ART HISTORY-VISUAL ARTS

Department Office: 826 Schermerhorn Hall; 212-854-4505
http://www.columbia.edu/cu/arthistory/

Director of Undergraduate Studies: Prof. Barry Bergdoll, bbg1@columbia.edu

Director of Art Humanities: Prof. Zoë Strother, zss1@columbia.edu

Coordinator for Undergraduate Programs: Emily Benjamin, eb3061@columbia.edu

The goal of the major in the Department of Art History and Archaeology is to explore the history of art, architecture, and archaeology across a broad historical, cultural, geographic, and methodological spectrum.

Department courses take advantage of the extraordinary cultural resources of New York City and often involve museum assignments and trips to local monuments. The department offers a major and concentration in art history and in the history and theory of architecture, and a combined major in art history and visual arts.

At the heart of the major is AHIS UN3000 INTRO LIT/METHODS OF ART HIST, which introduces students to different methodological approaches to art history and critical texts that have shaped the discipline. The colloquium also prepares students for the independent research required in seminars and advanced lecture courses, and should be taken during the junior year.

Surveys and advanced lecture courses offered by Barnard and Columbia cover the spectrum of art history from antiquity to the present and introduce students to a wide range of materials and methodologies. Limited-enrollment seminars have a narrower focus and offer intensive instruction in research and writing. The opportunity for advanced research with a senior thesis is available to students who qualify.

The major readily accommodates students who wish to study abroad during junior year. Courses taken at accredited programs can generally count as transfer credits toward the major, but students must gain the approval of the director of undergraduate studies. Similarly, any transfer credit for the major must be approved by the director of undergraduate studies. Generally no more than 12 points of transfer credit are applicable to the major. The form to petition for transfer credit can be found on the department website. Eligible Art History courses taken at Reid Hall and through the Berlin Consortium are counted as Columbia courses, not transfer courses.

All newly declared majors and concentrators should visit the department office and speak with the undergraduate program coordinator about the requirements and their planned curriculum.

The director of undergraduate studies regularly communicates with majors by e-mail to announce departmental events, museum internships, and other news. Students who do not receive these messages should email the undergraduate program coordinator. The director of undergraduate studies is also available to talk to students about their professional goals and plans to study abroad.

Course Information

Lectures
Attendance at the first class meeting is recommended.

Colloquia
For information about enrollment in the required colloquium AHIS UN3000 INTRO LIT/METHODS OF ART HIST, students should consult the department during the registration period in the semester prior to the one in which the course is offered. Interested students must sign up using an online form; majors will be informed of the sign-up dates and deadline via the majors mailing list. Enrollment is limited and admission is at the discretion of the instructor. It is recommended that students sign up for the colloquium in their junior year.

Seminars
Students must submit an application in order to be considered for enrollment in department seminars. These applications are due around the time of early registration (April for fall courses, November for spring courses). Interested students can apply using the Google form applications which are linked below each seminar description on the website, as well as in the “Notes” section of each Directory of Classes listing. Students should then join the SSOL wait-list for any seminars they have applied to.

Bridge Seminars
Bridge seminars are open to graduate and undergraduate students. Bridge seminars also require an application, which is due in the semester prior to the semester in which the course is offered (August for fall courses, December for spring courses). Interested students can apply using the Google form applications which are linked below each seminar description on the website, as well as in the “Notes” section of each Directory of Classes listing. Students should then join the SSOL wait-list for any seminars they have applied to.

Bridge Lectures
Bridge lectures are open to undergraduate and graduate students. They do not require an application.

Travel Seminar
In the spring, one or more undergraduate seminars in the Department of Art History and Archaeology may be designated as a travel seminar. Travel seminars receive funding to sponsor travel over the spring break to a distant site related to the subject matter of the seminar.

Study Abroad

Reid Hall, Paris
For information about the Columbia University in Paris Art History Program at Reid Hall, including summer session courses, visit the Office of Global Programs website.

Summer Program in Italy: Archaeological Fieldwork at Hadrian’s Villa
Columbia University offers a four-week summer program that provides undergraduate and graduate students with the opportunity to excavate and learn together at Hadrian’s Villa, a UNESCO World Heritage site near Rome and the most important Roman villa. It synthesizes Roman, Greek, and Egyptian architectural and artistic traditions and has attracted scholarly attention for centuries. For more information, visit the program website.

Columbia Summer Program in Venice
The Department of Art History and Archaeology and the Department of Italian offer a summer program based at Co’ Foscari University in Venice. The program uses an interdisciplinary approach to understanding Italian
culture through study of its language, literature/film, architecture, art history and conservation, and economy. Students have the opportunity to gain a deeper appreciation of the rich Venetian culture, traditions and history. The program is open to qualified undergraduate and graduate students from the U.S. and Italy. For more information, visit the program website.

Columbia Summer Program in Greece
The Department of Art History and Archaeology and the Program in Hellenic Studies offer a new summer program in Athens. "Curating the Histories of the Greek Present" examines aspects of Greek history and culture through the organization of an art exhibition under the general theme of the environment. The project is structured around classroom seminars, museum and site visits, walking tours, and workshop sessions in which students will learn about and gain experience in all stages of curating an exhibition. For more information, visit the program website.

Departmental Honors
In order to be considered for departmental honors, students must write a senior thesis and have a GPA of at least 3.7 in the major. The faculty of the Department of Art History and Archaeology submits recommendations to the College Committee on Honors, Awards, and Prizes for confirmation. Normally no more than 10% of graduating majors receive departmental honors in a given academic year.

Senior Thesis Prize
A prize is awarded each year to the best senior honors thesis written in the Department of Art History and Archaeology.

Professors
Alexander Alberro (Barnard)
Zainab Bahrani
Barry Bergdoll
Julia Bryan-Wilson
Michael Cole
Jonathan Crary
Francesco de Angelis
David Freedberg
Anne Higonnet (Barnard)
Kellie Jones
Branden W. Joseph
Holger A. Klein
Rosalind Krauss
Matthew McKelway
Jonathan Reynolds (Barnard)
Simon Schama
Avinoam Shalem
Zoë Strother

Assistant Professors
Gregory Bryda (Barnard)
Meredith Gamer
Eleonora Pistis
Michael J. Waters

Adjunct Faculty
Dawn Delbanco
Rosalyn Deutsche (Barnard)
John Rajchman

Lecturers
Frederique Baumgartner
Susannah Blair
Lucas Cohen
Sophia D'Addio
Alessandra di Croce
Xiaohan Du
Nicholas Fitch
Iheb Guermazi
Page Knox
Janet Kraynak
Sandrine Larrive-Bass
Martina Mims
Kent Minturn
Nicholas Morgan
Freda Murck
Irina Oryshkevich
Nina Rosenblatt
Susan Sivard
Leslie Tait
Stefaan Van Liefferinge
Caroline Wamsler
Leah Werier

Major in Art History and Visual Arts
Students electing the combined major should consult with a faculty adviser in the department, as well as with the director of undergraduate studies in the Visual Arts Department.

Up to two of the seven 3-point courses in art history may be replaced by a specifically related course in another department with approval of the adviser. The combined major requires fulfillment of sixteen or seventeen courses. It is recommended that students interested in this major begin work toward the requirements in their sophomore year.

The requirements for the major are as follows:

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<tr>
<th>AHIS W3895</th>
<th>Majors’ Colloquium: the Literature and Methods of Art History</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seven 3-point lecture courses in art history.</td>
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<td>At least one course in three of four historical periods, as listed below.</td>
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<td>An additional two courses drawn from at least two different world regions, as listed below.</td>
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<td>Two additional lectures of the student’s choice</td>
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21 points in Visual Arts covering:

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<tr>
<th>VIAR R1001</th>
<th>Basic Drawing</th>
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<td>VIAR R3330</td>
<td>Sculpture I</td>
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Five additional VIAR R3000-level or above course
The emphasis will be on France and Britain, with forays to Italy, Spain, Germany, India, America, and elsewhere.

AHIS UN2415 History Painting and Its Afterlives. 3.00 points.
This course will study the problematic persistence of history painting as a cultural practice in nineteenth century Europe, well after its intellectual and aesthetic justifications had become obsolete. Nonetheless, academic prescriptions and expectations endured in diluted or fragmentary form. We will examine the transformations of this once privileged category and look at how the representation of exemplary deeds and action becomes increasingly problematic in the context of social modernization and the many global challenges to Eurocentrism. Selected topics explore how image making was shaped by new models of historical and geographical time, by the invention of national traditions, and by the emergence of new publics and visual technologies. The relocation of historical imagery from earlier elite milieus into mass culture forms of early cinema and popular illustration will also be addressed.
AHIS GU4110 MODERN JAPANESE ARCHITECTURE. 3.00 points.
This course will examine Japanese architecture and urban planning from the mid-19th century to the present. We will address topics such as the establishment of an architectural profession along western lines in the late 19th century, the emergence of a modernist movement in the 1920's, the use of biological metaphors and the romanticization of technology in the theories and designs of the Metabolist Group, and the shifting significance of pre-modern Japanese architectural practices for modern architects. There will be an emphasis on the complex relationship between architectural practice and broader political and social change in Japan.

Fall 2023 Undergraduate and Bridge Seminars

UNDERGRADUATE SEMINARS: 3000-level courses. Open to undergraduate students only. Interested students must submit an online application (April deadline for fall courses, November deadline for spring courses). Visit the “Courses” page on the department website to find a list of undergraduate seminars and links to application forms.

BRIDGE SEMINARS: 4500-level courses. Open to graduate and advanced undergraduate students. Applications are due in August for fall courses, and January for spring courses. Visit the “Courses” page on the department website to find a list of bridge seminars and links to application forms.

AHIS UN3103 Roman Villas: The Art and Architecture of an Ancient Lifestyle. 4 points.

AHIS UN3319 The Architect’s Library-Laboratory. 4 points.
This seminar challenges the interpretation of architect’s libraries as static repositories of information, and it shows how they were in fact sorts of laboratories, in which architects experimented in both the creation of knowledge and the production of designs.

AHIS UN3413 NINETEENTH-CENTURY CRITICISM. 4.00 points.
Prerequisites: junior or senior standing, and the instructor’s permission. This course examines a diverse selection of social and aesthetic responses to the impacts of modernization and industrialization in nineteenth-century Europe. Using works of art criticism, fiction, poetry, and social critique, the seminar will trace the emergence of new understandings of collective and individual experience and their relation to cultural and historical transformations. Readings are drawn from Friedrich Schiller’s Letters On Aesthetic Education, Mary Shelley’s The Last Man, Thomas Carlyle’s “Signs of the Time,” poetry and prose by Charles Baudelaire, John Ruskin’s writings on art and political economy, Flora Tristan’s travel journals, J.-K. Huysmans’s Against Nature, essays of Walter Pater, Nietzsche’s Birth of Tragedy and other texts.

AHIS UN3462 Ecology, Art, and Empire. 4.00 points.
Looking at material that speaks to historic encounters and legacies of European imperialisms, this course explores how visual practices manage natural relationships across colonial and postcolonial conditions (c.1800-present). Studying art and other visual material “ecologically” reveals interconnections of people, plants, living beings, and inorganic entities within their specific contexts. Each unit will expose students to contemporaneous thinking about ecology, empire, and the construction of the human across texts, artists, and key objects. We will study a wide range of visual material, including maps, decorative objects, surrealist films, 1970s performances, contemporary Caribbean art, and other artworks that emerge out of imperial entanglements between Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Part one of the course explores how 18th-century landscape imagery supported European imperial conquest around the globe and inspired indigenous resistance. Part two examines how 19th-century evolutionary theory and global botanical trade produced new ideas of hybridity in fin-de-siècle Europe. Lastly, part three examines how modern and contemporary art (20th century to present) has turned toward “elemental media” in a radical reframing of art’s human bias.

AHIS UN3708 Beyond El Dorado: Materials, Values, and Aesthetics in Pre-Columbian Art History. 4 points.
In this seminar, we will investigate ancient and indigenous art, materials, and aesthetics from areas of what is today Latin America. Taking advantage of New York’s unrivaled museum collections, we will research Pre-Columbian gold and silver work, as well as equally precious stone, shell, textile, and feather works created by artists of ancient Mexico, Central America, and Andean South America. We will also study latter-day histories of collecting, reception, display, appropriation, and activism that shape contemporary understandings of Pre-Columbian art.

AHIS GU4546 GILLES DELEUZE: THINKING IN ART. 4.00 points.
The philosophy of Gilles Deleuze has emerged as one of the richest, most singular adventures in post-war European thought; Foucault considered it the most important in France, and more generally, in the 20th century. In all of Deleuze’s work there is a search for a new ‘image of thought.’ But how did art figure in this search, and how did the search in turn appeal to artists, writers, filmmakers, architects, as well as curators or critics? In this seminar, we explore the complex theme of ‘think in art’ in Deleuze, and its implications for art in the 21st century or for the global contemporary art of today.

AHIS GU4744 Art and Fashion: The Body, Architecture, Textile. 4.00 points.
This bridge seminar examines topics in and tensions between art and fashion in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The course will first explore clothing’s relationship to the body. This course will consider how artists investigate and critique the materials of fashion and spaces of visual merchandising: textiles, shop windows, and the department store. Topics include but are not limited to: voguing/ball culture, Queer coding and clothing, fashion photography, and site-specific installation. We will investigate the museum through the practices of collecting, curating, and the rise of blockbuster fashion exhibitions. Indigenous perspectives on display and sacred storage will be discussed. Art and fashion are embedded within their historical, political, and social contexts, and throughout this course, we will consider topics from a global perspective. Admission is by application and permission of the instructor. Applications must be submitted to the department of Art History.
Majors Colloquium

Required course for all majors in the department. See the department website for more information. Students must sign up online by the deadline, which is posted on the department website.

AHIS UN3000 INTRO LIT/METHODS OF ART HIST. 4.00 points.
Required course for department majors. Not open to Barnard or Continuing Education students. Students must receive instructors permission. Introduction to different methodological approaches to the study of art and visual culture. Majors are encouraged to take the colloquium during their junior year.

Senior Thesis

The year-long Senior Thesis program is open to majors in the Department of Art History and Archaeology. For more information, please visit the Senior Thesis information page on the department website.

AHIS UN3002 SENIOR THESIS. 3.00 points.
Prerequisites: the departments permission. Required for all thesis writers

Spring 2024 Undergraduate and Bridge Lectures

UNDERGRADUATE LECTURES: 2000-level courses. Attendance at first class meeting is strongly recommended. BRIDGE LECTURES: 4000-level courses. Open to graduate and advanced undergraduate students. Attendance at first class is strongly recommended.

AHIS UN1007 Introduction to the History of Architecture. 4.00 points.
This course is required for architectural history and theory majors, but is also open to students interested in a general introduction to the history of architecture, considered on a global scale. Architecture is analyzed through in-depth case studies of key works of sacred, secular, public, and domestic architecture from both the Western canon and cultures of the ancient Americas and of the Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic faiths. The time frame ranges from ancient Mesopotamia to the modern era. Discussion section is required

AHIS UN2119 ROME BEYOND ROME. 4.00 points.
This course will approach the art of the Roman empire from two vantage points. In its first half, it will consider it from the inside. Through a regional survey of the art and architecture produced in the provinces of the Roman empire between the 2nd c. BCE and the 4th c. CE, it will focus on the mechanisms by which models emanating from Rome were received and adapted in local contexts (so-called “Romanization”), as well as on the creative responses that the provincials’ incorporation into the empire elicited. The second half of the course will consider the art of the Roman empire from the outside, i.e., from the perspective of its neighbors in the Middle East and in Africa, as well as its self-proclaimed successors and imitators. On the one hand, we will see how ancient states such as the kingdom of Meroë and the Parthian empire, or regions such as the Gandhara, interacted with the visual culture of Rome and its empire. On the other, we will explore the degree to which the classical roots of the modern colonial empires in Asia, Africa, and the Americas both managed and failed to shape the visual cultures that these empires developed. CC/GS/CE: Partial fulfillment of Global Core requirement

AHIS UN2305 RENAISSANCE IN IMPERIAL SPAIN. 3.00 points.
Prerequisites: Required discussion section AHIS UN2306
The course will survey Renaissance art in Hapsburg Spain, considered in the wide geographical context of the extended and dispersed dominions of the different crowns of the Spanish monarchy, which connected the Iberian Peninsula with Italy, Flanders and the New World. It will concern visual art in its various media, mainly painting, sculpture and architecture, but also tapestries, prints, armor, goldsmithery and ephemeral decoration, among others. Works of the main artists of the period will be introduced and analyzed, giving attention to the historical and cultural context of their production and reception. The course will particularly focus on the movement of artists, works and models within the Spanish Hapsburg territories, in order to understand to what extent visual arts contributed to shaping the political identity of this culturally composite empire

AHIS UN2400 Nineteenth-Century Art in Europe. 3.00 points.
How do you represent a revolution? What does it mean to picture the world as it “really” is? Who may be figured as a subject or citizen, and who not? Should art improve society, or critique it? Can it do both? These are some of the many questions that the artists of nineteenth-century Europe grappled with, and that we will explore together in this course. This was an era of rapid and dramatic political, economic, and cultural change, marked by wars at home and colonial expansion abroad; the rise of industrialization and urbanization; and the invention of myriad new technologies, from photography to the railway. The arts played an integral and complex role in all of these developments: they both shaped and were shaped by them. Lectures will address a variety media, from painting and sculpture to the graphic and decorative arts, across a range of geographic contexts, from Paris, London, Berlin, and Madrid to St. Petersburg, Cairo, Haiti, and New Zealand. Artists discussed will include Jacques-Louis David, Francisco Goya, Théodore Géricault, J.M.W. Turner, Adolph Menzel, Ilya Repin, Edouard Manet, Claude Monet, Mary Cassatt, James McNeill Whistler, C. F. Goldie, Victor Horta, and Paul Cézanne

AHIS UN2411 History of Photography. 3 points.
Few media have shaped the course of modernity more powerfully than photography. Law, science, journalism, criminology, urban planning, and entertainment are but a handful of the fields remade by the introduction of photography. More ambivalent has been photography’s relationship to art. Once relegated to the margins, photographic practices now occupy the center of much artistic production. This course will not attempt a comprehensive survey of the medium. Rather, we will trace central developments through a series of case studies from photography’s 19th century birth to its current, digital afterlife. We will cover seminal movements and figures as well as more obscure practices and discourses. Particular attention will be paid to the theoretical and methodological questions concerning the medium.

AHIS UN2500 ARTS OF AFRICA. 3.00 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement
Introduction to the arts of Africa, including masquerading, figural sculpture, reliquaries, power objects, textiles, painting, photography, and architecture. The course will establish a historical framework for study, but will also address how various African societies have responded to the process of modernity

AHUM UN2604 ARTS OF CHINA, JAPAN AND KOREA. 3.00 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement
Introduces distinctive aesthetic traditions of China, Japan, and Korea—their similarities and differences—through an examination of the visual significance of selected works of painting, sculpture, architecture, and other arts in relation to the history, culture, and religions of East Asia
AHIS UN2702 PRE-COLUMBIAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE. 3.00 points.
The Western Hemisphere was a setting for outstanding accomplishments in the visual arts for millennia before Europeans set foot in the so-called "New World." This course explores the early indigenous artistic traditions of what is now Latin America, from early monuments of the formative periods (e.g. Olmec and Chavín), through acclaimed eras of aesthetic and technological achievement (e.g. Maya and Moche), to the later Inca and Aztec imperial periods. Our subject will encompass diverse genre including painting and sculpture, textiles and metalwork, architecture and performance. Attention will focus on the two cultural areas that traditionally have received the most attention from researchers: Mesoamerica (including what is today Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, and Honduras) and the Central Andes (including Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia). We will also critically consider the drawing of those boundaries—both spatial and temporal—that have defined "Pre-Columbian" art history to date. More than a survey of periods, styles, and monuments, we will critically assess the varieties of evidence—archaeological, epigraphic, historical, ethnographic, and scientific—available for interpretations of ancient Latin American art and culture.

AHIS GU4023 Medieval Art II: Castles, Cathedral, and Court. 4.00 points.
This advanced lecture course is intended for students with little or no background in medieval art of Latin ("Western") Europe. It provides a comprehensive introduction to a period spanning roughly one millennium, from Pope Gregory the Great’s defense of art ca. 600 to rising antagonism against it on the eve of the Protestant Reformation. Themes under consideration include Christianity and colonialism, pilgrimage and the cult of saints, archaism versus Gothic modernism, the drama of the liturgy, somatic and affective piety, political ideology against "others," the development of the winged altarpiece, and pre-Reformation iconophobia. We will survey many aspects of artistic production, from illuminated manuscripts, portable and monumental sculpture, stained glass, sumptuous metalworks, drawings, and reliquaries to the earliest examples of oil paintings and prints. While this course is conceived as a pendant to Medieval Art I: From Late Antiquity to the End of the Byzantine Empire (AHIS GU4021), each can be taken independently of one another. In addition to section meetings, museum visits to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters, and The Morgan Library are a required component to the course. Students must register for a mandatory discussion section.

AHIS GU4064 Arts of the Silk Road. 3.00 points.
The term "Silk Road," coined by German geographers in the nineteenth century, denotes a network of ancient inland routes that traversed between East Asia and the Mediterranean. This course, by focusing on the arts of the Silk Road, introduces cultural and religious exchanges among various regions in Asia, spanning a time period from the sixth century BCE—marked by the establishment of the Achaemenid Empire—to the thirteenth century CE, which saw the rise of the Mongol Empire. The course is organized into three sections: arts of empires, arts of kingdoms, and arts of migrants. Students will examine monuments, objects, and artworks originating from major Asian civilizations and religions, utilizing a comparative and historical perspective. Through this exploration, they will be equipped to understand ancient Asian history as a process of continuous interaction and interconnection between diverse peoples and cultures—a process that precursors globalization in the contemporary age.

AHIS GU4082 Islam in the Making: An Art and Architectural History. 3.00 points.
This lecture course offers an overview of Islamic history through its art and architecture. It spans fifteen centuries and three continents: Africa, Asia, and Europe. Organized chronologically, each session of this course will examine one Muslim city at a particular period of time. Starting with Mecca in the 6th century and ending with the urban and architectural expansions of the same city today. Damascus, Baghdad, Samarra, Kairouan, Cordoba, Bukhara, Cairo, Konya, Istanbul, Algiers, Touba and others will be examined and a critical depiction of urban and architectural monumental, influential artistic schools, and notable artworks that were produced in and around each of these urban centers will be offered. Each session is a snapshot of a city at a specific period of time with a clear emphasis on the broader intellectual, economic, ecological and political contexts surrounding the production of art and architecture in the Muslim world. Turning away from a classical dynastic reading of Islamic arts, this course centers the role theological debates, Sufi mysticism, legal innovations, economic exchanges and migration of people, ideas and technologies played in the birth and developments of a Muslim aesthetic tradition.

Spring 2024 Undergraduate and Bridge Seminars

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AHIS UN3101 The Public Monument in Antiquity. 4.00 points.
This seminar will focus on the invention of the public monument as a commemorative genre, and the related concepts of time, memory and history in the ancient Near East (west Asia), Egypt, and Greece. Public monuments will be studied in conjunction with ancient texts (in translation) as well as historical criticism, archaeological and art historical theories. The seminar considers ancient monuments in relation to, and in the context of, modern concepts of monuments, history and heritage and the debates surrounding them. The seminar also introduces these methodologies and debates to students.
AHIS UN3322 Bruegel's Comic World: Everyday Life in 16th-Century Netherlandish Art. 4.00 points.

We are told, in one of the earliest accounts of the life and work of the Netherlandish artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525–1569), that his prints and paintings elicited laughter. From his visualizations of carnival celebrations and children's games to peasant weddings to riotous hellicapes, the comic Bruegel makes his viewers, both in the late sixteenth century and today, question whether any of it should be taken seriously. This advanced undergraduate seminar examines Bruegel's innovative comic practice and the social context of laughter and humor in the era of the Dutch Revolt, a time fraught with social, political, and religious strife. We will explore the reception of Bruegel's work in his time, in particular the possibilities of both entertainment and didacticism for viewers. Our studies of pictorial humor in Bruegel's oeuvre will include broader investigations of the secularization of the image in the Reformation context, iconoclasm, the vernacular artistic mode, print culture in early modern Europe, humanism, global expansion and trade, the relationship between pictorial and literary humor, and the functions of satire in visual art. A field trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art will allow us to encounter Bruegel's images in person.

AHIS UN3444 REFLEXIVITY IN ART # FILM. 4.00 points.

This seminar will explore a range of individual works of Western art from the 16th century to late 20th century in which the tension between illusionism and reflexivity is foregrounded. It will focus on well-known paintings and films in which forms of realism and verisimilitude coexist with features that affirm the artificial or fictive nature of the work or which dramatize the material, social and ideological conditions of the work's construction. Topics will include art by Dürer, Holbein, Velázquez, Watteau, Courbet, Morisot, Vertov, Deren, Godard, Varda, Hitchcock and others. Readings will include texts by Auerbach, Gombrich, Brecht, Jameson, Barthes, Didi-Huberman, Bazin, Lukacs, Mulvey, and Daney.

AHIS UN3454 Zines by Artists. 4.00 points.

Most often associated with the explosion of punk rock at the end of the 1970s, self-published booklets, fanzines, or simply ‘zines actually arose first in the context of science fiction collectors in the 1930s. Beginning in the early 1970s (independently of, and before the advent of punk music), artists adopted and developed the format as a vehicle for visual expression, drawing from precedents in pop art, artists’ books, mimiographed literary magazines, historical avant-garde movements such as dada, and more contemporaneous developments in conceptual art and mail art. Overlooked in favor of artists’ books and artists’ magazines, on the one hand, and in favor of various types of music- or personal expression-based zines, on the other, the artist’s zine forms a rich and multifaceted genre spanning over five decades of practice. This course will examine the artist’s zine in the contexts of both art and music history, issues related to the expression and exploration of race, gender, and sexuality, and the notions of networking and community building. Although distinct from the development of punk rock, artists’ zine practice has forged and maintains a close connection to it and to its evolution into Queercore, Riot Grrrl, and Afropunk, all of which are covered in the course readings.

AHIS UN3461 Handicraft and Contemporary Art. 4.00 points.

This seminar examines the resurgence of craft within contemporary art and theory. In a time when much art is outsourced — or fabricated by large stables of assistants — what does it mean when artists return to traditional, and traditionally laborious, methods of handiwork such as knitting, jewelry making, or woodworking? Though our emphasis will be on recent art (including the Black feminist reclamation of quilts, an artist who makes pornographic embroidery, a cross-dressing ceramicist, queer fiber collectives, do-it-yourself Indigenous environmental interventions, and anti-capitalist craftivism), we will also examine important historical precedents. We will read formative theoretical texts regarding questions of process, materiality, skill, bodily effort, domestic labor, and alternative economies of production. Throughout, we will think through how craft is in dialogue with questions of race, nation-building, gendered work, and mass manufacturing. The seminar is centered around student-led discussion of our critical readings.

AHIS UN3463 Pastel in 18th-Century Europe. 4.00 points.

This seminar focuses on the practice of pastel in eighteenth-century Europe. Known for its luminosity and fragility—two characteristics linked to its powdery essence—as well as for its practicality, pastel as an artistic medium reached an unprecedented popularity in the eighteenth century. While some painters used it on occasion (Jean-Siméon Chardin, Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun, John Singleton Copley, to name a few notable examples), others made it their medium of choice, including Rosalba Carriera, Jean-Étienne Liotard, and Maurice-Quentin de la Tour, three of the most sought-after artists of the period. This seminar will examine these dazzling works, many of them portraits but not exclusively, from different perspectives: technique, artists’ manuals, and trade in materials; makeup and the aesthetic discourse; vision and touch; color and the rendition of skin tones; the construction of artistic identity; art criticism; and the commission, collecting, and display of pastels. The seminar will include at least two museum trips, including one to the Frick Madison where the exhibition Nicolas Party and Rosalba Carriera is currently on view.

AHIS UN3624 Narrative in Chinese Art. 4.00 points.

This course introduces pre-modern Chinese narrative arts, their visual storytelling techniques, and the interpretive questions they raise. What constitutes narrative art and what are its particularities in the East Asian context? How are certain narratives reproduced and translated, and understood in different geographic locales and time periods? We will study popular narratives from the 10th century to the early Qing dynasty, depicted in diverse mediums such as murals, handscrolls and hanging scrolls, ceramic pillows, painted fans, and printed books. The course will be organized thematically and address topics such as the influence of Buddhist artistic and liturgical practices, representations of borderlands and the foreign, literati and popular culture, urban life, utopias, and depictions of labor, class, and gender. We will approach narrative from a variety of disciplines and perspectives, including social and cultural history, religious studies, environmental history, and gender studies.
AHIS GU4721 Medieval Illumination in the Low Countries. 4.00 points.
The course ‘Medieval Illumination in the Low Countries: Origins, Sources, Materials’ aims to reflect on the place of illumination and the illuminated manuscript in the artistic profile and cultural, literary, political and religious life in the Low Countries and beyond. The development of illumination is closely linked to the cultural and economic situation of the Low Countries during more than eight centuries, but it is also deeply influenced by the intersection of contacts in European artistic, religious and intellectual contexts. The links between artistic networks in other media, the mobility of artists, models and materials are crucial to understanding the production of illuminated manuscripts and to framing them as fully representative of the dynamics of the cultural habitat of the Low Countries. The course will be illustrated with numerous examples and case studies of manuscripts in collections in Belgium and the Netherlands, as well as in collections in US and around the world. A special file rouge in the course will be devoted to recent research approaches in material culture and digital access of illuminated manuscripts. The course will be accompanied by PPP and a reading list to guide students (scans and online resources will be provided). Courses will be held on campus, with several visits to the Manuscript and Rare Book Collection of the Butler Library and to the Manuscript Collections of the Morgan Library.

AHIS GU4741 Art and Theory in a Global Context. 4.00 points.
What is “globalization”? How does it change the way we think about or show art today? What role does film and media play in it? How has critical theory itself assumed new forms in this configuration moving outside post-war Europe and America? How has these processes helped change with the very idea of ‘contemporary art’? What then might a transnational critical theory in art and in thinking look like today or in the 21st century? In this course we will examine this cluster of questions from a number of different angles, starting with new questions about borders, displacements, translations and minorities, and the ways they have cut across and figured in different regions, in Europe or America, as elsewhere. In the course of our investigations, we will look in particular at two areas in which these questions are being raised today – in Asia and in Africa and its diasporas. The course is thus inter-disciplinary in nature and is open to students in different fields and areas where these issues are now being discussed.

AHIS GU4745 Re/Building the American Dream. 4.00 points.
The term “American Dream” conjures images of white, middle-class or affluent families inhabiting single-family houses in the suburbs. But the population of the United States is – and always has been – characterized by considerable racial, ethnic, and gender diversity. Those varied populations have imagined, created, and altered domestic environments in ways that don’t fit the stereotypical vision of the “American Dream.” At the same time, the concepts of race, ethnicity, and gender themselves have shaped (for better and for worse) the buildings, landscapes, neighborhoods and cities in which US populations reside. From suburban ranch houses to Southwestern mission landscapes to urban public housing projects, domestic environments have been fundamentally shaped by racial, ethnic, and gendered ideologies that define who can live in what building, in which neighborhood, and in what domestic configurations. This course will explore how the concepts of race, gender, and ethnicity bear upon domestic spaces as well as how power relations embedded in designed environments have disparate impacts on people whether as individuals or in groups.

AHIS GU4762 Art and Archaeology of Immigrants in Chinese History. 4.00 points.
This seminar examines the art and archaeology of immigrants and immigrant communities in pre-modern China. Since the beginning of China’s dynastic history around the first millennium BCE, people from surrounding regions and even further afield have consistently moved into the Chinese heartland. These groups include not only nomads from the Mongolian steppes and the Tibetan Plateau, but also merchants, missionaries, and Muslims arriving via the so-called “Silk Roads”—a network of land and sea routes connecting China to the rest of the Eurasian continent (India, Persia, Central Asia, etc.). In certain periods, descendants of the Chinese diaspora and refugees in frontier regions also played significant roles in Chinese history. This seminar focuses on the archaeological remains and artistic expressions of these immigrants, as well as their interactions with native Chinese art and culture. Topics covered range from painting, sculpture, and calligraphy to crafts and architecture.