

ARTH 341 Fall 2021  
**Renaissance Art in Northern Europe**  
Tuesday and Thursday, 12 – 1:15 pm  
Innovation Hall 136

Instructor: Dr. Angela Ho  
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Office: Horizon Hall 3143  
Office Hours: Monday 12 – 2 (virtual), Tuesday 2 – 3, Thursday 2 – 3  
To make an appointment, please sign in to [Navigate Mason](#), find me and select the service “Art History Course Office Hours.” Alternatively, you can use this link: <https://gmu.campus.eab.com/pal/LV1F64TukI>. If you cannot meet during my office hours, please email me to make other arrangements.

### **Course Description**

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 Mason Core Arts requirement.

### **Course Objectives**

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

This course satisfies the following learning outcomes specified in the guidelines for Mason Core (Arts) courses:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic process, and a work's underlying concept, and where appropriate, contexts associated with the work.
2. Identify and analyze the formal elements of a particular art form using vocabulary and critique appropriate to that form.
3. Analyze cultural productions using standards appropriate to the form, as well as the works cultural significance and context.
4. Analyze and interpret the content of material or performance culture through its social, historical, and personal contexts.

## Readings

You don't need to purchase any textbooks for this course. All the readings will be available as PDFs on [Blackboard](#) or links will be provided to appropriate websites. These readings will be important resources for successfully completing your assignments and exams.

## Tech Matters

- 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. Please check your GMU email regularly, preferably daily, since that is the only way your professors and the university can communicate with you. Otherwise, you may miss out on important information and messages.
- [Blackboard](#) is where you will find most of the course materials, including:
  - Readings and lecture slide shows in weekly folders;
  - Instructions for submitting your work;
  - Grades and feedback on graded assignments.
- It is a good idea to install Microsoft Office, which is available to you through GMU. See [this page](#) for instructions.

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 Requirements

Attendance and participation	5%
Reading analysis	5%
Test 1	20%
Test 2	20%
Paper	25%
Final exam	25%

### Attendance and participation

It is important that you attend class regularly and on time. Only doing the readings 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, chronic absence and late attendance or disruptive behavior will negatively affect your grade. If you are unable to attend class because of medical or family emergency, please let me know as soon as you can.

### Reading analysis

You are asked to write an analysis of the Harbison reading for week 3. Your discussion should be about 250 – 300 words in length. The purpose of this exercise is to develop your critical reading and writing skills. More detailed instructions will be made available separately.

### Tests and Final exam

There will be 2 tests and a final exam, which will consist of questions about specific works of art and thematic short essays. You will be evaluated on your ability to discuss major monuments as well as your grasp on the themes introduced in lectures and readings. More detailed instructions will be available closer to the test dates.

All tests and the final exam will be conducted online, and you will be free to consult all course materials. The tests will be posted at 8 am on the day specified in the syllabus and your submissions are due by the end of the day. The day assigned for the final exam is December 9. The exam will be posted at 8 am and due at the end of the day.

**THERE WILL BE NO MAKE-UP TESTS OR EXAMS WITHOUT DOCUMENTATION OF ILLNESS, FAMILY EMERGENCIES, ETC.** Please notify me of any problems as soon as possible.

### Paper

The paper assignment for this course will ask you to consider artistic production in historical context. It will involve some basic research and the application of concepts discussed in the course to a problem-solving exercise. Detailed instructions for the assignment will be provided later in the semester.

In the interest of fairness, papers **MUST** be submitted on time to receive full credit. Students will incur a 3% penalty per day for late papers. **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+ (97-100)	A (93-96.5)	A- (90-92.5)	Excellent performance
B+ (87-89.5)	B (83-86.5)	B- (80-82.5)	Good to very good
C+ (77-79.5)	C (73-76.5)	C- (70-72.5)	Satisfactory to average
		D (60-69.5)	Below average; marginally acceptable
		F (<60)	Unacceptable

### **Add-drop deadlines**

Please note the following add-drop deadlines:

August 30, 2021	Last day to add a class
September 7	Last day to drop a class with 100% tuition refund
September 14	Last day to drop a class with 50% tuition refund
September 15 – 27	Unrestricted withdrawal period (no tuition refund)
September 28 – October 27	Selective withdrawal period (no tuition refund)

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 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.

### **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. 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.



### **Schedule**

(You will be notified in advance of any necessary changes)

#### Week 1

August 24 Introduction: defining “the Northern Renaissance”

August 26 How to talk and write about art

Readings:

Stephanie Porras, *Art of the Northern Renaissance* (London: Laurence King, 2018), 52-56.

#### Week 2

August 31 The Valois Courts: piety and luxury

September 2 The Valois Courts (II)

Readings:

Porras, *Art of the Northern Renaissance*, 23-32.

James Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: 2005), 30-48.

#### Week 3

September 7 Making paintings in the 15<sup>th</sup> century

September 9 *The Ghent Altarpiece* and the hallmarks of Northern Renaissance painting

**Critical reading exercise: Harbison reading**

Readings:

Susie Nash, *Northern Renaissance Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 204-209.

Craig Harbison, *The Art of the Northern Renaissance* (London: Laurence King.), 25-27, 31-33, 38-42, 47-53.

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*, 87-94.

#### Week 4

September 14 Jan van Eyck: symbols and illusions

September 16 Rogier van der Weyden: piety, drama and emotions

Readings:

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*, 100-104; 118-128.

#### Week 5

September 21 Flanders in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century: faith and civic society

September 23 Hans Memling in Bruges: art of devotion in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century

Readings:

Porras, *Art of the Northern Renaissance*, 68-80.

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*, 197-202.

#### Week 6

September 28 **Test 1 (on-line; class will not meet in person)**

September 30 Joos van Ghent and Hugo van der Goes: Netherlandish art and/in Italy

Readings:

Nash, *Northern Renaissance Art*, 102-105; 121-127.

Harbison, *Art of the Northern Renaissance*, 53-60.

#### Week 7

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

October 7 Rhineland and Germany: Painting

Readings:

Andrée Hayum, "The Meaning and Function of the Isenheim Altarpiece: The Hospital Context Revisited," *Art Bulletin* 59 (1977): 501-517.

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*, 215-222.

#### Week 8

October 12 **Tuesday classes do not meet this week**

October 14 Rhineland and Germany: Limewood sculpture

Readings:

Nash, *Northern Renaissance Art*, 215-225.

Porras, *Art of the Northern Renaissance*, 128-132.

#### Week 9

October 19 Print Culture: impact of a new technology

**Paper outline due**

October 21 Albrecht Dürer: rising status of the artist

Readings:

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

Porras, *Art of the Northern Renaissance*, 131-136.

#### Week 10

October 26 Albrecht Dürer as printmaker  
October 28 **Class cancelled (instructor at conference)**

Readings:

Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *Dürer* (London: Phaidon, 2012), excerpt.

### Week 11

November 2 Landscapes and witches: new subjects in art

November 4 The Protestant Reformation and its impact on art

Readings:

*Malleus Maleficarum* (*Hammer of the Witches*, 1487), excerpts.

Porras, *Art of the Northern Renaissance*, 149-162.

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*, 351-367.

### Week 12

November 9 **Test 2 (online; class will not meet in person)**

November 11 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.

### Week 13

November 16 The Netherlands under the Habsburg rulers

November 18 Hieronymus Bosch’s demons

**Paper due**

Readings:

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

Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *The Northern Renaissance* (London: Phaidon, 2004), 333-340.

Porras, *Art of the Northern Renaissance*, 122-128.

### Week 14

November 23 The Lure of Italy: classicism in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Netherlands

November 25 **Thanksgiving break**

Readings:

Harbison, *The Art of the Northern Renaissance*, 160-67.

### Week 15

November 30 Pieter Bruegel the Elder

December 2 Review

Readings:

Primary sources on Bruegel, in Stechow ed., *Northern Renaissance Art*, 36-41.

Smith, *Northern Renaissance*, 345-350.

### Exam period

**December 9 Final Exam (online)**