

ARTH 400/600 Fall 2023
Methods and Research in Art History
Tuesday 4:30, Aquia 213

Instructor: Dr. Angela Ho
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Office: Horizon 3143
Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30 – 4 (in person or virtual)
Wednesday 12:30 – 2 (in person or virtual)

Please make an appointment on Navigate: <https://gmucampus.eab.com/pal/LV1F64TukI>. If you cannot meet during my office hours, please email me to make other arrangements.

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-class and online discussions.

Course Objectives

In this course, you will

- recognize, understand, and employ art historical methods;
- develop critical reading and thinking skills;
- examine how historical and cultural contexts inform the interpretation of art;
- develop methodological self-awareness in your research and writing.

Course Format and Requirements

This course will be run as a seminar. I will provide background information or explanations when appropriate, but the bulk of the class sessions will be devoted to critical discussions of assigned readings. Your engagement with ideas presented in classes and readings, and your ability to apply them, will be assessed based on your participation in discussion, weekly comments and questions about the readings, response papers, and a final project (oral presentation and paper). 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.

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. Comments and questions (about 200 words each week) on weekly readings (please see page 9 for details);

2. Two 3- to 4-page response papers on assigned readings of your choice (please see page 9 for details);
3. A final paper of 8 to 10 pages. Submit a draft by November 18 and the final paper by December 12.

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.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and participation:	20%
Weekly comments and questions:	20%
Response papers:	20%
Presentation:	10%
Final paper:	30%

Grading scale

A+ (98-100)	A (93-97)	A- (90-92)	Outstanding and exceptional level of work
B+ (87-89)	B (83-86)	B- (80-82)	Good to very good level of work
C+ (77-79)	C (73-76)	C- (70-72)	Satisfactory to average level of work
D (60-69)			Below average work – marginally acceptable
F (below 60)			Unacceptable work of poor quality or quantity

Textbook and Readings

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 help guide you through the theoretical texts. In order to get the most out of this course, it is essential that you complete the assigned readings **BEFORE** you come to class.

Participation

In a seminar, learning happens when we are discussing readings and visual materials. Attendance and informed participation in class discussions are therefore required of all students. Your starting attendance/participation grade (i.e., you attend all class meetings but do not participate in discussions, or do not give any indication that you have done the readings) will be a C+. You build on that grade with informed contributions to class discussions.

If you cannot attend class due to medical reasons or other emergencies, I would be happy to meet with you 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, 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 in class sessions. Constructive comments and criticism are welcome, but please be mindful of and respect one another's views.

Weekly Comments and Questions

From weeks 2–5, 7, 9–13, choose 7 weeks to submit short responses (around 200 words) to the readings. Please post your response on Blackboard by 3:30 pm on the day we discuss the relevant topic in class. Please see page 9 for further instructions. Just to be clear, you are expected to do all the readings for all 10 weeks, whether you choose to write a post or not.

Response Papers

Out of the 7 weekly postings, choose 2 (3 for ARTH 600 students) to expand into longer, more formal response papers. **At least one (two for ARTH 600) must be on readings from before week 12.** Upload response papers to Blackboard the week *after* we discuss the relevant topic. Please see page 9 for specific instructions.

Final Paper

For the final project for this course, you are asked to write a historiographic analysis of a topic of your choice. You will present your project to the class on November 21 or November 28. The final paper will be due by the end of the day on December 12. Submit your final paper electronically to Blackboard.

A note about presentations: this is an opportunity for you to get feedback from your colleagues before you finalize the paper. It will also give all of you a chance to learn from each other. Attendance at all presentations is mandatory. For each presentation you miss, you will incur a 5% penalty from your final paper grade. So, for example, if you miss an entire session with 5 presentations, the starting grade for your final paper will be 75% (C).

PLEASE NOTE: In the interest of fairness, papers 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.

Religious Holidays

Please consult the George Mason religious holiday calendar here: <https://ulife.gmu.edu/religious-holiday-calendar/>

If religious observances will require an adjustment to your course schedule, please let me know within the first two weeks of class.

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. Be sure to plan ahead, because the Writing Center is very busy near the end of the semester.

Standards of Academic integrity

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. We need to follow three fundamental principles at all times: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. Please consult the [Office for Academic Integrity](#) for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. Strict adherence to the Honor Code as defined in the undergraduate catalogue is expected. Plagiarism and all other instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Honor Committee, and may result in a failing grade for the course.

Students with disabilities

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. Under the administration of University Life, Disability Services implements and coordinates reasonable accommodations and disability-related services that afford equal access to university programs and activities. Students can begin the registration process with Disability Services at any time during their enrollment at George Mason University. If you are seeking accommodations, please visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

If you qualify for accommodation, the [ODS](#) staff will give you a form detailing appropriate accommodations for your instructor. Please provide me with this form as soon as possible.

Diversity

George Mason University values the diversity of its students. The University's Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Multicultural Education (ODIME) seeks to create and sustain inclusive learning environments where all are welcomed, valued, and supported. Harmful or hateful behavior will not be tolerated.

Proper Etiquette for our Course

Rules of respect and etiquette are important in this course. Some of the material we will deal with in this class may be controversial, and in some cases, politically loaded or difficult. Each student is expected to treat their fellow students and Instructor with respect, and treat all persons fairly and kindly. Our classroom is a safe, open space for the exchange and debate of ideas. Please respect your fellow students and listen to everyone's comments. Please do your part to help us maintain a supportive, amicable and also challenging place for learning.

Student Privacy

Student privacy is governed by Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from or send messages to a non-Mason email address. For Mason's policy on student privacy, please see <https://registrar.gmu.edu/ferpa/>

Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Interpersonal Violence

George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students and employees who believe that they have been sexually harassed, sexually assaulted or subjected to sexual or interpersonal misconduct to seek assistance and support. Please consult [University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct](#) for the specifics of Mason's process, the resources, and the options available to students and employees.

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual or interpersonal misconduct: As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Non-Confidential Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, complicity, and retaliation to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

Add-drop deadlines

Please note the following add-drop deadlines:

August 28	Last day to add a class
September 5	Last day to drop a class (100% tuition refund)
September 12	Last day to drop (50% tuition refund)
September 13 – 26	Unrestricted withdrawal period (NO tuition refund)
September 27 – October 23	Selective withdrawal period (NO tuition refund)
<i>Only for undergraduate students</i>	

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

SCHEDULE

(You will be notified in advance of any changes)

Week 1 August 22

Introduction

- Hatt and Klonk, "Introduction" and "Preview."

Week 2 August 29

Hegel and Art History

- Moxey, Keith. "Art History's Hegelian Unconscious." In *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives*, 25-51. Edited by Mark A. Cheetham et al. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- 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. [OPTIONAL]

Week 3 September 5

Style and Connoisseurship

- Berenson, Bernard. *Rudiments of Connoisseurship*, 111-148. New York: Schocken Books, 1962 (originally published in 1902).
- Morelli, Giovanni. "Italian Painters." Excerpts in *Eric Fernie, ed., Art History and its Methods*, 103-115. London, 1995.
- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 4.

Week 4 September 12

Formalism

- 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.
- Riegl, Alois. "Leading Characteristics of the Late Roman 'Kunstwollen.'" (1893) In *The Art of Art history: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi, 169-175. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 5.

Week 5 September 19

Iconography and Iconology

- Panofsky, Erwin. *Studies in Iconology*, 3-17. New York: Icon Editions, 1972.
- Panofsky, Erwin. "Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait*." *Burlington Magazine* 64 (1934): 117-119; 122-127.
- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 6.

Week 6 September 26

Library session

Discussion of final paper project and presentation by Stephanie Grimm, Art and Art History Librarian at Mason.

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

Week 7 October 3

Social history and Marxism

- 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.
- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 7.

Week 8 October 10

Tuesday classes do not meet this week.

Week 9 October 17

Feminism and gender theory

Bibliography for final paper due

- 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*, selections. Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1988.
- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 8.

Week 10 October 24

Semiotics

- Bal, Mieke, and Norman Bryson. "Semiotics and Art History." *Art Bulletin* 73 (1991): 174-188.
- Krauss, Rosalind. "In the Name of Picasso." In *The Originality of the Avant-garde and other Modernist Myths*, 23-40. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985.
- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 10.

Week 11 October 31

Postcolonialism

- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*, 49-73. 25th anniversary ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
- Coombes, Annie E. "Inventing the 'Postcolonial': Hybridity and Constituency in Contemporary Curating." *New Formations* (1992): 39-52.
- Hatt and Klonk, chapter 11.

Week 12 November 7

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.
- Gerritsen, Anne, and Giorgio Riello. "Introduction." In *Writing Material Culture History*, 1-13. Edited by Anne Gerrisen and Giorgio Riello. London: Bloomsburg Academic, 2015.
- Holmes, Megan. *The Miraculous Image in Renaissance Florence*, 163-77; 272-77. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

Week 13 November 14

Globalism

- Dean, Carolyn. "The Trouble with (the Term) Art." *Art Journal* 65 (2006): 24-32.
- Farago, Claire. "The 'Global Turn' in Art History: Why, When, and How does it Matter?" In *The Globalization of Renaissance Art: A Critical Review*, 299-313. Edited by Daniel Savoy, 299-313. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017.

****Draft of final paper due on November 18, 11:59 pm. Please upload to Blackboard.***

Week 14 November 21

Presentations

Week 15 November 28

Presentations

****Final paper due on December 12, 11:59 pm. Please upload to Blackboard.***

Weekly Readings, Comments and Questions, Response Papers

The goal of these assignments 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 information 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?
- What evidence does the author use to support his/her arguments and how does s/he do so?
- Do you find the argument effective? Why or why not? How do the conclusions compare with other readings you have encountered?

Weekly Comments and Questions

Gather your thoughts and observations into a short essay (about 200 words) and post it to Blackboard. Identify the main arguments of a reading and—if appropriate—pose questions about the parts that you find particularly difficult. 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 your active engagement with the readings. Demonstrate your understanding of the readings, but feel free to also pose questions about them. From the weeks for which we have common assigned readings, choose 7 to post your comments and questions.

Response papers

For two (three for ARTH 600) of those weeks, you are asked to write a longer response paper on the readings (about 4 pages). Turn in the response paper the 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 a week after I send you my feedback. One (two for graduate students) of the papers must be on readings from before week 12.

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

If you draw on your classmates' postings 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.