

ARTH 343 Spring 2022  
**The Art of Venice**  
MW 12 – 1:15, Music & Theater 1007

Instructor: Prof. Angela Ho  
Email: [aho5@gmu.edu](mailto:aho5@gmu.edu)  
Office: Horizon 3143  
Office hours: Tuesday 1 – 2 pm (virtual only)  
Wednesday 2 – 3 pm (virtual or in-person)  
Thursday 12 – 2 pm (virtual only)

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 studies Venetian society and culture through the visual arts. Venice was a center of maritime trade in the late medieval and early modern Europe. Situated on the northeast coast of Italy, Venice was a hub for merchants, pilgrims, diplomats, soldiers, and sailors traveling around the Mediterranean region. These encounters shaped Venice’s rich visual and material culture, which integrated features from other parts of Italy, northern Europe, the Byzantine Empire, Ottoman Turkey, North Africa, and Classical Greece and Rome into a distinctive aesthetic. In this course, we will study the major monuments (e.g., the church of San Marco and the Ducal Palace) and the celebrated artists (e.g., the Bellini family, Titian, Palladio, and Tiepolo). We will also consider other media that are often left out of art history surveys but were equally important to Venetian art, including the city’s famous glass production, luxury textile industry, print and publishing, and mosaics. We will examine these eclectic art forms in relation to the city’s geography, trade, contacts with foreign cultures, as well as class and gender hierarchies. Lectures, discussions, and assignments are designed to help students situate works of art within their historical context and develop the skills of visual analysis, critical reading, and writing. ARTH 343 fulfills the Mason Core requirement in the Arts.

### **Learning Objectives**

This course is designed to help students not only to gain a familiarity with the major monuments and artists of late medieval and early modern Venice, but also to consider topics of broader relevance, such as the value and functions of art in society. In this semester you will:

- Consider relationship between the physical environment and artistic processes. In the case of Venice, how did the fact that the city was built on islands in a lagoon affect both the materials and designs of its art and architecture?
- Examine the functions of artworks in their original social and cultural contexts (religious, courtly, civic, commercial, etc.).
- Consider the creative solutions artists adopted to produce a work that fulfilled those functions.
- Study the effects of cross-cultural encounters—in war, diplomacy, trade, and travel—on artistic production.

- Learn to analyze formal elements of art objects using the appropriate art historical vocabulary.
- Learn to read primary and secondary sources critically.
- Develop the skills of presenting 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.

### **Textbook and Readings**

There are no required textbooks for this course. For those who would like to purchase general reference books on Venetian art, I recommend these two titles:

- Brown, Patricia Fortini. *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1997 [There is also a 2005 reissue of this title.]
- Howard, Deborah. *The Architectural History of Venice*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Unfortunately, both books are out of print, but used copies should be available on Amazon or at used books stores.

All required readings will be posted on Blackboard each week. These include texts on historical context, studies of particular artists, or discussions of methods and viewpoints in art history. We will discuss these texts in class, so please complete the readings assigned for the specific day before coming to class.

### **Course Requirements**

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Attendance and participation | 5%  |
| Reading analysis             | 5%  |
| Test 1                       | 20% |
| Test 2                       | 20% |
| Paper: stage 1               | 5%  |
| Paper: stage 2               | 20% |
| Final exam                   | 25% |

### **Attendance and participation**

It is important that you attend class regularly and on time. 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, 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.

### Reading analysis

You are asked to write an analysis of the Marin Sanudo reading assigned for week 2 (due in 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 (all take-home). The focus of these exams will be your ability to discuss major monuments and the themes introduced in lectures and readings. All exams will involve short essays on works of art and/or readings, as well as longer essays on thematic topics. Detailed guidelines on format and instructions for submission will be provided over the course of the semester.

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

### Paper

The paper assignment involves a proposal for a themed exhibition and wall texts for three paintings. All works are to be selected from the collection of the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. You will complete the paper in two stages. The first submission (a brief description of the theme of the exhibition and a list of selected works) is due on March 23 and the second submission (a proposal for the exhibition and wall texts for the works) on April 20. Detailed instructions for the assignment will be provided later in the semester.

In the interest of fairness, papers **MUST** be uploaded to Blackboard 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:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| January 31, 2022 | Last day to add a class                           |
| February 7       | Last day to drop a class with 100% tuition refund |
| February 14      | Last day to drop with 50% tuition refund          |

February 15 – March 1  
March 2 – April 11

Unrestricted withdrawal period (no tuition refund)  
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.

### **Tech requirements and policy**

- 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.

### **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 (<https://writingcenter.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](#) 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 changes)

### Week 1

January 24 Venezianità: the “Otherness” of Venice

January 26 The City on the Lagoon: Geography, Ecology, and Visual Culture

Readings:

- Patricia Fortini Brown, “Venezianità: The Otherness of the Venetians,” in *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice* (New York: Abrams, 1997), 9-19.
- Paul Hills, “Living on a Lagoon,” in *Venetian Colour* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 1-21.

### Week 2

January 31 Origins and the Myths of Venice

February 2 Venice and the Byzantine Empire

Readings:

- Marin Sanudo, “Praise of the City of Venice, 1493,” in David Chambers and Brian S. Pullan, eds., *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450-1630* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 4-21.
- Deborah Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 14-28.

### Week 3

February 7 Appropriations and *Spolia* in San Marco

February 9 The Doge’s Palace and the Imagery of the State

***Reading analysis due on Blackboard by 11:59 pm***

Readings:

- Deborah Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 14-28; 90-96.
- Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice*, 65-89.
- Selections on the Venetian government from *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450-1630*, eds. David Chambers and Brian S. Pullan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 41-43, 46-47, 61-62.

### Week 4

February 14 Venice and the Ottoman Empire: Rivals and Trading Partners

February 16 Venice and the Ottomans II; test 1 review

Readings:

- Deborah Howard, “Venice, the Bazaar of Europe,” in *Bellini and the East*, eds. Caroline Campbell and Alan Chong (London and New York: Yale University Press, 2005), 10-35.
- Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice*, 19-26.

### Week 5

February 21 Prime Real Estate: Mansions on the Grand Canal

February 23 **Take-home Test 1 (due 11:59 pm). Class does not meet.**

Readings:

- Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice*, 96-110.
- Loren Partridge, *Art of Renaissance Venice 1400 – 1600* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 71-76.

### **Week 6**

February 28 Dress, Rituals and Identities in Urban Spaces

March 2 Ladies, Nuns, Courtesans: Gender Categories in Venetian Society

Readings:

- Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice*, 143-154.
- Dennis Romano, “Gender and the Urban Geography of Renaissance Venice,” *Journal of Social History* 23 (1989), 339-353.

### **Week 7**

March 7 Renaissance Painting in 15<sup>th</sup>-century Venice: Patronage and Production

March 9 Venetian *scuole* and Narrative Painting

Readings:

- Peter Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven and Longon: Yale University Press, 1995), 71-89.

### **Week 8**

March 14 *Spring break*

March 16 *Spring break*

### **Week 9**

March 21 Transformations in the 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Venetian Altarpiece

March 23 Venetian *Colorito* in the Art of Giorgione and Titian

***Paper stage 1 due by 11:59 pm***

Readings:

- Frederick Ilchman, “Transformation of Venetian Painting around 1500,” in *Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese: Rivals in Renaissance Venice*, ed. Frederick Ilchman (Boston: MFA, 2009), 85-91.
- David Rosand, “Venetian Aesthetic and the *disegno-colorito* Controversy,” in *Painting in Sixteenth Century Venice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10-25.

### **Week 10**

March 28 Visual Poems: Inventions by Giorgione and Titian

March 30 Exporting Venetian Painting: Titian’s International Career

Readings:

- Paul Holberton, “The *pastorale* or *fête champêtre* in the early Sixteenth Century,” in Joseph Manca ed., *Titian 500* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1993), pp. 245-262.
- Partridge, *Art of Renaissance Venice 1400 – 1600*, 200-215; 233-236; 244-246.

### Week 11

April 4 "Age of Rivals" in Mid-16<sup>th</sup> Century: Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese

April 6 **Take-home Test 2 (due 11:59 pm). Class does not meet.**

Readings:

- Frederick Ilchman, "Venetian Painting in an Age of Rivals," in *Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese: Rivals in Renaissance Venice*, ed. Frederick Ilchman (Boston: MFA, 2009), 21-38.

### Week 12

April 11 Jacopo Tintoretto's Work for the *Scuole*

April 13 Theater and Elegance in the Art of Paolo Veronese

Readings:

- David Rosand, "Action and Piety in Tintoretto's Religious Pictures," in *Painting in Sixteenth Century Venice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 134-153.
- Partridge, *Art of Renaissance Venice 1400 – 1600*, 284-288.

### Week 13

April 18 Claiming the Classical Heritage in Architecture: Jacopo Sansovino

April 20 Claiming the Classical Heritage in Architecture: Andrea Palladio

**Paper stage 2 due by 11:59 pm**

Readings:

- Howard, *The Architectural History of Venice*, pp. 190-208.

### Week 14

April 25 Repetition and Renewal: Legacy of the Venetian Renaissance in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century

April 27 Giovanni Battista Tiepolo: Spectacles for a Republic in Decline

- David Posner, "Tiepolo and the Artistic Culture of Eighteenth-Century Europe," in Keith Christiansen ed., *Giambattista Tiepolo, 1696-1770* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), pp. 19-28.

### Week 15

May 2 Painting for the (Grand) Tourist

May 4 Conclusions and Review

- Bruce Redford, *Venice and the Grand Tour* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 90, 93, 96-102.
- Thomas F. Madden, *Venice: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2012), 340-353.

May 16 **Take-home Final Exam (due by 11:59 pm)**