

**ARTH 499 Impressionism  
SYLLABUS**

Professor Lisa Passaglia Bauman

Office: Robinson Hall B, room 373A

Office Hours: Monday 12:00-1:15; Thursday 3:00-4:15, or by appointment

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**Course Description:**

Beneath seemingly simple paintings seen as essentially truthful renderings of an unproblematic world, or as concerned mainly with questions of perception and the “fleeting glance,” Impressionism raises deeper issues and begs serious questions. Each week we will focus on a different artist and attempt to recover the real intensity and strangeness of that artist’s involvement with modernity. Topics will include the rise of urbanism; labor and industry; landscape painting; the triumph of the bourgeoisie; the gendering of art; the birth of the avant-garde. We are going to explore pictorial evidence and art historical theories to present a complex whole, grounded in the historical context in which the works were made.

**Course Objectives:** Learn to place works of art in their social and historical context. Develop your visual analysis skills. Read critically, write engagingly, present professionally both in lecture and in written form, and meet deadlines. But most of all to develop a sense of joy and wonder in research.

**Required Text:**

T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life. Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*. Revised Edition (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1984). (\$24 new; \$13 used)

James Rubin, *Impressionism* (London: Phaidon, 1999). (\$19 new; \$6 used)

All other readings will be on Blackboard.

**Tech requirements and policy:** All students must activate and check their GMU e-mail accounts on a regular basis. I will ONLY use the e-mail distribution list from the class registration. If you prefer to use a commercial account, you must activate the forwarder on your GMU account.

A successful seminar is made by the collaborative efforts of the group. That means being a group—doing the reading before seminar, being engaged in seminar. To that end, there are no cell phones in my classroom (unless you are awaiting an organ transplant, are a volunteer fire fighter and may be called into action, or need to be accessible to young children or elderly parents). You can use your laptop but I must assume that it is only for the purpose of bringing up the readings or your notes. If I see you on the internet doing anything else, I will call you out.

**Method of Assessment:**

ASSIGNMENT	PERCENTAGE OF FINAL GRADE
Attendance	15
Weekly synthesis papers	35
Class Presenter/Discussion Leader	15
Prelim Biblio and Thesis	5
Presentation	10
Paper	20
*****Draft of first 3 pages	*****Worth 10% of your paper grade

**Writing Across the Curriculum.** This course has been approved by the Faculty Senate Writing Across the Curriculum Committee to fulfill all/in part the Writing Intensive requirement in the Art History major. It does so through the SEVEN 500-word papers due throughout the semester, the 250-word thesis statement and the 2000-word research report. The research report will be completed through a draft/feedback/revision process. A draft of the first 750 words will be due on November 12; I will provide commentary on the draft, and the revised draft will be due on December 13.

**Attendance: 15% or your final grade**

This is not a lecture class. Seminar is interesting when people are engaged. Attendance and informed participation are the coin of the realm and are therefore required of all students. If you cannot attend seminar due to medical reasons or an emergency, you will need to bring me proper documentation for that absence. If you just miss because your heart was recently broken and you are having a hard time leaving your bed, then that impacts your participation grade. Any unexplained absence will drop your participation grade by 10 points. Each time. An unexcused absence during the weeks of student presentations will drop your **final grade** by 10%.

**Weekly synthesis papers: 7 TOTAL. 5 points each. Worth 35% of your final grade.**

Each week in seminar is focused around an artist and a set of readings. Those readings are the basis for weekly synthesis papers: a 400-500 word, double-spaced, typed paper (always include word count). The goal of the synthesis paper is NOT to produce a summary but to address one particular idea, problem or even quotation by drawing together ideas from several of the readings assigned for that day. Try to synthesize the readings into what you consider to be the “big ideas,” connections or contradictory opinions expressed in the readings. In short, the paper should be a response to the question “what have I learned once I put all of these readings together.” You do not have to refer to every reading, but you should bring in at least two in each of your papers. You may want to start with a quote from one of the readings and analyze it in relation to all the readings; alternately, you may want to choose one point touched on by each of the readings and compare the authors’ ideas on that point; other times, you may want to offer critiques on the methodology of the readings. There is no one single approach or format. Be thoughtful and creative. As a seminar, this class is intended to make you think independently and form your own scholarly opinions; use these papers to express your thoughts in relationship to our readings. Papers are due in class: late submissions will not be accepted.

- There are 10 weeks of readings, starting next week; you are responsible for turning in **SEVEN** synthesis papers.
- You will NOT turn in a synthesis paper the week you are the presenter/discussion leader.
- Everyone **MUST** do next week’s paper on Manet.
- If you choose to do all 9 papers, I will drop your two lowest grades, taking only the **best 7 grades**.

**Weekly Presenter/Discussion Leader: Worth 15% of your final grade.**

Each member of the class will be responsible for leading the class one week. (Some weeks have two presenters but the division of artists is pretty clear, except for the week on Degas.) Your job will be to present the featured artist in a powerpoint presentation, providing basic background and a chronology of the most important works in their oeuvre. This should run 15 minutes. You will also provide an oral presentation on one of the articles listed for that week. For the article that you are presenting, you need to be prepared to provide a concise summary of the article; do not try to repeat everything, rather boil it down to the most significant features. The summary should run 5-10 minutes. This will be followed by class discussion which you will lead. The presenter should come prepared with four or five points that will act as springboards for discussion: a quote, a connection with another reading/idea, a problem of methodology, etc. **We will settle these right now.**

**Research Paper: Worth 20% of your final grade.**

There is a list of paper topics at the end of the syllabus. I suggest that you look at a number of these and see what seems most interesting. I am open to other ideas if you have one already in mind.

- **Step 1:** Choosing a topic: at our 9/17 class meeting, you will need to hand in your top three (3) preferences for paper topics, ranked in terms of desirability. I will do my best to accommodate everyone’s preferences.
- **Step 2:** Preliminary Bibliography and Thesis: a typed, properly formatted preliminary bibliography and thesis is due in class on October 15. The bibliography should include a minimum of four sources, not including any articles already on the syllabus. There should be no more than two web-based resources in this initial bibliography. On the whole, I strongly advise caution when consulting web-based sources for scholarly information (images are a different matter). Wikipedia is NOT a scholarly source!! Make certain that you evaluate the academic integrity of your on-line sources; for the most part, .edu extensions are trustworthy, but do not take even that at face value. It is very important from a scholarly perspective that you include primary

(19<sup>th</sup> century) sources. Articles that you find in JSTOR are NOT web-based sources. Those are legitimate peer-reviewed articles that you are simply reading on the web.

- The thesis should articulate the problem that you are working on in the paper. It can be more than one sentence incidentally. This is not a topic sentence which simply states the area of material being investigated. A thesis should introduce the reader to your particular approach to the material. For instance: **Topic sentence:** In this paper, I will examine images of working women in Impressionist painting. **Thesis:** In this paper, I will argue that depictions of women at work were subjected to unprecedented levels of pictorial innovation by the Impressionist painters due to changing notions of female agency and female participation in cultural and political debates. **Bibliography/thesis is worth 5% of your final grade.**
- **Step 3:** Rough draft of first three pages. Due in class on November 12. This allows me to see that the thesis is clear and that you have made the transition to your first piece of evidence convincingly. **This draft is worth 10% of your PAPER grade.**
- **Step 4:** Paper: The paper itself will be due on Sunday, December 13 by NOON. The paper must be 7 or 8 pages (normal margins, double-spaced, 12 point font, I prefer Times New Roman) and have at least 7 bibliographical sources from peer-reviewed journals or books, plus illustrations (which do not factor into your page count). No more than three of your sources should be web-based. Clarity of argument, structure, grammatical and syntactical issues will all be factored into the final grade of the paper along with the quality of research. Proofreading errors will be detrimental to the grade. Further details on the paper will be given out as the semester progresses.

**Research presentation. Worth 10% of your final grade.**

These will be scheduled for the last three weeks of the semester: November 19, December 3, and December 10. Present your paper to the class as if you were giving it at a conference or as a guest lecturer in my ARTH 360 class. You will need to provide a handout that outlines your topic, provides a bibliography, and gives a list of illustrations. (This also provides your classmates with a place to write notes or questions.) Your presentation should be about 20 minutes with another 5-10 minutes for questions and discussion.

**Important dates:**

**Monday, September 7.** Labor Day recess. No class.

**Tuesday, September 8.** Last day to add classes.

**Friday, October 2.** Last day to drop a class

**October 12.** Columbus Day recess. No class. **But Monday classes meet on Tuesday that week.**

**English as a second language:** If English is not your first language, please discuss any concerns you might have about the writing assignments with me. Please, however, give me plenty of notice (at least a week) before any due dates. And don't forget about the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>).

**Standards of Academic Integrity:** GMU has an Honor Code that you can consult at the Office for Academic Integrity (<http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/>). Aristotle famously described the relationship between an abstraction and its human manifestation. How does one become honorable? By doing honorable deeds. Who does honorable deeds? The man with the sense of honor. Through persistence and habit, we can increase our capacity for honor.

**Students with disabilities:** All accommodations must be arranged through the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. If you qualify for accommodation, the ODS staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for you to give to me. Please do that within the first month of class.