

Graduate Art History Course Descriptions Fall 2018

ARTH 602 Research Methods of Art History: Early Modern Portraiture

Maria Loh *ml3120@hunter.cuny.edu*
Tuesday 7 - 9:40pm HN 1502 Code 21232

What do we see when we look at a Renaissance portrait? What was a self-portrait in the age before selfies? Who was allowed to have their portraits done and under what kinds of circumstances? What can we learn by gazing at the silent faces of these distant men and women? What stories are they trying to tell us and what tales can we provide for them today? The broad topic of this course is early modern portraiture. Emphasis will be placed on Italian art in the period around 1400 to 1600, and priority will be given to works in the Met collection. The course, however, will focus first and foremost on skills training. It will provide students with a basic understanding about the nature of and debates around early modern portraiture; arm students with the key research skills that will enable them to undertake independent research in an area with which they might have some to virtually no familiarity and to face the ever-shifting challenges of research and critical thinking across fields and disciplines; engage critically with visual, textual, and historical sources in order to build a logical argument; and train students to present their research and conclusions in a public forum and to respond with intellectual openness and generosity to the work of other scholars.

ARTH 602 Research Methods of Art History: Robert Rauschenberg

Emily Braun *ebraun@hunter.cuny.edu*
Tuesday 4 - 6:40pm HN 1502 Code 21233

This course will be held in collaboration with the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. It involves research and writing on a selection of works by Rauschenberg, in diverse media and from various phases of career, belonging to the Foundation's Collection. In the process, each student will focus on one art object in depth and compose a comprehensive catalogue entry, which consists of two parts. The first is the full technical data on the object (title, date, medium, dimensions, markings, provenance, exhibition history, bibliography, and condition); the second is a detailed essay on all aspects of the work and its meaning written in a publishable, expository style. The course provides fundamental training for academic and curatorial work by emphasizing the foundational tools and methods needed to analyze artworks as historical and material documents. On a secondary level, it offers pragmatic instruction in determining appropriate and viable frameworks for critical interpretation. The seminar covers a variety of methodological approaches, from connoisseurship and related issues of authenticity, to recent interdisciplinary and theoretical approaches in art history. Finally, strategies for writing - the organization of the information retrieved, clear articulation of ideas, logical structure of argument, and developing an authoritative voice -- are also stressed.

As part of the course work, students will "learn by doing" through a series of technical tasks involving information retrieval and analysis. In addition to the weekly tasks, they will also be required to give a class presentation on the progress and problems of their research. The final catalogue entry is submitted at the end of the semester. As per above, it must be in two parts: the fully researched documentary information including provenance, exhibition history, and bibliography specific to the object; and a ten- to fifteen-page interpretative essay that places the object in context and explicates any and all issues of dating, title, condition, iconography, related works, the artist's intentions and critical reception. Proper footnotes, bibliography, and relevant illustrations must accompany the essay section of the entry.

There will be several instructional sessions outside the classroom, including at the Foundation offices, located in lower Manhattan, and one library workshop with instruction on research in print and electronic media.

ARTH 620 Roman Art

Hendrik Dey *hdey@hunter.cuny.edu*
Tuesday 7 - 9:40pm HN 1501 Code 58290

In this course we will explore the material culture of Roman civilization, from the Republican period (509-31 BC) through the fourth century AD. Material remains provide a crucial and often highly evocative window onto the spectacular rise and subsequent evolution of the Roman Empire and its constituent cultures. We will consider the evolution of Roman art and architecture (chiefly sculpture, mosaics, and painting, as well as 'minor arts' such as jewelry, household items and coins/medallions) not only in stylistic and iconographical terms, but also as an index of broader and more systemic changes in Roman society over the long term. The issues which our study of Roman art and architecture will allow us to confront include: state-formation and empire building; 'Romanization'; ethnicity and identity in a multicultural empire; and the role of religion (including the rise of Christianity) in Roman society.

ARTH 622 Modern Art II

Lauren Kaplan *laurenalbie@gmail.com*
Monday/Wednesday 3:20 - 6:28pm HN 1501 Code 6170

*****PLEASE NOTE THIS COURSE MEETS SUMMER 2018 FROM MAY 30 - JULY 11*****

This course surveys the evolution of modern art from approximately 1880 to the 1950. We will focus on developments in Europe, the United States, and Latin America, paying particular attention to objects and artists currently on view in New York. Over the course of the summer, we will see how artists respond to events in their own lives, the work of their colleagues, dramatic social change, scientific advancements, and political shifts. In addition to looking closely at works of art, we will also discuss critical texts and primary sources, with an emphasis on artists' interviews and statements. What are the goals of key movements and figures, and do artists practice what they preach? This course will also include field trips to museums and galleries throughout the city.

ARTH 629 Modern Art IV

Howard Singerman *howard.singerman@hunter.cuny.edu*
Thursday 4 - 6:40pm HN 1527 Code 58292

Modern Art IV will approach the contemporary as a history of exhibitions and exhibition practices. Beginning in 1993 with that year's Whitney Biennial and the Whitney's "Black Male" show, the course will focus on exhibitions that have helped to form the discourse and development of contemporary art over the past two-and-a-half decades—and will, necessarily, address questions of the curatorial, biennial culture, and globalization that have marked the art of the period. Thus, we will discuss not only the artists that populate the cosmopolitan art world (and its discontents), but also the institutions that structure it.

ARTH 734 Theory and Criticism: Reading Clement Greenberg

Thierry De Duve *td655@hunter.cuny.edu*
Tuesday 4 - 6:40pm HN 1503 Code 21234/ 21236/ 21240

Enormously influential from the 1940s on, the art critic Clement Greenberg fell from grace in the 1970s and his reputation never seems to have recovered. He was a staunch defender of modernism and the advocate of a criticism based on taste; it is therefore not surprising that his demise was associated with the rise of postmodernism and the anti-aesthetic. But postmodernism came and went, the anti-aesthetic failed to address issues of quality in art, and Greenberg's writings have proven to have surprising lasting power in the face of the often oversimplified objections of his critics and detractors. The time has come to re-read Greenberg with an unprejudiced eye.

One doesn't need to be in agreement with Greenberg's conception of modernism or with all his judgments on individual artists—needless to say, I am not—in order to read him fruitfully and examine his positions on their own merits. This is what we shall do in this seminar. From the programmatic and much contested 1939 "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" to the Bennington College seminars on aesthetic theory from the 1970s, we shall submit a dozen of Greenberg's texts to a close reading and discuss them in class. Every week, a student will be asked to present and summarize the text under scrutiny. A final essay on a topic related to the issues raised in class will also be required.

ARTH 762 Curatorial Practicum: Robert Rauschenberg (cross-listed with ARTH 602 Research Methods)

Emily Braun *ebraun@hunter.cuny.edu*

Tuesday 4 - 6:40pm HN 1502 Code 23809

This course will be held in collaboration with the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation. It involves research and writing on a selection of works by Rauschenberg, in diverse media and from various phases of career, belonging to the Foundation's Collection. In the process, each student will focus on one art object in depth and compose a comprehensive catalogue entry, which consists of two parts. The first is the full technical data on the object (title, date, medium, dimensions, markings, provenance, exhibition history, bibliography, and condition); the second is a detailed essay on all aspects of the work and its meaning written in a publishable, expository style. The course provides fundamental training for academic and curatorial work by emphasizing the foundational tools and methods needed to analyze artworks as historical and material documents. On a secondary level, it offers pragmatic instruction in determining appropriate and viable frameworks for critical interpretation. The seminar covers a variety of methodological approaches, from connoisseurship and related issues of authenticity, to recent interdisciplinary and theoretical approaches in art history. Finally, strategies for writing - the organization of the information retrieved, clear articulation of ideas, logical structure of argument, and developing an authoritative voice -- are also stressed.

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ARTH 762 Curatorial Practicum: Create, Curate, Critique

Joachim Pissarro *jpissarr@hunter.cuny.edu*
Thursday 4 - 6:40pm 205 Hudson Code TBA

A joint reflection between MAs and MFAs on the cross-semination between studio practice, art critical writing, and the curatorial profession. Essentially, a group of MAs exert their critical and curatorial skills, and curate a selection of works from their MFA peers. The end result is a series of exhibitions, with catalogue and essays, that will take place at 205 Hudson on the 2nd floor.

ARTH 780.2U Medieval Art and Thing Theory

Cynthia Hahn *cynthia.j.hahn@gmail.com*
Wednesday 4 - 6:40pm HN 1503 Code 58294

Art history has returned to the object and "materiality" with enthusiasm. Nevertheless, our approach to the object is not/cannot be unmediated. This course will explore medieval materiality through the use of "Thing Theory," a multi-disciplinary consideration that will include the "social life of things," Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory, philosophy's "speculative realism," (or also called Object Oriented Ontology--OOO) and historical investigations of matter and material. We will read Appadurai, Bynum, Harman, Latour, and others in order to understand why material and objects matter. We will explore the particular qualities of materials such as wax, parchment (skin), gold and gems, clay, and stone. Students will choose an object or group of objects to re-vision using these methodological approaches, examples might include reliquaries and other art objects "used" and made in the long Middle Ages.

ARTH 7803E Duchamp's Telegram

Thierry De Duve *td655@hunter.cuny.edu*
Thursday 7 - 9:40pm HN 1502 Code TBA

This lecture course is a new and profoundly revised version of a course I developed under this or a similar title over a period of fifteen years. Its subject matter is the transition from one art world to another, a transition of which Marcel Duchamp was the messenger. With the photo of a urinal baptized *Fountain*, he put a message in the mail in 1917 announcing that the Western art institution had switched from the *Beaux-Arts* system to the art world as we know it today, which I call the *Art-in-General* system. The fact that Duchamp was merely the messenger and not the author or the agent of this institutional change does not in the least diminish his importance as an artist: four out of fourteen classes will be devoted to a survey or in-depth analysis of his work. Three classes will unpack the historical meaning of his “telegram.” Two classes on “the invention of non-art” will seek to understand how and when the switch from one system to the other occurred. Two more classes will explore “missing links” between the two systems, and one class will deal with “acknowledgments of receipt” of Duchamp’s “telegram” in the ’60s and ’70s. Finally, two classes will be devoted to the sentence “This is art,” as it applied to *Fountain* and ushered in the Art-in-General system. The last class will be devoted to a recapitulation and a general discussion.

Students are asked to read the required readings in preparation of each seminar, and encouraged as well to make use of the list of advised readings so as to broaden their knowledge. The required readings listed under any given date should be read by that date.

Your assignment for the term consists of one mid-term paper and one final paper, each around ten pages long. For your mid-term assignment, present a thorough summary of one of the required readings (as per list). For your end-of-term assignment, write an essay in connection with a number of topics which will have arisen in class.

ARTH 7804C Van Gogh’s Modernity

Michael Lobel michael.lobel@hunter.cuny.edu
Monday 4 – 6:40pm 1502 HN Code TBA

Is there anything more to be said about Van Gogh? The intense, widespread popular fascination with the artist and the lurid details of his biography—his personal difficulties, his supposed madness, the infamous ear episode—at this point make serious academic study seem downright unfeasible. Nevertheless, this course proposes a sustained reexamination of the artist’s work and legacy. One way we will attempt to revise our understanding is by considering lesser-known episodes in his career, such as his early drawings in The Hague and the series of weaver pictures he executed in Nuenen. As the title of the course suggests, we will also reconsider the modernity of the artist’s practice, whether in his engagement with the mechanical reproduction of images, with new modes of transportation, or with issues of national identity. Finally, we will examine various aspects of the artist’s legacy, as conveyed through scholarly debates and in Van Gogh’s importance to recent artists such as Robert Colescott and Nicole Eisenman.

ARTH 7801P Devotional Space in Buddhist Art

Wen-shing Chou chouwenshing@gmail.com
Wednesday 4 – 6:40pm 1502 HN Code TBA

This course considers the purpose and function of Buddhist art by examining the role of Buddhist images in situ. How are images used in religious practices, and how do assemblies of images create and define the devotional space, both physical and conceptual? We begin with early archaeological sites in northern India from second century B.C.E, follow Buddhism’s paths of dissemination to Central Asia and China, and conclude with temples in the Himalayas that are still in active use today. Major sites of study include stupas of Sanchi and Amaravati, cave shrines of Ajanta, Bamiyan, Dunhuang, Yungang, Longmen, Xiangtangshan, and Dazu, monastic complexes at Wutai Shan, Alchi, and Tabo, as well as temples in the Potala Palace and the Forbidden Palace. Topics to be covered include representations of the lives of the Buddha, veneration of relics and reliquaries, visualization of scriptures, portraits of saints and eminent masters, mapping of Buddhist cosmology, and manifestations of divine kingship.

ARTH 7801Z Reading the Photo Essay

Antonella Pelizzari apelizza@hunter.cuny.edu
Monday 7 - 9:40 pm 1502 HN Code TBA

How does the photo essay work as a form of narrative and how do we write about it? The scope of this seminar is to discuss the visual and textual strategies that go to shape a photo essay – how photographs work in a sequence; what

is the role of graphic artists, publishers, and editors in these constructions; how does one describe the temporal and haptic experience of leafing through a visual essay.

Despite the large number of recent publications dedicated to the production of photo books in the Western, Asian, and Latin American world, art historians are still searching for a language that can unpack the use of photography in these narratives. The course will look at a wide range of geographies and historical moments that have marked this history, from nineteenth century travel writing to modernist fiction, social documentary essays, classic *Life* magazine stories, and conceptual forms expanded across cinema and the visual arts, with the scope of devising a language, possibly an experimental one, that can explain these creative modes of sequencing images and text.

The seminar is conceived as a working group that collaborates weekly on the discussion of a multiplicity of photo sequences, understanding the subjectivity of their authors, the aesthetics at work, and the cultural and financial demands of their publishing industries.

Readings cover a large array of themes and strategies, from classic texts by Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, W.J.T. Mitchell, and Carol Armstrong, to well-known essays conceived by artists, writers, and photographers - Robert Smithson, W.G. Sebald, and Sophie Calle, among others. Each student is asked to choose one project among a selection of straightforward photojournalistic essays or conceptual projects, and to propose a cohesive and compelling analysis in class presentation and in a 15-page paper. The course will schedule a visit to the New York Public Library Photographs Collection and will require research on an original artifact.

Attendance is mandatory. Please email instructor with any questions.

ARTH 780.08 The Artist's Institute Seminar: Art Writing

Jenny Jaskey jenny@theartistsinstitute.org
Tuesday 4 - 6:40pm The Artist's Institute Code 21245

This craft-based writing workshop will help artists and art historians develop stylish prose. We will use readings of artists' writings and literary non-fiction to discuss style, point of view, narrative technique, and language. Students will work on short writing exercises weekly to build skills and will develop a longer piece of art writing as a final assignment. The course will be led by Jenny Jaskey and a guest writer (TBA).