

## **ARTH 599: Advanced Studies in Medieval or Islamic Art**

Theories of Art and the Image in the Middle Ages

Spring 2024

### **Professor Heidi Gearhart**

Office Hours: Mondays 2-4 pm, and by appointment

Horizon Hall 3260

Wednesdays 4:30–7:10 pm

Aquia Building 213

### **Course Description**

Was the European Middle Ages a dark era, a moment in which art had no theory? How did people think about art in the Middle Ages? Is the notion of “art theory” one that belongs solely to modern art? In this course we will consider these questions. We will look at how art was discussed in medieval texts from late antiquity to c. 1400, and examine art objects themselves for clues. We will consider, for example, what the medieval writers had to say about idolatry and the function of images. We will also study debates about the role of art in religious life, comparing for example the ascetic art of the Cistercians with extravagant luxurious art objects like the nearly life-size gem-studded reliquary of Sainte Foy. We will also consider medieval notions of semiotics and reading, the role of technical knowledge, and the place of art in medieval systems of learning, particularly in relation to the liberal arts. The course will be built around primary and secondary source readings, class discussion, and a substantial research paper.

### **Learning Objectives:**

In this course, students will develop reading, research, and writing skills, while learning about notions of art in the Middle Ages, particularly in Europe. Through class participation and work done during and beyond class hours, students should strive to:

- Understand current problems and questions in the field of medieval art
- Demonstrate knowledge of medieval objects and architecture and its cultural context
- Critically assess texts and analyze objects and architecture
- Gain familiarity with key art historical and primary sources
- Through written and oral communication, synthesize and analyze specific problems of artistic production
- Develop original ideas and research on our topic and produce a written analysis

### **Evaluation:**

Attendance and Participation	15%
Comments and Questions on the Readings (c. 150 words weekly)	15%
Short Paper 1: “Where Are You?” (1000 words due Feb. 7)	10%
Short Paper 2: “Where Shall We Go?” (1000 words due March 13)	10%
Final Paper Abstract and Bibliography (2 pages, due April 3)	10%
Presentation (April 10, 17 or 24, individual schedule TBA)	10%
Final Paper (3000 words, due May 1)	30%

In order to pass this course you will have to keep up with lectures and assigned readings, and complete all assignments. Participation in class discussion is critical.

**Readings:**

Readings for this class will be available through the library e-reserves on Blackboard/Leganto. Readings will form the basis for discussion each class and are required. Your participation grade will depend on your completion of the readings and your discussion of them in class.

**Attendance:**

Attendance at meetings is **required**. More than two unexcused absences will cause your participation grade to drop. (After two absences every additional missed class will lower your participation grade by half a letter.)

**Participation:**

Participation grades will be as follows:

A: Excellent. Consistent attendance and participation in discussion, demonstrates understanding and effort with regard to weekly readings comments are productive, making connections to other students' points and to other parts of the course, positive contributions to class discussion and environment.

B: Good. Consistent attendance and occasional participation, demonstrates completion of weekly readings, makes a positive contribution to class discussion and environment.

C: Needs Improvement. Poor class attendance and does not participate, doesn't keep up with reading, and does not contribute positively to the class.

D/F: Unsatisfactory. Poor class attendance, disrupts discussion or does not allow other students to learn, or negatively contributes to class.

Please note: Technological devices may only be used in relation to the class. Use of a technological device for non-course related reasons during class negatively affects the entire classroom and will lower your participation grade by two letter grades. The only exception is for university emergency alerts.

**Comments and Questions on the Readings (c. 150 words weekly)**

Each week write out c. 150 words about the readings. You may summarize what you've read, and make note of things that you thought were interesting or things with which you disagreed. Be sure to include at least one question to bring up in class.

You may write it by hand or on Blackboard in the designated Reading Journal, but be sure to bring what you've written to class each week. By the end of the semester you should have ten weeks' worth of notes. You will receive one grade for your notes at the end of the semester.

**Short Papers:**

You must submit two short papers during the semester (1000 words/3 pages each), which will reflect

further on the readings of the course, and through which you will begin to develop a research theme. These papers will also help you learn different stages and types of writing.

Your first paper, “Where Are You?”, will be 3 pages (1000 words) and due Feb. 7. For this paper, you will be asked to build on your reading notes and your notes from class discussion and reflect on one week’s reading. Summarize the reading you have chosen and evaluate the argument therein. What do you think worked about this article and what didn’t? Do you agree or disagree with the author? If you agree, explain why you think the argument was convincing. If you disagree, explain what you found unconvincing. Finally, what did you learn? What questions do you still have? By examining an article, writing a summary of it, assessing its argument, and reflecting on what you have learned from it and what questions you still have, this assignment enriches your understanding of the field and the questions at stake. It also asks you to reflect on what you have learned, and thus guides you in writing as a way to learn.

Your second paper, “Where Shall We Go?” will be 3 pages (1000 words) and due March 13. In this paper, you will build on the skills you learned in Paper 1 and start to develop a research question. Taking two readings from the course thus far, identify the arguments presented by the authors and assess the evidence they use. What are they examining? What are they leaving out? Focus your paper around a written argument that proposes what you think needs to be done next. Explain to your audience what scholars have already addressed and the lacunae that you see, to justify your new idea. This writing assignment will help you analyze what you read, develop a potential research question, and communicate your findings to an audience.

#### **Presentations:**

During the last weeks of classes, each student will present their research project to the class. Presentations will take place on **April 10, April 17 and April 24**. Presentations should be about fifteen minutes long, with slides. In your presentation, you’ll want to follow roughly the same guidelines as your paper: introduce your topic, discuss the existing literature and frame your contribution and argument within it, and give a brief outline of what you will discuss in your paper. Next, you may either give an overview of your examples, or an in-depth discussion of one example. There will be ten minutes of discussion and questions following each presentation. Your goal is to communicate clearly to the class the aims and argument of your project, and how it fits with existing literature. This is an assignment that will help you develop skills in writing to communicate.

#### **Final Papers:**

All students are to submit a final paper for this course (3000 words) which will be submitted via Blackboard, and due by **11.59 pm Monday May 1**.

We will discuss how to organize and research your paper during class on Feb. 28 and March 13.

**An abstract and bibliography** are due at **11.59 pm April 3**. Write a short abstract (c. 250 words) outlining your research question for your paper. Include a bibliography with at least six sources.

#### **Deadlines:**

Deadlines are important. All submissions are due via Blackboard by 11.59 pm on the due date. If you need an extension you must contact me 24 hours before the deadline to request more time. If you do not submit an assignment your grade will be a zero.

If you wish an exemption for religious holidays you must contact me within the first two weeks of the semester with the appropriate dates.

**Evaluation:**

Your work will be evaluated as follows:

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 – very poor quality or quantity

**Important University Deadlines:**

Last Day to Add	Tues. Jan. 23
Last Day to Drop (with 100% tuition refund)	Tues. Jan. 30
Last Day to Drop (with 50% tuition refund)	Tues. Feb. 6
Unrestricted Withdrawal (100% tuition liability)	Wed. Feb. 7–Tues. Feb. 20
Selective Withdrawal (Undergrad only; 100% tuition liability)	Wed. Feb. 21–Mon. March 25

**GMU Calendar:**

For further information regarding these dates and other University deadlines, please consult the University calendar: [https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/spring\\_2024/](https://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/spring_2024/)

**Proper Etiquette for Course:**

Our class is a space for everyone to learn. Each student is expected to treat their fellow students and Instructor with utmost respect, and treat all persons fairly and kindly. For further guidelines see <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

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. We want our class to be a supportive, amicable and also challenging place for learning. We are all in this together!

Just a note – when you send an email, please remind me of your full name and which class you are in. Also, please let me know how best to address you. I use she/her for myself and you may address me as Dr. Gearhart in email and verbally.

**Technological Requirements:**

This class will be taught in person, but readings will be accessed through Blackboard, and assignments will be submitted through Blackboard as well. Please make sure that you have appropriate bandwidth to access files, and can log in to the course on Blackboard regularly.

*A GMU email address is required for this course.* All communication will be through Blackboard and GMU email only.

**GMU Recommendations for Software:**

This course uses Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the [myMason Portal](#). See [supported browsers and operating systems](#). Log in to [myMason](#) to access your registered courses.

*Nota Bene:* If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

**GMU Policy on Academic Integrity:**

At George Mason University, Academic Integrity is demonstrated in our work, community, the classroom and research. We maintain this commitment to high academic standards through Mason's Honor Code. It is an agreement made by all members of our community to not "cheat, steal, plagiarize, or lie in matters related to your academic work." Students sign an agreement to adhere to the Honor Code on their application for admission to Mason and are responsible for being aware of the most current version of the code.

The Honor Code Pledge reads as follows:

***To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University Community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set for this Honor Code: Student Members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.***

The Honor Committee is selected to promote academic integrity as a core value for our university community. Members of the committee serve on hearing panels established to investigate and resolve alleged violations of the Honor Code. Undergraduate and graduate students at Mason are subject to the university Honor Code. Mason's law school, the Scalia School of Law, has an Honor Committee that is independent from the rest of the University's Honor Committee. Questions about cases brought by the Scalia School of Law should be referred to that committee.

In addition, Mason has an office that deals with issues around research misconduct. Those incidents are investigated through the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance. As it states in policy 4007, "Allegations of academic misconduct against graduate students are governed solely by the university's honor code, except for 1) research activities as defined above regardless of sponsorship; and 2) master's theses and doctoral dissertations, both of which are governed by this policy. Allegations of academic misconduct against undergraduate students are governed solely by the university honor code, except for sponsored research activities which are governed by this policy." For more information, visit the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance website at <https://rdia.gmu.edu/topics-of-interest/research-misconduct/>.

This link provides the full text of the GMU Honor Code:

<https://oai.gmu.edu/full-honor-code-document/>

**GMU Policy on AI Text Generation and Academic Integrity**

We have multiple writing assignments in this class. Because the act of composing a response in your own words actually increases your learning, it is important that you complete the task yourself, rather than rely on an artificial intelligence (AI) tool. Completing these writing assignments yourself will help strengthen your performance in this class on later assignments and activities, as well as help you develop professionally and succeed in your career goals. You should also be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses; thus they do not produce text that meets the standards of this course. Furthermore, use of AI-generated text without proper attribution is a violation of academic integrity.

**Diversity:**

George Mason University values the diversity of its students. So do I. 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.

**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.

**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/>

**GMU Policy on 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. University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct speaks to 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](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).*

**From the GMU Disability Services Office:**

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](mailto:ods@gmu.edu) | Phone: (703) 993-2474. Please see the office website at <https://ds.gmu.edu> for further information.

**Other Student Services:**

Mason provides many services to help you learn. Take advantage of them! Here are a few:

- Keep Learning, Learning Services: [learningservices.gmu.edu/keeplearning/](https://learningservices.gmu.edu/keeplearning/)
- Online Education Services, University Libraries: [library.gmu.edu/for/online](https://library.gmu.edu/for/online)
- University Libraries: [library.gmu.edu](https://library.gmu.edu)
- The Writing Center: [writingcenter.gmu.edu](https://writingcenter.gmu.edu)
- Counseling and Psychological Services: [caps.gmu.edu](https://caps.gmu.edu)

## **SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS**

### **Week 1**

**Wednesday, Jan. 17**                      **Introduction to the Course**

### **Week 2**

**Wednesday, Jan. 24**                      **Justifications for art in Christian and Jewish Tradition**

Iafrate, Allegra. "A King of Small Things," *The Wandering Throne of Solomon: Objects and Tales of Kingship in the Medieval Mediterranean*. Leiden: Brill, 2015. 29–54.

#### **Primary Source Reading:**

Exodus 2: 2–17 (ten commandments)

1 Kings V.6–VII.51 (temple of Solomon)

Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars, Volume I: Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius, Caligula*, trans. John Carew Rolfe, LCL 31 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), book 2, ch. 28–29, p. 193. (Caesar Augustus)

Tertullian. "The Argument From Scripture." *Early Medieval Art, 300–1150. Sources and Documents*. Caecilia Davis-Weyer, ed. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1986. 3-6.

Minucius Felix. "A Philosophical Argument (c. 200)." *Early Medieval Art, 300–1150. Sources and Documents*. Caecilia Davis-Weyer, ed. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1986. 6-7.

*The Book of the Popes (Liber Pontificalis), to the pontificate of Gregory I*, Louise Ropes Loomis, ed. and trans. (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), 47. (Constantine, donations to Rome)

Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, trans. and ed. Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), book III, ch. 45, p. 138. (Helena)

### **Week 3**

**Wednesday, Jan. 31**                      **Semiotics and Medieval Sign Theory**

Beechy, Tiffany. "No ideas but in things: aesthetics and the flesh of the Word." *Aesthetics and the Incarnation in Early Medieval Britain: Materiality and the Flesh of the Word*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2023.

Chazelle, Celia. "Pictures, books, and the illiterate: Pope Gregory I's letters to Serenus of Marseilles." *Word & Image* 6 / 2 (1990): 138-153.

#### **Primary Source Reading:**

Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, excerpt



Gregory the Great, Letter to the Bishop Serenus of Marseilles. *Early Medieval Art, 300–1150. Sources and Documents*. Caecilia Davis-Weyer, ed. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1986. 47–48.

#### **Week 4**

**Wednesday, Feb. 7**

#### **Truth and Fiction**

Bawden, Tina. "Observations on the Topological Functions of Color in Early Medieval Christian Illuminated Manuscripts." *Clothing Sacred Scriptures: Book Art and Book Religion in Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Cultures*. David Ganz and Barbara Schellewald, eds. Manuscripta Biblica 2. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019. 187–203.

Bolman, E. S. "De Coloribus. The Meanings of Color in the Beatus Manuscript (Pierpont Morgan Library, 10th century illuminated manuscript of Beatus of Liebana's 'Commentarius in Apocalypsin')." *Gesta* 38 / 1 (1999): 22–34.

#### **Primary Source Reading:**

The Caroline Books: A Frankish Attack on Iconoclasm. *Early Medieval Art, 300–1150. Sources and Documents*. Caecilia Davis-Weyer, ed. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1986. 100–103.

Augustine. Art and Truth. *Early Medieval Art, 300–1150. Sources and Documents*. Caecilia Davis-Weyer, ed. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1986. 40–44.

#### **PAPER #1 DUE**

#### **Week 5**

**Wednesday, Feb. 14**

#### **Agency & Authorship**

Ackley, Joseph Salvatore. "Tuotilo caelator; Early Medieval Monastic Metalworking, and the Precious-Metal Book-cover of the Evangelium Longum (Cod. Sang. 53)." *Tuotilo: Archäologie eines Frühmittelalterlichen Künstlers*. David Ganz and Cornelia Dora, eds. St. Gall / Basel: Verlag am Klosterhof St. Gallen / Schwabe Verlag, 2017. 213–230.

Leturque, Anne. "The scope of competence of the painter and the patron in mural painting in the Romanesque period." *Romanesque Patrons and Processes: Design and Instrumentality in the Art and Architecture of Romanesque Europe*. Jordi Camps Sòria, et al., eds. London: Routledge, 2018. 313–325.

#### **Primary Source Reading:**

Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* (hereafter DDC). James F. Shaw, ed. and trans. Chicago: William Benton and Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952. 649 (book II, ch. 25).

Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume II: Books 9–15*, trans. Frank Justus Miller, rev. G. P. Goold. Loeb Classical Library 43 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916) 427 (book XV)

*Rule of Saint Benedict*, excerpt

*Vita of St. Eligius*, excerpt

**Week 6****Wednesday, Feb. 21****Technique and Craftsmanship**

Schatzberg, Eric. "The Discourse of Ars in the Latin Middle Ages." *Technology: Critical History of a Concept*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. 30–41.

Bryda, Gregory C. "The Exuding Wood of the Cross at Isenheim." *The Art Bulletin* 100 / 2 (2018): 6–36.

**Primary Source Reading:**

Theophilus, Prologue I

Rupert of Deutz, Divine Grace and Artistic Skill, 167–168.

*Life of St. Meinwerk*, excerpt

Pliny, On Glass, excerpt

**Week 7****Wednesday, Feb. 28****Rhetoric: Variety, Ornament, Simulation****Discussion of process for research paper, part I: Finding a Topic**

Schapiro, Meyer. "On the Aesthetic Attitude toward Romanesque Art," *Romanesque Art, selected papers*. New York: Braziller, 1977. 1-27.

Carruthers, Mary. "'Varietas': A Word of Many Colours," *Poetica* 41 / 1/2 (2009): 11–32

**Primary Source Reading:**

Theophilus, Prologue III

**Week 8****Wednesday, March 6****SPRING BREAK NO CLASS**

**Week 9****Wednesday, March 13****Gender****Discussion of process for research paper, part II: Organizing your paper**

Blamires, Alcuin. "Women and creative intelligence in medieval thought." *Voices in Dialogue: Reading Women in the Middle Ages*. Linda Olson and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, eds. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005. 213-230.

Castelli, Elizabeth. "'I Will Make Mary Male': Pieties of the Body and Gender Transformation of Christian Women in Late Antiquity." *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub, eds. New York: Routledge, 1991. 29-49.

**Primary Source Reading:**

Vita Saint Landrada, excerpt

Vita of Edith of Wilton, excerpt

Vita of Harlindis and Renildis of Maaseyck, excerpt

**PAPER #2 DUE****Week 10****Wednesday, March 20****Asceticism and Luxury**

Dale, Thomas E. A. "Monsters, Corporeal Deformities, and Phantasms in the Cloister of St-Michel-de-Cuxa." *The Art Bulletin* 83/3 (Sep., 2001) 402-436.

Rudolph, Conrad. "Bernard of Clairvaux's Apologia as a description of Cluny, and the controversy over monastic art." *Gesta* 37 / 1-2 (1988) 125-132.

**Primary Source Reading:**

Abbot Suger, *De administratione*, excerpt

Bernard of Clairvaux, *Apologia*, excerpt

**Week 11****Wednesday, March 27****Wonder and the Sublime**

Binski, Paul. "Reflections on the 'wonderful height and size' of gothic great churches and the medieval sublime. *Magnificence and the sublime in medieval aesthetics : art, architecture, literature, music*. C. Stephen Jaeger, ed. New York, NY : Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 129-156.

Jaeger, C. Stephen. "Richard of St. Victor and the medieval sublime." *Magnificence and the sublime in medieval aesthetics : art, architecture, literature, music*. C. Stephen Jaeger, ed. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 157-178.

**Primary Source Reading:**

Bernard of Clairvaux, Song of Songs, Sermon 834

Guillaume Durandi, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*

**Week 12**

**Wednesday, April 3**

**Naturalism and Affect**

Jung, Jacqueline. "From Motion to Emotion: Encounters with the Wise and Foolish Virgins." *Eloquent Bodies: Movement, Expression, and the Human Figure in Gothic Sculpture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020. 133–181.

Binski, Paul. "Figure and affect." *Gothic Sculpture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019.

**Primary Source Reading:**

Our Lady's Tumbler

**\*\*\*ARTH 599 ABSTRACTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE\*\*\***

**Week 13**

**Wednesday, April 10**

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Week 14**

**Wednesday, April 17**

**PRESENTATIONS**

**Week 15**

**Wednesday, April 24**

**PRESENTATIONS**

**\*\*\*FINAL PROJECTS DUE MAY 1 by 11.59 pm\*\*\***