

ARTH 341 Spring 2024
Renaissance Art in Northern Europe
Tuesday and Thursday, 3 – 4:15 pm
Art and Design L008

Instructor: Dr. Angela Ho
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Office: Horizon Hall 3143
Office Hours: Tuesday 10:30 am – 12 noon (in-person or virtual)
Wednesday 3 – 4:30 pm (virtual only)

Please use [this link](#) to make an appointment with me on [Navigate Mason](#). If you cannot meet during my office hours, please email me to make other arrangements.

Course Description

The astonishing lifelikeness of Jan van Eyck's paintings, the technical virtuosity of Albrecht Dürer's prints, and the careful observations of Pieter Bruegel's depictions of peasants exemplify the art of Northern Europe during the Renaissance. This course examines how these creations were produced in a period marked by plagues, war, and religious upheaval. We will study the role played by visual images in spiritual practices, and how the Protestant Reformation brought radical changes. We will study the aristocratic courts as centers of artistic patronage and the rise of the art market in prosperous towns. Artistic innovations, including the new technology of print and emergence of new subjects, will be another focus. We will also consider the emerging cultural ideas that elevated artists to the status of supremely gifted creators. 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 required readings will be available as PDFs or links to online publications on [Blackboard](#). 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 2 pages 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.

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

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 paper is due. You may also consider consulting the Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>).

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, 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.

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 <https://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 note that this form must be provided to me at least two weeks before the first test.

Diversity

George Mason University values the diversity of its students. This class seeks to create and sustain an inclusive learning environment where all are welcomed, valued, and supported. Harmful or hateful behavior will not be tolerated. Please see [The Center for Culture, Equity, and Empowerment](#) for diversity at Mason.

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 Mason 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:

January 23, 2024	Last day to add a class
January 30	Last day to drop a class (100% tuition refund)
February 6	Last day to drop (50% tuition refund)
February 7 – 20	Unrestricted withdrawal period (NO tuition refund)
February 1 – March 25	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.

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Schedule

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

Week 1

January 16 Introduction: defining “the Northern Renaissance”

January 18 How to talk and write about art

Readings:

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

Week 2

January 23 The Valois Courts: piety and luxury

January 25 The Valois Courts (II)

Readings:

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

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

Week 3

January 30 Making paintings in the 15th century

February 1 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, 2005), 25-27, 31-33, 38-42. **[This is also the reading for your reading analysis assignment]**

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

Week 4

February 6 Jan van Eyck: symbols and illusions

February 8 Rogier van der Weyden: piety, drama and emotions

Readings:

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*, 100-104 (Van Eyck); 118-128 (Van der Weyden).

Week 5

February 13 Flanders in the mid-15th century: faith and civic society

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

February 15 Hans Memling in Bruges: art of devotion in the late 15th century

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

Week 6

February 20 **Test 1**

February 22 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

February 27 The French Court in the 15th century

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

February 29 Rhineland and Germany: Painting

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

Week 8

March 5 *Spring Break*

March 7 *Spring Break*

Week 9

March 12 Rhineland and Germany: Limewood sculpture

Readings:

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

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

March 14 Print Culture: impact of a new technology

Paper outline due

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

Week 10

March 19 Albrecht Dürer: rising status of the artist

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

March 21 ***Class cancelled (instructor at conference)***

Week 11

March 26 Albrecht Dürer as printmaker

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

March 28 Landscapes and witches: new subjects in art

Readings:

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

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

Week 12

April 2 **Test 2**

April 4 The Protestant Reformation and its impact on art

Reading:

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

Week 13

April 9 Reformation II: Lucas Cranach and Hans Holbein

Reading:

Review Porras reading from April 2.

April 11 Hieronymus Bosch's demons; **Paper due**

Readings:

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

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

Week 14

April 16 Bosch (II)

Reading:

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

April 18 The Lure of Italy: classicism in 16th-century Netherlands

Reading:

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

Week 15

April 23 Pieter Bruegel the Elder

Readings:

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

Honig, Elizabeth A. *Pieter Bruegel and the Idea of Human Nature*. London: Reaktion Books, 2019

April 25 Conclusions and Review

Exam period

May 2 Final Exam