

Graduate Art History Course Descriptions Fall 2015

ARTH 602 Research Methods of Art History

Susanna Cole

Tuesday 4:00 pm – 6:40 pm Room 1503 HN

The course will offer an introduction to the discipline of art history and to a range of methodologies that have impacted developments in the field. We will examine methods employed by art historians in order collectively and individually to examine artworks.

We examine a range of visual imageries from the 18th century forward that interrogate space. This inquiry will be of both the visually realized and philosophical theories of space including perspective, conventions of landscape, and the construction of new concepts of urbanism, vision and place. We will explore the transformation of the idea of space as fixed and timeless to an idea of spatiality that is open, hybrid and contested.

Throughout the course each student will focus on the analysis of an individual work of art. Each individual investigation will culminate in a final research paper. In addition to the classroom sessions there will be classes at the Hunter College Library, MOMA and The Metropolitan Museum of Art addressing different approaches and avenues for research. Students will also be required to give a class presentation on progress and problems in their research.

ARTH 602 Research Methods of Art History

Romy Golan

Thursday 7:00 pm – 9:40 pm Room 1503 HN

This course will focus on readings in the history of art addressing questions internal to the discipline such as: the historicity of art, the aims of the *Kunstwollen*, pure vs. symbolic form, the travels of the *Pathos formula*, aura vs. reproducibility, formalism vs. social art history, post-colonialism and cultural difference, the temporalities of art, authorship in Structuralism vs. Post-Structuralism, feminist and gender theory, the lives of objects, exhibitions and globalization, the blurring between art history and art criticism.

Requirements: weekly short (3pp double-spaced) papers for class discussion centered on a chosen artifact, or a pair of art objects or possibly an installation shot that best encapsulates the subject of each week's readings.

ARTH 623 Renaissance Art I

Staff

Thursday 4:00 pm – 6:40 pm Room 1501 HN

ARTH 626 Modern Art III

Staff

Monday 4:00 pm – 9:40 pm

This class will explore the art of the past twenty years. It will be organized thematically; every class meeting will cover a different topic or strategy of interest to contemporary artists. Topics might include abstraction, trash, failure, crowds, music, celebration, and distortion. Each week we will read critical texts and artists' writing appropriate to the subject, focusing on three or four artists. The artists will typically include people like Mike Kelley, Sigmar Polke, Tomma Abts, David Hammons, Aernout Mik, Jessica Stockholder, and Gabriel Orozco. This is a lecture course, and the requirements are attendance, doing the readings, and writing several short papers.

ARTH 634 Art of Africa
Staff
Thursday 7:00 pm – 9:40 pm Room 1501 HN

ARTH 734 Theory and Criticism
Staff
Thursday 1:10 pm – 3:50 pm Room 1503 HN

ARTH 734 Theory and Criticism
Howard Singerman
Tuesday 7:00 pm – 9:40 pm Room 1503 HN

“What does it mean for a painter to *think*?... Not only what is the role of speculative thought for the painter at work? But above all what is the mode of thought of which painting is the stake? Can one think *in* painting as one can dream in color? ... Or again, to use a language current some ten years ago, is painting a theoretical practice? Can one designate the place of the theoretical in painting without doing violence to it, without, that is, disregarding painting’s specificity, without annexing it to an applied discourse...?”

Yve-Alain Bois, *Painting as Model*, p. 245

“It is, I want to say, as though unless something compels conviction as to its quality it is no more than trivially or nominally a painting. This suggests that flatness and the delimitation of flatness ought not to be thought of as the “irreducible essence of pictorial art” but rather as something like the *minimal conditions for something’s being seen as a painting.*”

Michael Fried, “Art and Objecthood,” p. 123

Why is it so hard for something to *be* a painting, or to be seen as a painting that is neither trivially nor nominally so, that is, *merely* a painting? Is the medium of painting something more or other than its material? What does it mean to take painting historically, or to say as Greenberg does, that it is “self-critical”? Again, “is painting a theoretical practice”?

This course will present answers in a couple of ways: one around the question of history and the medium, or the historical composition of the medium; the other around the question of being: what *is* painting, in relation to vision, thought, or language?

ARTH 734 Theory and Criticism
Joachim Pissarro
Monday 7:00 pm – 9:40 pm Room 1503 HN

This course is a continuation of the spring semester course Art in France in the 1960s. Only students that were enrolled in the first semester are eligible to sign up for the second part.

ARTH 755.03 Independent Study
Staff
Independent study requires consent by the professor and the department.

ARTH 780.08 Artist’s Institute Seminar

Jenny Jaskey

Tuesday 1:10 pm – 3:50 pm Room 1602 HN

The Fall 2015 Artist's Institute seminar will be organized around the work of Fia Backström. Defying categorization either by medium or visual style, Backström explores the fabric of the social bond and group subjectivity through language, affect, technology, and institutions. Backström works with text and presence in performances, environments, events, prints and lens based media. Her projects often take form through extended, reflexive improvisations with the conventions of a specific site, blurring the lines between performance and process, rhetoric and action, "behind the scenes" and "on display". In 2009, for her solo exhibition *Studies in Leadership (a family affair)*, Backström adopted the position of a fickle, equivocating artist unable to make a decision, (or alternately a soft corporate leader) engaging the curator and the institutional staff in a drawn out ambivalent negotiation of possibilities, which generated a novel form of collaboration between artist and institution. The concept of collaboration and the terms for engagement in all its possible iterations and implications remain central to Backström's practice: she often works together with and even transplants the works of other artists into her own process. The work adapts methods from multiple interdisciplinary sources such as poetry, pedagogy, group psychology, print design, and corporate branding.

Backström represented Sweden in the 2011 Venice Biennial, participated in the 2008 Whitney Biennial, and has had solo exhibitions and projects at the Museum of Modern Art and White Columns in New York, the ICA, London and Moderna Museet, Stockholm. She teaches at Princeton and Columbia, and is co-chair of Bard's MFA photography department.

Drawing on her experience both as an artist and an educator, Backström will work together with the Artist's Institute seminar and its fellows; the seminar will provide a theoretical and practical platform for examining and extending the diverse concepts that inform her work. Both MFA and MA students are encouraged to apply. Questions that will be raised in the seminar include: Can artists use curatorial strategies, and if so how? Can curators be considered artists, and if so why? What platforms are available, or could be created for the joint venture between curator and artist? In what ways can collaboration and audience participation be part of artistic practices and exhibition making in a networked society? How can an artist address social and political issues today?

ARTH 780.14 Curatorial Methods

Staff

Monday 7:00 pm – 9:40 pm Room 1502 HN

ARTH 7801E Postwar Italian Art

Emily Braun

Thursday 4:00 pm – 6:40 pm Room 1503 HN

Focusing on the decades 1945- 1975, this seminar considers post-war Italian art chronologically and thematically, from the careers of individual artists and histories of major movements to issues of gender, materials, politics, cultural theory and historiography. It coincides with the Burri retrospective opening at the Guggenheim in October 2015. The course will begin with a foundational background lecture in Italian art before 1945 and conclude with a look at contemporary art practices. Classes will consist of informal lectures, reading assignments and discussions, and museum and gallery visits. The viewing of a series of films outside of class time will also be mandatory, for those who are not already familiar with them. Students will work on a major research paper to be presented in class and submitted at the end of the semester. One of the chief aims of the course is revisionist: to move outside the now standard framework of the Cold War; explore international networks through exhibitions and periodicals; and challenge longstanding perceptions of anti-Americanism and categorical one-way influences in Italian art with more nuanced interpretations.

ARTH 78021 The Islamic City: from the Pre-Modern to the Era of Globalization

Nebahat Avcioğlu

Monday 4:00 pm – 6:40 pm Room 1503 HN

The concept of the city is as important as it is difficult to define. A rigorous definition of the Islamic city has also proven uneasy to establish among historians and theoreticians, since it elides any essentialist characterization, even that of the reductive “non-western” identity. Framing the city as the dialectic between spatial and social processes we will discuss the prominence of the concept of the Islamic city from a critical historical perspective. Special attention will be paid to the problematization of the concept and its contemporary academic and polemical formulations. By focussing on specific city types such as the classical city, traditional city, imperial city, modern city, (post)colonial city and global city, we will examine a variety of interpretive paradigms employed by scholars in order to reify or reject the validity of the category of the Islamic city. Looking at specific cities – such as Kufa, Baghdad, Cairo, Jerusalem, Damascus, Istanbul, Fatehpursikri, Isfahan and Dubai, among others – through a genealogical approach to their architectural fabric, we will also try to understand their workings. We will explore the intrinsic relationship between the city and a particular architectural feature - such as a mosque, a palace, a citadel, a market, a house – that have come to define the city’s historical character and narrative. Structured along these lines, the course will problematize the concept of the Islamic city and consider its relevance for the study of cities in the Muslim world today.

ARTH 7802J Dangerous Liaisons: The International Rococo in Visual and Material Culture

Tara Zanardi

Tuesday 7:00 pm – 9:40 pm Room 1502 HN

This lecture course covers the Rococo, a stylistic period that flourished primarily in the decorative arts and ornamental design during the first half of the eighteenth century. Despite its familiar associations to France, the Rococo was an international phenomenon manifested in a variety of media, including architecture, painting, sculpture, the decorative arts, and fashion. The Rococo generally foregrounded fluid, asymmetrical, and organic characteristics in its ornamentation and design aesthetic, which we will evaluate using eighteenth-century and modern critical sources. In this course we will examine Rococo expressions in diverse media, especially as the decorative arts and furniture were integral to overall artistic programs. We shall consider examples from various locations, which parallel artists’ travels throughout Europe and abroad. We shall address significant topics such as gender, politics, the ‘exotic,’ novel forms of sociability, women’s roles as patrons and subjects of rococo art, the Enlightenment, and the rise of the art market and art dealer. While the rococo has been devalued and gendered as “feminine” (in contrast to the supposedly “masculine” style of neoclassicism), recent scholarship has taken a revisionist methodology and interdisciplinary approach to the understanding of this period and its supposedly “feminine” characteristics, including evaluating this period from a global perspective. We will also look to contemporary examples of the rococo and the ways in which artists are still fascinated by its formal qualities in various forms.

ARTH 7802K Nostalgia in Contemporary Art

Maxim Weintraub

Wednesday 4:00 pm – 6:40 pm Room 1503 HN

This course explores nostalgia as a theme and an impulse in contemporary art and criticism. Examining select but exemplary artists and scholars from the late 20th and early 21st centuries, this class considers what is at stake in the uses of nostalgia in art and visual culture—what is at stake, in other words, in nostalgia’s stark expression of loss and displacement, its utopian possibilities and its disjunctive relationship to history. Throughout the semester we will explore nostalgia as a longing or affection for the past in which broader conversations about capitalism, representation, memory, race and class come into play. In so doing, this class aims to understand how nostalgia can be seen as both restorative or retrogressive, and can be considered by some a sign of a contemporary cultural malady and by others a site

of constructive social commentary and critical resistance. Readings will include texts by Victor Burgin, Frederic Jameson, Pierre Nora, Svetlana Boym and Renato Rosaldo, among others.

ARTH 7802N Topics in Modern Art: Art for and Against the State in Latin America

Harper Montgomery

Thursday 7:00 pm – 9:40 pm Room 1502 HN

In this course we will examine the dynamic role art has played within societies in Latin America and the Latino United States from the early 1950s to the present. Art will take myriad forms in this class--a great many of which were conceived to challenge traditions of painting and sculpture--and will relate to society in many ways. At times, we will see, art is deployed on behalf of the state, at times in support of revolution, and at others as a tool of protest against the government or as a means to obtain civil rights. Moving chronologically, we will begin by exploring the relationship of public art and architecture in state sponsored projects initiated during the 1950s, including the new Brazilian capitol city and college campuses in Venezuela and Mexico. We will look at the role film played in the wake of the 1959 Cuban Revolution, at the use of art to protest dictatorships in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Central America, and to promote Chicano and Puerto Rican civil rights in the United States during the 60s through the 80s. We end by considering art's relationship with local contexts in contemporary Latin America, as much Latin American art is now displayed and collected in a global context. Weekly readings will focus on recent art historical texts and on primary statements by artists and critics. For at least 2 classes we will leave the lecture hall to view exhibitions of modern and contemporary Latin American art at the Guggenheim and Museum of Modern Art. To receive credit for the course students must attend weekly meetings, participate in discussions, and write a research paper.

ARTH 780.88 Egyptian Art

Edward Bleiberg

Monday 7:00 pm – 9:40 pm Room 1527 HN

This graduate course explores problems in understanding ancient Egyptian art and architecture from pre-history through the end of Egypt's New Kingdom about 1075 B.C.E. The course proceeds chronologically beginning approximately 3500 B.C.E. with questions about the origins of Egyptian art. The problems addressed in class concern typical art historical issues such as royal versus middle class patronage, the nature of Egyptian style, and the emergence of Egyptian iconography in various periods. The course concludes with discussions of the current antiquities market, Egyptian collections in museums, and issues of cultural patrimony.

At the Graduate Center (EPermit required, permission of professor required)

Performance and Devotion- Seminar

Cynthia Hahn

Medieval art is not art for art's sake. It consists of material objects created to facilitate interaction with viewers, spaces, and other objects in dense and complex ways. This seminar will consider the literature on performance and devotional art to investigate interactions and points of contact. The primary focus of our investigation will be liturgical and devotional materials, especially manuscripts and reliquaries. Readings will include basics on performance such as work by J.L. Austin and Judith Butler, and essays from *Visualizing Medieval Performance*, as well as Jill Stevenson, *Performance, Cognitive Theory, and Devotional Culture*, *Sensual Piety in Late Medieval York*, and also, work on devotion by Jeffrey Hamburger. The class will visit the Morgan Library and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.