

ARTH 400/600 Fall 2020
Methods and Research in Art History
Synchronous sessions on Wednesdays, 4:30 pm EST

Instructor: Dr. Angela Ho
Email: aho5@gmu.edu
Office Hours: Monday 12 – 2:30 pm, Thursday 12 – 2 pm (all times EST)

To make an appointment for a Zoom meeting, please sign in to Navigate Mason, find me and select the service “Art History Course Office Hours.” If you cannot meet during my office hours, please email me for other arrangements.

Course Description

What do art historians do? What kinds of questions do they ask about works of art and how do they attempt to address those questions? This course considers how art historical approaches to understanding and interpreting art have evolved over time. We will look at a variety of research methods, including iconography, formalism, and social historical inquiry. We will also explore how, in recent decades, art historians have drawn on Marxism, feminism and postcolonial theories to study the connections between visual images and issues of class, gender, and race. This course will examine the historical context in which each methodological approach emerged, and how cultural conditions might have shaped the scholars’ perspectives and assumptions. Taking the course at the graduate level (ARTH 600) will involve extra written assignments but all students will be expected to complete weekly readings and fully participate in both asynchronous and synchronous discussions.

Course Objectives

In this course, you will

- Learn to recognize, understand, and employ art historical methods;
- Develop critical readings skills;
- Examine how historical and cultural contexts influenced the interpretation of art;
- Develop methodological self-awareness in your research and writing.

Writing Intensive Requirement for Art History Major (ARTH 400)

The Faculty Senate Writing Across the Curriculum Committee has approved ARTH 400 to fulfill the Writing Intensive (“WI”) requirement in the Art History major. These requirements are met in 3 ways:

1. Discussion board posts (about 150 – 200 words each week) on weekly readings (please see page 8 for details);
2. Two 3- to 4-page response papers on assigned readings of your choice (please see page 8 for details);
3. A final paper of 8 to 10 pages. You will submit a draft by November 18 and the final paper by December 9.

Course Format and Requirements

This course will be conducted online as a seminar. In a seminar—even one held online—learning happens when we are discussing readings and visual materials. Your engagement with the readings and your ability to apply the ideas presented in them will be assessed based on:

- Your participation in discussions, both on the Discussion Board and in synchronous class sessions;
- Formal response papers (2 for ARTH 400 and 3 for ARTH 600);
- Final project with multi-stage submissions.

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 class without specific, prior permission of the instructor.

Weekly time commitment

The time required to complete the work for each week of the semester can vary, depending on whether you are writing a response paper or working on the final paper. However, on average you can expect to spend 8 – 10 hours, including our synchronous meeting, per week on the course. This is in line with Mason recommendations for online learning (<https://masononline.gmu.edu/success/?cmgfrm=www.google.com>).

Tech requirements for remote learning

Because this course will be conducted in an online format, it is essential to have certain technologies at your disposal. You are probably familiar with at least some of these apps, which are accessible at no extra cost through Mason. Please see this page:

<https://masononline.gmu.edu/what-technologies-do-i-need/?cmgfrm=www.google.com>.

- I will ONLY use your GMU email addresses. If you prefer to use a commercial account, you must activate the email forwarder on your GMU account.
- Blackboard is where you will find most of the course materials, including:
 - Readings and videos in weekly folders;
 - Discussion board;
 - Instructions for submitting your formal written work;
 - Grades and feedback on graded assignments.
- We will use Zoom for synchronous sessions. As a student, you have a shared Zoom account through GMU. Go to this page for access: <https://its.gmu.edu/service/zoom/>
- It is a good idea to install Microsoft Office, which is available to you through GMU. See this page: <https://its.gmu.edu/service/microsoft-365-apps-for-enterprise/>.

Breakdown of course grade

| | |
|--|-----|
| Discussion board posts | 20% |
| Participation (synchronous) | 15% |
| Response papers | 25% |
| Final project | 40% |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal • Bibliography • Draft • Peer review • Final submission | |

Grading scale

| | | | |
|----|---------|----|---------|
| A+ | 97-100 | C+ | 77-79.5 |
| A | 93-96.5 | 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 | | |

Readings and Participation

Weekly readings include articles and book excerpts and will be available on Blackboard. Please also purchase the textbook:

Hatt, Michael, and Charlotte Klonk. *Art History: A Critical Introduction to its Methods*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006.

Hatt and Klonk will serve as a guide to the theoretical texts. You may find it helpful to read the chapter in the textbook before tackling the primary texts.

Informed participation on the discussion board and synchronous sessions are required of all students. Your starting attendance/participation grade (i.e., you attend all zoom meetings but do not participate in discussions, or do not give any indication that you have done the readings in your discussion board posts) will be a C+. You build on that grade with thoughtful contributions to both the asynchronous and synchronous forums.

I anticipate that our synchronous sessions will be around an hour to 90 minutes. If you cannot attend class or post responses on time due to medical reasons or other emergencies, I would be happy to meet with you (virtually) during office hours to bring you up to date with the course material. Proper documentation, however, must be submitted to me in a timely fashion. Otherwise, after one missed class meeting, each subsequent unexplained absence will lead to a deduction of 10% of your participation grade.

It is important to maintain a positive learning environment and observe rules of classroom etiquette on the discussion board and in class sessions. Constructive comments and criticism are welcome, but please be mindful of and respect one another's views.

Discussion Board

Each week, I will start a forum with questions on the readings. Please submit a post (about 150 – 200 words) at least **24 hours** before we meet to discuss the relevant topic in class. Feel free to respond to one another's posts but, again, please be constructive and respectful in your comments. See page 8 for more details.

Response Papers

From weeks 2 to 5 and 7 to 12, choose 2 (3 for ARTH 600) to expand into formal response papers (3 to 4 pages). **At least one (two for ARTH 600) must be on readings from week 2 to week 10.** Upload response papers to Blackboard the week *after* we discuss the relevant topic. Please see page 8 for specific instructions.

Final project

The final project involves analyzing an art history paper that you wrote in the past. More detailed instructions will be provided later in the semester. This project will be completed in stages (all submissions are due at 11:59 pm EST on the specified date):

- September 30: proposal due
- October 14: bibliography
- November 18: draft
- December 2: peer review reports and synchronous group discussion
- December 9: final paper

The class will be divided up into small groups, and your drafts will go through a peer review process in these groups. I will also provide feedback. Please submit all parts of the assignment to Blackboard.

PLEASE NOTE: In the interest of fairness, written work must be submitted on time to receive full credit. Students will incur a 3% grade penalty per day for late papers. In cases of medical or other serious problems, please document them and let me know as soon as possible.

Add-drop deadlines

Please note the following add-drop deadlines:

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|---------------------------|---|
| August 31, 2020 | Last day to add course |
| September 8 | Last day to drop with 100% tuition refund |
| September 9 – 15 | Drop period (50% tuition refund) |
| September 16 – 28 | Drop period (No tuition refund) |
| September 29 – October 28 | Selective withdrawal (no tuition refund). Option available for undergraduates only; 3 times maximum over degree program |

It is your responsibility to observe the add-drop deadlines to ensure that you are properly registered for specific courses.

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 due dates. You may also consider consulting the Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>). Be sure to plan ahead, because the Writing Center is very busy near the end of the semester.

Students with disabilities

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please note that requests for accommodation must be provided to me before the due date of the first assignment. For further information and documentation please contact the Office of Disability Services at (703) 993-2474, TTY: (703) 993-2476, or ods@gmu.edu.

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 (<https://oai.gmu.edu/>) for a full description of the code and the honor committee process.

SCHEDULE

Week 1 August 26

Introduction

- Hatt and Klonk, “Introduction” and “Preview.”

Week 2 September 2

Hegel and the narrative of art history

- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 3.
- Graham, Mark Miller. “The Future of Art History and the Undoing of the Survey.” *Art Journal* 54 (1995): 30-34.

Week 3 September 9

Connoisseurship and technical art history

- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 4.
- Berenson, Bernard. *Rudiments of Connoisseurship*, 111-148. New York: Schocken Books, 1962 (originally published in 1902).
- Video excerpt: *Out of the Shadows: Unraveling the Mystery of Hidden Masterpieces*. Toronto: Sullivan Entertainment, 2012.

Week 4 September 16

Formalism

- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 5.
- Wölfflin, Heinrich. “Principles of Art History” (1915). In *The Art of Art history: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi, 115-126. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Week 5 September 23

Iconography

- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 6.
- Panofsky, Erwin. *Studies in Iconology*, 3-17. New York: Icon Editions, 1972.

Week 6 September 30

No readings this week, but **final paper proposals are due**.

Synchronous meeting: discussion of final paper project and presentation by Stephanie Grimm, Art and Art History Librarian at Mason, on doing research this fall.

Week 7 October 7

Social history of art

- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 7.
- Baxandall, Michael. "Period Eye (excerpts)." In *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, 29-56; 86-108. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Clark, T. J. "Olympia's Choice" (excerpts). In *The Painting of Modern Life*, 100-119, 130-140, 145-146. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Week 8 October 14

Feminism and gender theory

Bibliography for final paper due

- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 8.
- Nochlin, Linda. "Why have there been no great women artists? (1975; excerpt)" In *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays*, 145-70. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.
- Nead, Lynda. *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain*, 1-11, 23-29. Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1988.

Week 9 October 21

Psychoanalysis

- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 9.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Fears, Fantasies and the Male Unconscious or 'You Don't Know What is Happening, Do You, Mr. Jones?'" In *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 6-13. Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1989.
- Pollock, Griselda. "Woman as Sign: Psychoanalytic Readings." In *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the History of Art*, 120-54. London: Routledge, 1988.

Week 10 October 28

Semiotics

- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 10.
- Bal, Mieke, and Norman Bryson. "Semiotics and Art History." *Art Bulletin* 73 (1991): 174-188, 206-208.
- Krauss, Rosalind. "In the Name of Picasso." *October* 16 (1981): 5-22.

Week 11 November 4

Postcolonialism

- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 11.
- Craven, David. "Abstract Expressionism and Third World Art: A Post-Colonial Approach to 'American' Art." *Oxford Art Journal* 14 (1991): 44-66.
- Coombes, Annie E. "Inventing the 'Postcolonial': Hybridity and Constituency in Contemporary Curating." *New Formations* (1992): 39-52.

Week 12 November 11

Material Culture

- Gell, Alfred. "The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology." In *The Art of Anthropology: Essays and Diagrams*, 159–86. London and New Brunswick: The Athlone Press, 1999.
- Holmes, Megan. "Ex-votos: Materiality, Memory, and Cult." In *The Idol in the Age of Art: Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World*, eds. Michael Cole and Rebecca Zorach, 159-181. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009.

Week 13 November 18

No class meeting. Please submit your drafts by **11:59 pm EST on November 18.**

Week 14 November 25

No class: Thanksgiving

Week 15 December 2

Peer review of paper drafts

Please read your colleagues' papers and complete the review form before the class meeting.

Final paper due on December 9, 11:59 pm EST. Please submit your paper electronically to Blackboard. More instructions to follow.

ARTH 400/600 Fall 2020

Weekly Readings, Discussion Board and Response Papers

Participation in the weekly discussion board is an important component of this seminar. The purpose of this exercise is to help you develop critical reading skills, which in turn will enable you to understand art historical methods.

Reading critically does not mean gathering facts from a text, or simply reading it through once from beginning to end. Critical reading is active reading. Underline or highlight the main points and note down your thoughts and questions. When you have finished a reading, go back over your notes and highlights, and consider the following:

- When was the text written? How would the date of the text affect the way you approach it?
- What are the author's major arguments? How does s/he approach the history of art?
- Do you detect any assumptions or biases underlying the author's analysis?
- How does the author build his/her arguments?
- Do you find the argument effective? Why or why not?

Discussion board

I will post guiding questions for each week's readings on the discussion board in Blackboard. Respond to these questions in a post of about 150 – 200 words. In your posts and response papers, concentrate on the primary articles and text excerpts on Blackboard rather than the textbook. Hatt and Klonk should serve as a guide to the sources rather than the main object of your analysis.

This is an informal writing assignment; what I am looking for is not perfection but your active engagement with the readings. Demonstrate your understanding of the readings by identifying the main arguments, but feel free to ask your own questions about the parts that you find particularly difficult or provocative.

Response papers

ARTH 400 are required to write two longer, more formal response papers on the readings (about 3 – 4 pages). ARTH 600 students, please submit three. Turn in the response paper one week after we discuss the readings in class. For example, if you decide to write a response paper on the topic for week 4 ("Formalism"), you will submit the paper in week 5. One of the papers (for ARTH 400; two for ARTH 600) must be on readings from before week 10.

The response paper is a formal written assignment. You are expected to go into greater detail in this paper than in your informal post, and the class discussion should help you refine or adjust your initial ideas. The paper should be proofread, with proper citations.

If you draw on your classmates' posts on Blackboard, you must acknowledge your sources. It goes without saying that your response must reflect your own critical engagement with the text, and should not be a mish-mash of your classmates' postings.