transformational practice of putting together something that is torn or broken. It is never complete, nor does it redeem a history of harm or violence. Rather repair is an invitation: a bringing of people, histories, objects, buildings, feelings and geographies into relation with one another in order to link worlds that have been splintered and separated. It is also a call to imagine other futures. North African contemporary artists have deeply engaged in this type of repair work, attending to colonial history, economies of extraction and environmental damage, race and slavery, housing inequity, gender identity and broken transmission of memory. We will dive into the work of individual artists as well as collectives while reading theoretical texts about broken-world thinking, reparative epistemology, alternative archives, and material reparations.

Class Format: Conducted in French.

Requirements/Evaluation: For undergrads: Active participation, 8 1-page response papers, 5-page mid-term paper, 10-12 page final paper and presentation. For grad students: Active participation, 8 response papers, 5-page mid-term paper, and 20-page final paper and presentation.
Prerequisites: Any RLFR 200-level course or above, or by permission of instructor.
Enrollment Limit: 18
Enrollment Preferences: If over-enrolled, preference will be given to RLFR, ARAB, ARTH and COMP majors, and only 2 spots will be offered to Grad Art students.
Expected Class Size: 15

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

Distributions: (D1) (DPE)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
RLFR 360(D1) ARTH 460(D1) ARTH 560(D1) ARAB 360(D1) COMP 361(D1)

Difference, Power, and Equity Notes: This course critically examines art work that engages colonial history, economies of extraction and environmental damage, race and slavery, housing inequity, gender identity.

Fall 2024

SEM Section: 01    TF 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm     Katarzyna M. Pieprzak

ARTH 561  (S)  Land, Memory, Materiality: Histories and Futures of Indigenous North American Arts  (DPE)

Cross-listings: HIST 454

Primary Cross-listing

This course engages Indigenous North American traditions of creative expression, remembrance, and representation in historical, contemporary, and future-facing ways. Drawing upon diverse Native American and First Nations theories and practices, it ranges widely across the continent to consider Indigenous arts and material culture within specific cultural, socioeconomic, and political contexts. Part of the course is grounded in the Native Northeast, including the Indigenous homelands of the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican Community in which the Graduate Art Program and Williams College are situated. Other units will focus on continuities and transformations in artistic and maker-traditions within and across specific Indigenous nations and communities. The course is especially interested in connections between past and present, and the innovative ways Indigenous artists, makers, and knowledge-keepers have reckoned with what has come before, while also mapping meaningful future pathways. Topics will include repatriation and community-led restorative efforts to bring home ancestors and important heritage items “collected” over the centuries following 1492; concepts and practices of cultural, intellectual, visual, and political sovereignty; decolonizing museums; the complex dynamics of collaboration; Indigenous, African-American, and Afro-Indigenous artistic connections and solidarities; and Indigenous challenges to Eurocentric and settler colonial approaches to preservation, interpretation, and classification. Seminar members will develop familiarity with methods and ethics grounded in Native American and Indigenous Studies, and with new scholarship by leading and emerging critics and creators.

Class Format: The course will feature seminar discussions as well as local trips to museums, libraries, and archives with pertinent collections and exhibitions.

Requirements/Evaluation: Engaged participation in discussions; in-class presentations; short writing assignments in preparation for final project; final original research and interpretive project, with presentation to seminar.

Prerequisites: For undergraduates, at least two prior courses in or related to History, Art History, Native American and Indigenous Studies, and/or Museum Studies.

Enrollment Limit: 16

Enrollment Preferences: Priority for Graduate Art students. Four seats are reserved for undergraduates, with preference to junior and senior majors in Art History and History. Undergraduates should email a brief statement of interest to cd10@williams.edu.

Expected Class Size: 16

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

Distributions: (D1) (DPE)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
ARTH 561(D1) HIST 454(D2)

Difference, Power, and Equity Notes: The course centers theories, experiences, and expressions from Native American/Indigenous communities, scholars, and artists/makers, while engaging foundational and new work in Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS). The course also provides students with critical tools for reckoning with settler colonialism and its historical as well as enduring impacts in Indigenous contexts; and with race, ethnicity, sovereignty, and tribal nationhood as key interpretive frames.

Attributes: HIST Group F Electives - U.S. + Canada

Not offered current academic year
ARTh 563 (F)(S) Contemporary Curatorial Workshop

Seminar for graduate art history students to engage in discourse around contemporary curatorial practice with professionals in the field. Guest curators discuss their work and methodology and students enrolled in the course who are working on curatorial projects have the opportunity to workshop their ideas with their peers and guests. Under the direction of the chairs, students will participate in class discussions, present projects, host local and visiting curators, travel to visit exhibitions regionally as the schedule allows, and explore key topics in modern and contemporary art and curatorial practice.

Class Format: workshop, meets 4x a semester

Requirements/Evaluation: Attendance is required at all sessions. There are no assignments or exams.

Prerequisites: None

Enrollment Limit: 25

Enrollment Preferences: Graduate students in the history of art, and undergraduates with prior approval of the instructors and as space allows.

Expected Class Size: 25

Grading: pass/fail option only

Distributions: (D1)

Attributes: ARTH post-1800

ARTh 565 (F) Sonic Ecologies: Queer Listening, Orientations, and Objects

This seminar considers sound, the aural imagination, and practices of listening in visual art and time-based media. Focusing on work produced in the 20th and 21st centuries, we will explore theoretical, media, aesthetic, and reception issues through an intersectional lens. While we will focus on queer theory and related artworks and art historical accounts, the course will also draw heavily on recent writings on and artistic practices that take up other related aspects of "ecology" broadly understood: interspecies relationality, the environment, the climate crisis, and scholarship grounded in the specificity of critical race theory, Latinx, Caribbean, and diasporic studies. Readings will tend toward the theoretical--from Sara Ahmed and José Esteban Muñoz to Tina Campt and Ren Ellis Neyra, among many others--but will be accompanied by art historical accounts and each class meeting will be grounded by in-depth discussion of several specific works of art. When resonant, we will take advantage of access to relevant exhibitions, performances, or events at the Clark, Williams College Museum of Art, MASS MoCA, or Bennington College. The course will prioritize student-facilitated discussion, and student work will be focused on producing a substantial research paper (with an option to produce a hybrid research/creative project, developed in conversation with the instructor). Undergraduates welcome with permission of the course instructor.

Requirements/Evaluation: Reading and writing requirements, class participation

Prerequisites: None

Enrollment Limit: 18

Enrollment Preferences: Grad students first, then music majors and art majors, but undergraduates must seek approval from Professor Woolsey

Expected Class Size: 12

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

Distributions: (D1)

Attributes: ARTH post-1800

Not offered current academic year

ARTh 569 (F) Gérôme

This course explores work and career of Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904), perhaps the most renowned, popular, and influential artist of the later nineteenth century. With commercial and artistic relationships that spread his influence across the globe, Gérôme has come to seem very much like a highly successful contemporary artist, specifically with regard to his place in an international art world that married elite institutional practices to new technologies of reproduction, marketing techniques, and other instruments of modern mass culture. Gérôme's fame was short lived, however. In the
wake of the Modernist revolution on the one hand, and Post-Colonial critique on the other, no discussion of the artist can avoid wrestling with complaints that have left him thoroughly diminished—though less forgotten than scorned. Not only did his art, as it seemed, help perpetrate a gigantic aesthetic error, it blundered onto ethically compromising terrain. Today Gérôme stands as Exhibit A in wide-ranging critique of Orientalism's ideological work. The course will interrogate the Modernist and Post-Colonial complaints against Gérôme in detail, even as it also explores his art from a range of other perspectives, many developed very recently. Topics include Gérôme's relationship to photography, to Orientalism and animal studies, to the cinema, to polychrome sculpture, his approach to historical narrative, and well as his voyeurism and other other manipulations of viewer experience so critical to his art. The seminar will engage the Clark's important collection of Gérôme paintings, and also travel to the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, conditions permitting. Students may prepare papers on any aspect of global late-nineteenth-century "academic" or "official" art that was informed by Gérôme's example.

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation, presentations in seminar, research paper (approximately 20 pp)
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 16
Enrollment Preferences: MA students, then art history majors
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year

ARTH 578  (F)  The "Book" Dissected: Making and Meaning in Medieval Manuscripts
How did medieval and Renaissance "books" work, when the codex was only one form of the book, which continually evolved, and when they weren't only used for reading? This course will explore the book as object and the book as concept. Drawing on the collection of manuscripts, incunables, and later printed books at WCMA, Chapin, and surrounding museums, the course will consider how the forms and materiality of books could have affected readers' reception and perceptions, and in turn, how religious, cultural, political, and economical forces shape their format, decoration, and paratext. While it will primarily deal with Western books, we will also consider early ones from around the world. Students will develop codicological and bibliographic analytical skills as we study our changing uses and relationships with and to books as instruments of doctrine and devotion, power and identity.

Requirements/Evaluation: class presentations; research papers; other assignments
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 14
Enrollment Preferences: Graduate students in the history of art, then advanced undergraduate art history majors
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)
Attributes: ARTH pre-1800

Fall 2024
SEM Section: 01    R 1:00 pm - 3:50 pm    Elizabeth M. Sandoval

ARTH 579  (F)  Art and the Body in Ancient China
What is the relationship between art and the body? In what ways can art be more than representation of the body, and body the subject and the beholder? What effects, if any, can art have on the body? While these questions pertain to art across different cultures and eras, ancient Chinese artworks offer a distinct and yet substantially untapped vantage point for contemplating the art-body relationship. Examining a wide range of materials, ranging from exquisite artifacts unearthed from tombs and Buddhist temples to the earliest examples of painting and calligraphy, in relation to the political, cosmological, and religious conceptualizations of the body in ancient China, this graduate seminar considers the capacities and limitations of how art engages with the body, particularly in ways beyond representation and looking.

Requirements/Evaluation: Attendance and active participation in discussions (30%); two research presentations (20-30 minutes each) per student per semester (30%); a research paper (15-20 pages) accompanied by a presentation (40%).
Prerequisites: None
Enrollment Limit: 14
Enrollment Preferences: Graduate students in history of art and undergraduate art history majors.
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)
Attributes: ARTH pre-1800

Fall 2024
SEM Section: 01 W 1:00 pm - 3:50 pm Ziliang Liu

ARTH 584 (S) Fragments and Healing: Disability Studies and Late Antique Art
Cross-listings: REL 425
Secondary Cross-listing
This seminar will investigate some of the ways that contemporary Disability Studies can help us see and think about the complexities of differently abled bodies in Late Antiquity (broadly, from ca. 200 until ca. 750), the formative period for Christian art (and consequently for much of Western art). Disability Studies is an extremely active and rich body of literature and art that has not often been brought into conversation with historical periods of art, and so this seminar seeks to open up discussion of the insights possible from that conversation, not only how Late Antique art can be re-interpreted, but also how that period of art can reveal under-explored areas in the field of Disability Studies. The seminar will undertake a mutual interrogation of accepted notions in both fields and, in this way, to explore some new understandings of Disability Studies' capacities for allowing us to think with our art, culture, and bodies. The means at our disposal for this seminar are art of Late Antiquity and of the contemporary world, and that idea of mutual interrogation also operates in our study and display of that art. The seminar will look at art of healing and recuperation, art produced by and directed at diversely-abled bodies, and at fragments and restoration, and think about art as documents, reflections, and determinants of those bodies, now and in the past. It will, for this reason, work around the collection of WCMA, with exhibition and collection research, and the historical archives of the Library holdings, so that the widest possible study of bodies and difference is opened for our thinking and dialogue.
Requirements/Evaluation: participation in discussion; three 1-2-page reading reports; one 3-5-page exhibition response; one 15-20-page final essay
Prerequisites: none
Enrollment Limit: 12
Enrollment Preferences: senior art-history majors and graduate students; other students will need instructor consent
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Unit Notes: In this seminar, students will develop skills of crafting clear and persuasive arguments through an iterative writing process. Further, to help them achieve these goals, they will receive timely comments on their written work.
Distributions: (D1)
This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:
ARTH 425(D1) ARTH 584(D1) REL 425(D2)
Attributes: ARTH pre-1800

Not offered current academic year

ARTH 585 (S) Facing Portraiture
What constitutes a portrait? How do portraits act in the world? What histories do they hold, and what stories can they tell? This seminar will explore how artists, sitters, viewers, and historians have approached this genre and to what ends. We will interrogate the possibilities and limits of portraiture; examine how portraiture encodes forms of difference through ideological claims to power, likeness, and self-possession; and explore how technological developments inform portraiture's shifting private and public uses. Attending to historical and cultural specificity--with particular though not exclusive attention to the post-1800 period and the United States--we will also excavate the genre's legacy by exploring its contemporary presence, asking what concerns shape conceptions of portraiture in contexts such as the National Portrait Gallery's triennial Outwin Competition and popular discourse. Bridging past and present, and in conversation with objects held in the collections of the Clark, WCMA, and the Chapin Library, we
will work toward our own definition of portraiture and, in so doing, discover and complicate the relationship between personhood, identity, and representation. Students are welcome to develop final projects on relevant topics and materials outside the temporal and geographic contexts addressed in class.

Requirements/Evaluation: attendance and participation in discussion; weekly responses; final research project (proposal; select annotated bibliography; abstract; 15-min oral presentation; 15-20pp research paper)

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 16

Enrollment Preferences: graduate students, then undergraduate art history majors, then any interested student

Expected Class Size: 12

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

Distributions: (D1)

Not offered current academic year

ARTH 588 (S) The Scene of Decapitation in European Art

From Goliath to Medusa, from Judith to Salome, from the invention of the guillotine to the mythology of the executioner under "Oriental despotism," the "scene" of decapitation has long stood as a central focus of European art and letters. This course examines that scene as an artistic, psychological, and intellectual problematic across painting, sculpture, and other media, from the late-middle ages to the end of the nineteenth century. Although part and parcel of the larger spectacle of juridical punishment, the scene of decapitation arguably constitutes its own series, and for this reason has attracted numerous artists and a prestigious literature. Artists include Caravaggio, Artemisia Gentileschi, Théodore Géricault, Gustave Moreau, Henri Regnault, and numerous others. Interdisciplinary readings as well as a large body of art historical literature. Weekly readings, discussion, oral presentation, and research paper on a relevant topic from 1300 to 1900.

Requirements/Evaluation: class presentation; research paper (approx 20pp)

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 14

Enrollment Preferences: graduate students in the history of art, then advanced undergraduate art history majors

Expected Class Size: 12

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

Distributions: (D1)

Attributes: ARTH pre-1800

Spring 2025

SEM Section: 01 R 1:00 pm - 3:50 pm Marc Gotlieb

ARTH 589 (S) Imitation, Copy, Reproduction

Focusing primarily on European and American art before 1900, this course addresses the related categories of imitation, copy, and reproduction with particular attention to prints and other works of art on paper. We will consider the status of the multiple, the role of imitation in classical art theory and pedagogy, the motivations for (and protections against) different kinds of copying, the emergence of photomechanical processes, and the centrality of reproducible images to the art-historical enterprise, among other topics. The basis of our investigations will be works from the Clark's own collection, to be studied with a close eye to their medium and materiality. We will explore concepts of originality, fidelity, authenticity, and value in the light of critical and theoretical texts, while also examining the historical conditions that underlie distinct instances of image reproduction. This course will take place in the Manton Study Center for Works on Paper. Each session will offer direct engagement with works in the Clark's permanent collection.

Requirements/Evaluation: seminar presentation; research paper (approx 20pp)

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 14

Enrollment Preferences: graduate students in the history of art, then advanced undergraduate art history majors

Expected Class Size: 12

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
ARTH 590  (F)  Guillaume Lethière (1760-1832) and Caribbean Networks in France during the 18th and 19th centuries

Born in the French colony of Guadeloupe, Guillaume Lethière (1760-1832) was a key figure in French painting during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The son of a white plantation owner and a formerly enslaved woman of mixed race, Lethière moved to France with his father at age fourteen. He trained as an artist and successfully navigated the tumult of the French Revolution and its aftermath to achieve the highest levels of recognition in his time. A favorite artist of Napoleon’s brother, Lucien Bonaparte, he served as director of the Académie de France in Rome, as a member of the Institut de France, and as a professor at the École des Beaux-Arts. Despite his many accomplishments and sizeable corpus of paintings and drawings, Lethière has notably disappeared from the “canon” of art history. Such a lacunae begs many questions about the circles of sociability in which he traveled, the reception of Caribbean artists in France in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the lack of widespread knowledge on these topics today. This seminar will be timed with the major monographic exhibition taking place at the Clark Art Institute in the summer/fall of 2024. The course will also provide an opportunity for close examination of objects in the Clark’s permanent collection.

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation, presentations, research paper (approx. 20pp)

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 14

Enrollment Preferences: Graduate students in the history of art, then undergraduate art history majors

Expected Class Size: 12

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

Distributions: (D1)

Attributes: ARTH pre-1800

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ARTH 593  (S)  The Sonic Turn

Over the last two decades, art history has experienced something of a sonic turn. What does attending to sound open up for art historians, so long trained principally in visual analysis and critique? This seminar delves into sonic practices, methods, and theories in the visual arts from 1960 to the present. While we will examine time-based media, including film, performance, and intermedia works, this course considers the aural imagination and practices of listening more expansively and addresses artworks outside what might conventionally be deemed “sound art.” Course readings will include art historical accounts, art criticism, and artist’s writings, as well as relevant texts from adjacent disciplines including sound studies, media studies, performance theory, queer theory, disability studies, Black Studies, and Latinx and Chicana studies. The course will explore the cross-pollination of theater, music, and artistic experimentation in the 1960s; the immersive installations of “radical architecture” by groups like Archigram; the strident politics of experimental Italian interventions in the 1970s; the reverberations of the AIDS crisis, for so long silenced in the United States, in the 1980s and early 90s; recent work by Deaf artists critiquing ableist hearing ideologies; and contemporary Caribbean artists using sonic methods today to grapple with histories of oppression, climate change, and diaspora, among other topics.

Requirements/Evaluation: Attendance and participation in discussion; short writing assignments; final research projects (including 10-minute oral presentation and 15-20 pg. paper)

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 12

Enrollment Preferences: Grad students first, then music majors and art majors, but undergraduates must seek approval from Professor Woolsey

Expected Class Size: 12

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

Distributions: (D1)
Attributes: ARTH post-1800

Spring 2025
SEM Section: 01    R 10:00 am - 12:50 pm     Caitlin Woolsey

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. 
Requirements/Evaluation: per discretion of instructor
Prerequisites: permission from GradArt Director
Enrollment Limit: none
Enrollment Preferences: none
Expected Class Size: none
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D1)
Not offered current academic year

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)
Not offered current academic year

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)
Not offered current academic year

ARTH 599 Muertos: Ancestral Mexican Arts of Mortality
The Mexican Días de los Muertos, which coincides with the Catholic holy days of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day on November 1 and 2 of each year, numbers among the most widely recognized holidays practiced in contemporary Latin America. Available scholarly accounts of this holiday's historical origins, which tend to minimize the degree to which it reflects ancestral Indigenous Mexican religious practices, typically draw their earliest evidence from the Mexica (Aztec) capital of Tenochtitlan (present-day Mexico City) of c. 1300-1521 CE. However, the Mexica--well known for their practices of human and animal sacrifice, as well as other social practices that implicated mortality--were themselves the inheritors of a millennial tradition that venerated death. This course considers the theme and actual practice of death over the Mexican longue durée. It begins in the first two centuries CE, which saw a substantial population collapse in central Mexico that was followed soon thereafter by the first known mass-human sacrificial event in Mesoamerica. It then follows the social construction of death in Mesoamerica through early modernity when the importation of Eurasian pathogens into the Americas alongside the atrocities of European colonization led to the death of an estimated 90% of Indigenous Americans. The final weeks of the course will consider how modern artists have responded to ancestral artistic and historical precedents. Artworks to be considered will include the Temple of the Feathered Serpent of Teotihuacan, the sarcophagus of Pakal the Great of Palenque, the Great Ball Court of Chichen Itza, and the novel Pedro Páramo by Juan Rulfo.
Requirements/Evaluation: Readings (100-200 pages/week); Participation (25%); Essay proposal 1 page (10%); Essay mid-semester draft 10-12 pages (25%); Final research essay, 20-25 pages (40%)
Prerequisites: None.
Enrollment Limit: 12
Enrollment Preferences: 1) Graduate art history students 2) third and fourth year undergraduate art majors 3) third and fourth year undergraduate
American Studies majors

Expected Class Size: 12

Grading:

Distributions: (D1)

Attributes: ARTH pre-1800

Not offered current academic year