

ARTH 341 Fall 2017  
**Renaissance Art in Northern Europe**  
TR 1:30-2:45pm      Art and Design 2026

Instructor:      Prof. Angela Ho  
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Office:            Robinson B334  
Office Hours:    Monday 12–2, Thursday 11–1, and by appointment

This course examines the art and architecture produced north of the Alps from the late fourteenth century through the sixteenth century. This period saw social, political, and religious turmoil, but also tremendous artistic and cultural innovations. We will pay particular attention to the connections between art and religious life, including the visualization of the spiritual, the viewer's interaction with the devotional image, and the radical changes brought by the Reformation. We will examine the aristocratic courts as centers of patronage, as well as the development of the art market in towns. We will also study the exchanges with Italy and the cultural ideas that led to the elevation of artists such as Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, Albrecht Dürer, Hieronymus Bosch, and Pieter Bruegel to the status of supremely gifted creators. Lectures, examinations, and writing assignments are designed to help students develop the skills of visual analysis and critical thinking. This course satisfies the General Education requirement for the arts.

### **Textbook and readings**

The textbook for this course is:

Snyder, James. *Northern Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture, the Graphic Arts from 1350 to 1575*. Second edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005.

Please note that this is the second edition. The textbook provides good background information, as well as reproductions of many of the art works discussed in this course.

I have also selected a number of short texts that go into greater detail on particular artists or provide examples of particular methods and viewpoints in art history. These include both primary and secondary sources, and will be available on Blackboard. We will discuss these texts in class, so please complete the readings assigned for the specific day before coming to class.

### **Tech requirements and policy**

All students must activate their e-mail accounts on campus. I will ONLY use your GMU email addresses. If you prefer to use a commercial account, you must activate the forwarder on your GMU account. Readings, course updates, information on assignments and examinations will be available on Blackboard.

Please be respectful of your peers and your instructor when using electronic devices.

- Cell phones must be put on silent.
- Please do not engage in activities that are unrelated to class. Such disruptions show a lack of professionalism and may affect your participation grade.

## Course Objectives

This course is designed to help you not only to gain a familiarity with major monuments and artists of the Northern Renaissance, but also to encourage you to consider topics of broader relevance, such as the value and functions of art in society. Over the course of this semester, you will:

- Acquire and develop the skills of visual analysis and interpretation;
- Learn to situate the works of art in their social and cultural contexts;
- Learn to read primary and secondary sources critically;
- Develop the skills to present observations and arguments in academic writing.

Lectures, discussions, and reading and paper assignments are designed to help you achieve these learning objectives.

## Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation	5%
Test 1	10%
Test 2	20%
Paper 1	15%
Paper 2	25%
Final exam	25%

**PLEASE NOTE:** Students must complete *all* graded assignments and other requirements listed on the syllabus. Even if your overall average without one of these elements is sufficient for a passing grade, you cannot pass the course without completing all requirements.

## Attendance and participation

It is important that you attend class regularly and on time. Reading the textbook is NOT a substitute for coming to lectures, because in class I will synthesize and present information from various sources, and I will often use monuments to explore specific themes. Your starting attendance/participation grade (i.e., you attend all lectures but do little else) will be a B-. Active, informed participation in discussion will improve that grade. Conversely, more than two unexcused absences, chronic late attendance, or disruptive behavior will negatively affect your grade. If you are unable to attend class because of medical or family emergency, please provide me with documentation as soon as possible.

## Tests and Final exam

There will be 2 tests and a final exam. You will be evaluated on your ability to identify and discuss major monuments, as well as your grasp on the themes introduced in lectures and readings. The first 2 tests involve identification of slides and short essays in response to guiding questions. There are two parts to the final exam. (1) Take-home essay to be submitted when you come to (2) in-class slide exam (same format as the first 2 tests) on.

**NB:** THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP TESTS OR EXAMS WITHOUT WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION OF ILLNESS, FAMILY EMERGENCIES, ETC. By registering for this course, you commit to taking the final exam on the day officially specified by GMU. Please notify me as soon as possible if you have problems.

## Papers

There are two paper assignments for this course. The first assignment, due in week 7, will be a critical paper in response to readings. The museum essay will be due in week 13. The second paper assignment asks you to write a comparative analysis of objects in the National Gallery of Art. Detailed instructions will be provided later in the semester.

**NB:** In the interest of fairness, papers **MUST** be submitted on time to receive full credit. Hard copies of papers are due in class on the specified dates. Students will incur a 3% penalty per day for late papers (including weekends). Papers more than 10 days late will not be accepted. In cases of medical or other serious problems, please document them and let me know as soon as possible.

## Grading scale

A+	98-100	C+	77-79.5
A	93-97.5	C	73-76.5
A-	90-92.5	C-	70-72.5
B+	87-89.5	D	60-69.5
B	83-86.5	F	< 60
B-	80-82.5		

## English as a second language

If English is not your first language, feel free to discuss with me any concerns you have about the writing assignments. Please, however, give me plenty of notice (at least a week) before the paper is due. You may also consider consulting the Writing Center.

## Standards of Academic integrity

Strict adherence to the Honor Code as defined in the undergraduate catalogue is expected. Plagiarism, cheating on examinations, and all other instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Honor Committee, and may result in a failing grade for the course. Please consult the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process.

## Add-drop deadlines

Please note the following add-drop deadlines:

September 5	Last day to add a class
	Last day to drop a class with no tuition penalty
September 19	Last day to drop a class with 33% tuition penalty
September 29	Final drop deadline with 67% tuition penalty
October 2 to	Selective withdrawal period
October 27	

## Students with disabilities

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should see me and contact the Office for Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. If

you qualify for accommodation, the ODS staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for your instructor. Please note that this form must be provided to me at least two weeks before the first test.

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***SCHEDULE*** (subject to change)

Week 1

August 29 Introduction: Defining “The Northern Renaissance”

August 31 Valois Courts: piety and dynastic ambitions

Readings:

Susie Nash, *Northern Renaissance Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 87-94.

Snyder, 17-33.

Week 2

September 5 Valois Courts (II)

September 7 *Class cancelled. Instructor at a conference.*

Readings:

Nash, *Northern Renaissance Art*, 209-215.

Snyder, 34-50.

Week 3

September 12 Jan van Eyck: Ghent Altarpiece

September 14 Jan van Eyck: symbols and illusions

Readings:

Craig Harbison, “Visions and Meditations in Early Flemish Painting,” *Simiolus* 15, no. 2 (1985): 87-118.

Snyder, 87-109.

Week 4

September 19 Robert Campin and Rogier van der Weyden

September 21 Flanders in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century: Petrus Christus and Dieric Bouts

Readings:

Nash, *Northern Renaissance Art*, 204-209.

Snyder, 111-132; 139-149.

Week 5

September 26 Bruges, later 15<sup>th</sup> century: Hans Memlinc and Gerard David

September 28 **Test 1**

Readings:

Snyder, 197-213.

Week 6

October 3 Joos van Ghent and Hugo van der Goes: Netherlandish art and/in Italy

October 5 The French Court in the 15<sup>th</sup> century

Readings:

Julia I. Miller, "Miraculous Childbirth and the Portinari Altarpiece," *Art Bulletin* 77, no. 2 (1995): 249-261.

Snyder, 159-170; 215-224.

Week 7

October 10 *Columbus Day recess—Tuesday classes do not meet.*

October 12 Print culture: Impact of a new technology

***Paper 1 due***

Readings:

Nash, *Northern Renaissance Art*, 129-141.

Snyder, 248-265; 270-272.

Week 8

October 17 Print culture (cont'd); Rhineland and Germany: Limewood sculpture

October 19 Rhineland and Germany: Painting

Readings:

Andrée Hayum, "The Meaning and Function of the Isenheim Altarpiece: The Hospital Context Revisited," *Art Bulletin* 59, no. 4 (1977): 501-517.

Snyder, 275-287; 77-85; 242-247; 289-99.

Week 9

October 24 Albrecht Dürer as printmaker

October 26 Dürer: the changing status of the artist

Readings:

Joseph Koerner, "Albrecht Dürer, A Sixteenth-Century *Influenza*," in Giulia Bartrum ed., *Albrecht Dürer and his Legacy: The Graphic Work of a Renaissance Artist* (London: British Museum, 2007), 18-38.

Snyder, 302-333.

Week 10

**October 31 Test 2**

November 2 Albrecht Altdorfer and Hans Baldung Grien: responses to Dürer

Readings:

Snyder, 302-333 (review); 351-367.

Week 11

November 7 The Reformation and its impact on art

November 9 Reformation II: Lucas Cranach and Hans Holbein

Readings:

“Luther on Images,” in Wolfgang Stechow ed., *Northern Renaissance Art, 1400-1600: Sources and Documents* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 129-130.

Dürer’s *Four Holy Men*, in Stechow ed., *Northern Renaissance Art*, 107-108.

Snyder, 337-351; 375-391.

Week 12

November 14 The Habsburg Netherlands

November 16 *Class cancelled. Instructor at conference.*

Readings:

Snyder, 420-431.

Week 13

November 21 Hieronymus Bosch

**Paper 2 due**

November 23 *Thanksgiving*

Readings:

Primary sources on Bosch in Stechow ed., *Northern Renaissance Art*, 19-24.

Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *The Northern Renaissance*, reprint (London and New York: Phaidon, 2011), 333-340.

Snyder, 394-409.

Week 14

November 28 The Lure of Italy: Northern European artists at home and abroad

November 30 Antwerp: Quentin Massys and Pieter Aertsen

Readings:

Smith, 291-308.

Snyder, 433; 438-449; 453-466; 479-481; 491-499.

Week 15

December 5 Pieter Bruegel the Elder

December 7 Review

Readings:

Primary sources on Bruegel, in Stechow, 36-41.

Snyder, 502-523.

**December 19 Final exam, 1:30 pm**