HISTORY OF ART (HSAR)

* HSAR 002a / AMST 007a, Furniture and American Life  Edward Cooke
In-depth study and interpretation of American furniture from the past four centuries. Hands-on experience with furniture in the collection of the Yale University Art Gallery to explore such topics as materials, techniques, styles, use, and meaning. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. WR, HU

HSAR 119a / EAST 119a, Introduction to the History of Art: Asian Art and Culture  Staff
This introductory course explores the art of India, China, Japan, and Korea from prehistory to the present. We consider major works and monuments from all four regions. Themes include the representation of nature and the body, the intersection of art with spirituality and politics, and everything from elite to consumer culture. All students welcome, including those who have no previous experience with either art history or the study of Asian art. This class makes frequent visits to Yale University Art Gallery. HU o Course cr

HSAR 219a / AMST 197a / ARCH 280a / URBN 280a, American Architecture and Urbanism  Elihu Rubin
Introduction to the study of buildings, architects, architectural styles, and urban landscapes, viewed in their economic, political, social, and cultural contexts, from precolonial times to the present. Topics include: public and private investment in the built environment; the history of housing in America; the organization of architectural practice; race, gender, ethnicity and the right to the city; the social and political nature of city building; and the transnational nature of American architecture. HU

HSAR 223a / AFAM 271a, The Venice Biennale, Art Fairs, and Foundations  Andrianna Campbell
A crowd formed at the Whitney Museum, as San Francisco artists occupied the institution to protest Laura Owens's solo exhibition opening. The gathering was in successive date order to Patrick Bright's protest of Dana Schultz's Emmet Till painting. It came a few years after the HowDoYouSayYaminAfrican? (YAMs collective) protest of Joe Scalans's Donelle Woolford performance artwork. The protest also foreshadowed the Black Women Artists for Black Lives Matter (BWABLM) series of protests across the country. From the Sackler family to Warren Kanders, those who peddle in rue and misfortune are now being asked to resign from art boards as multiple allegations force them out of planning positions, and remove their names from wings and museum buildings. Hive-like sit-ins and stand-ins are the actions of political organizers to make the democratic body heard in the public sphere. Today, these ethical shifts in art communities criticize and disrupt the planned temple-like meditative space of the museum. Between the cynical mole hill aims of a few of those San Francisco artists who capitulated after the Whitney offered them an exhibition, to the effective efforts of BWABLM, we explore where the art object functions in relation to political discourse and performative disruption as art practice. HU

* HSAR 224a / AFAM 271a, The Venice Biennale, Art Fairs, and Foundations  Andrianna Campbell
Since the 1970s, there has been a proliferation of commercial art fairs and new small foundations dedicated to the arts---FIAC, JoBurg, 1-54, Miami Basel, Fondation Cartier, Louis Vuitton Foundation, and the Foundation Zinsou. These and their correlative personal museums such as the Long Museum in China evidence a collecting class untethered from the traditions of encyclopedic, modern, and contemporary museums. The stalwart of these temporary art exhibitionary spaces is the Venice Biennale (1895), which is organized by country and imbricated in late-nineteenth century and twentieth-century representations of nationhood. By the 1950s already struggling to stay current alongside the São Paulo Biennale (1951), Biennale curators have been pushed into constant reinvention and innovation. The course examines Katharine Kuh's influence on a more gender diverse and racially inclusive Biennale in the 1950s, Sam Gilliam's 1970s installation, and current comparisons to Documenta, Berlin, Gwanju and Shanghai Biennales. Alongside these new institutions, the hybridized commercial art fairs pair some of the most historically relevant exhibitions alongside transient booths with works for sale. In an era of changing hierarchies of culture and status, the novelty of these exhibition spaces requires a constant flow of new artists, while they interrupt and silence criticality. The course examines their future impact on art historical scholarship, and their, at times, paradoxical and troubling grandiosity. HU

HSAR 240a, London Art Capital: Black Death to Brexit  Staff
Today London is a great art city—a cosmopolitan center for the making, display, and collecting of works of art. How did that come to be? This course answers the question through an intense engagement with the rich collections of the Yale Center for British Art, offering an introduction to British Art across six centuries and to the lively debates it generates. The course links the development of art and the art market with the origins and progression of capitalism. It traces London's artistic and architectural development from medieval origins through the courtly spectacle of Tudor and Stuart eras to the emergence of a recognizably modern economy and society around 1750, the time of William Hogarth. After 1800, Londoners William Blake and JMW Turner, and their Victorian successors, vividly chronicled the transformation of the industrial and imperial city. From 1910 British art entered a complex relationship with European modernism epitomized in the work of sculptor Barbara Hepworth. London was shattered by bombing during the Blitz: from the ruins emerged Pop Art, followed by Op-Art, led by Bridget Riley. By the 1990s the prominence of artists of color such as Yinka Shonibare prefigured the dynamic and cosmopolitan art scene of the present day. After Brexit, after Covid, what is the future for British art and for London? HU o Course cr

HSAR 247a / ARCG 161a / CLCV 161a, Art and Myth in Greek Antiquity  Staff
Visual exploration of Greek mythology through the study of ancient Greek art and architecture. Greek gods, heroes, and mythological scenes foundational to Western culture; the complex nature of Greek mythology; how art and architecture rendered myths ever present in ancient Greek daily experience; ways in which visual representations can articulate stories. Use of collections in the Yale University Art Gallery. HU o Course cr
* HSAR 251a / FREN 366a, Writers and Artists in Paris, 1780–1914  Marie Girard
Ways in which the transformation of Paris shaped the representation of artists who lived and worked in the French capital from the end of the Old Regime until the eve of World War I. The emergence of Paris as a cultural marker; the role played by the image of the bohemian or the artiste maudit. Authors and artists include David, Balzac, Delacroix, Baudelaire, Manet, Mallarmé, impressionist painters, and Picasso. L5, HU

* HSAR 258b / AMST 235b / ER&M 235b / EVST 235b, Wilderness in the North American Imagination  Alison Kibbe
Framing the terms “wilderness” and “North America” expansively, this seminar examines the construction of and the relationships between the human and the non-human in the “New World” through the lens of the conquest encounter and its ongoing impacts. We approach “North America” as a construct that we cannot disentangle from the construction of the Americas as a whole. We unpack how concepts such as wilderness, nature, wild, tame, and human are deeply imbricate with the construction of race, gender, and capitalism and cannot be understood outside of the historical and cultural context of the conquest of the Americas. This interdisciplinary course is grounded in Black studies, Black geographies, mobility studies, food studies, and Black and Indigenous understandings of the other-than-human. We consider academic texts, literature, performance, creative production, and community projects as intellectual production and theoretical interventions. Through field trips and special guests we connect with local Black and Indigenous agricultural producers and outdoor educators working in New England and learn how multi-modal and community-engaged scholarship can offer models for critical intervention and healing. This course requires permission from the instructor. Email alison.kibbe@yale.edu. HU

HSAR 273a, Art of Gothic Cathedrals  Jacqueline Jung
European Gothic churches (1140–1400) explored as multimedia architectural environments in which stained glass, sculpture, textiles, and liturgical furnishings are integral aspects of design and meaning. Buildings considered for their formal and material qualities and as sites of ritual performance and signs of political and social power. Recommended preparation: HSAR 112. HU

HSAR 275a / SAST 262a, The Body in Indian Art  Subhashini Kaligotla
How did artists in South Asia represent and view the body? And what do such representations reveal about the values of the time and place that produced them? This introductory lecture course explores these questions across time and through a range of figures that cut across gender and social group. We consider the representation of divine figures such as the Buddha, Hindu gods and goddesses, Jain saviors, and Muslim mystics; portraits of kings, queens, ministers, and courtly figures; and images of saints, yogis, ascetics, mendicants, and other renunciants. We also see how a range of non-human figures from birds and animals to powerful mythical beings such as demons, tree spirits, and snake demi-gods were depicted. Course materials include textual sources and visual media such as painting, sculpture, architecture, and more. Together they help us examine the imagination of their makers as well as the cultures, politics, and religions of the Indian subcontinent that gave rise to them. HU

HSAR 285a / ITAL 343a, Italian Renaissance Art  Staff
This course surveys the art of Renaissance Italy (c. 1420–1550) in its full breadth, including architecture, sculpture, and painting. Lectures situate artworks within broad cultural themes, while sections include the first-hand study of objects in the Yale University Art Gallery. Topics include the display of art in civic space; the influence of Roman antiquity on monumental architecture; the conception of nature in paintings and gardens; the representation of the human body in portraiture and heroic sculpture; the rise of women artists and patrons. The course scrutinizes acknowledged masterworks by Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and Raphael, in the artistic centers of Florence, Rome, and Venice. At the same time, it considers lesser known yet no less vibrant artistic sites, such as those in Southern Italy. It also draws map connections beyond Europe, revealing rich cultural exchanges with the Ottoman empire and the Americas. HU o Course cr

HSAR 262a / ARCH 260a, History of Architecture to 1750  Kyle Dugdale
Introduction to the history of architecture from antiquity to the dawn of the Enlightenment, focusing on narratives that continue to inform the present. The course begins in Africa and Mesopotamia, follows routes from the Mediterranean into Asia and back to Rome, Byzantium, and the Middle East, and then circulates back to mediaeval Europe, before juxtaposing the indigenous structures of Africa and America with the increasingly global fabrications of the Renaissance and Baroque. Emphasis on challenging preconceptions, developing visual intelligence, and learning to read architecture as a story that can both register and transcend place and time, embodying ideas within material structures that survive across the centuries in often unexpected ways. HU o Course cr

HSAR 374b / FREN 375b, Icons in French Art  Marie Girard
The purpose of the course is to focus on the emergence of some of the visual myths, which the large diffusion of pictures through all kind of media (prints, lithographs, photographs, ads) along the 19th century made possible. Based on a selection of works painted between Renaissance and 20th century, which have long been part of the French collections and belong for the most of them to the Musée du Louvre and the Musée d’Orsay, the course focuses on both the genesis of these pictures and the emotional, social, and political response they gained form the public audience when they appeared. Putting them in context and reading some of the main critical texts by Gautier, Baudelaire, Zola and Foucault among others, helps to understand what made Delacroix’s Liberté or Millet’s Angevin survive as emblems of the period and keys to French culture. That illuminates how artists shaped French history and sensibility through emblematic works which are still at the center of the visual culture today and how collective myths can grow. Prerequisite: French L5. L5, HU

* HSAR 399b / HIST 280jb / HSHM 407b / HUMS 220b, Collecting Before the Museum  Paola Bertucci
A history of museums before the emergence of the modern museum. Focus on: cabinets of curiosities and Wunderkammern, anatomical theaters and apothecaries’ shops, alchemical workshops and theaters of machines, collections of monsters, rarities, and exotic specimens. WR, HU
A wide-ranging introduction to the methods of the art historian and the history of the discipline. Themes include connoisseurship, iconography, formalism, and selected methodologies informed by contemporary theory.

* HSAR 405a / FILM 393a / HSHM 472a / HUMS 246a, Early Modern Media  
  Marisa Bass and John Peters

How did ideas move in the early modern world across time and place, between people and things? Looking beyond art history's traditional understanding of "medium" as referring to what a work of art is made from, this seminar explores the broader range of "media" that were central to discourse and debates about faith, politics, and the natural world during a period of great technological innovation and global expansion, as well as violence, upheaval, and uncertainty. Focusing on Dutch art, science, and thought during the long seventeenth century—a context in which experiments with media at home and encounters with media from abroad were especially charged, our discussions range from optics to navigation, theology to mathematics, landscape to microscope, clocks to cannons, and shells to flowers. Readings both historical and theoretical complement several visits to study works firsthand in nearby collections.

* HSAR 407a / ARCG 406a / HUMS 386, In, Out, and Back: African Art Collection, Exhibition, and Restitution  
  Cecile Fromont

This seminar investigates the role and place of material and immaterial objects of African expressive culture in their original contexts of production and display on the continent, the circumstances of their displacement to the European galleries and museum where they have featured since the early modern period, and the accelerating restitution movement aiming to bring them back to African communities and states. Collection visits, guest speakers, readings, and student research address topics such as the scientific and artistic project of early modern cabinets of curiosities; the birth of ethnology and the advent of the museum; art, race, violence; the entanglements between collection, commerce, and colonialism; and contemporary trends in museum decolonization and restitution.

* HSAR 427a / EAST 427a, Chinese Skin Problems  
  Quincy Ngan

This seminar uses artwork as a means of understanding the various skin problems faced by contemporary Chinese people. Divided into four modules, this seminar first traces how the "ideal skin" as a complex trope of desire, superficiality, and deception has evolved over time through the ghost story, Painted Skin (Huapi), and its countless spin-offs. Second, the course explores how artists have overcome a variety of social distances and barriers through touch; we look at artworks that highlight the healing power and erotic associations of cleansing, massaging, and moisturizing the skin. Third, we explore the relationship between feminism and gender stereotypes through artworks and performances that involve skincare, makeup and plastic surgery. Fourth, the course investigates the dynamics between "Chineseness," colorism, and racial tensions through the artworks produced by Chinese-American and diasporic artists. Each module is comprised of one meeting focusing on theoretical frameworks and two meetings focusing on individual artists and close analysis of artworks. Readings include Cathy Park Hong's Minor Feelings, Nikki Khanna's Whiter, and Leta Hong Fincher's Leftover Women.
about how Japan and Japanese objects and materials, along with objects and materials from other places, figured in a greater community of exchange, friction, confrontation, conquest, and adaptation in times when Portuguese marauders, Jesuit missionaries, Muslim traders, and Japanese pirates found themselves in the same waters, on ships laden with goods, making landfall in the domains of Japan’s great military hegemons. 

* HSAR 460a / ENGL 419a / HUMS 185a, Writing about Contemporary Figurative Art Margaret Spillane
A workshop on journalistic strategies for looking at and writing about contemporary paintings of the human figure. Practitioners and theorists of figurative painting; controversies, partisans, and opponents. Includes field trips to museums and galleries in New York City. Formerly ENGL 247. WR, HU

* HSAR 462a / AMST 446a, Sculpture and the Human in the 20th Century Joanna Fiduccia
This course explores how sculpture responded to radical struggles over the definition of the human in the 20th century. Our focus is the decades between 1914 and 1989, an interval when competing ideas about the nature of humanity emerged from global warfare, feminist activism and theory, postcolonial nationalisms, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Non-Aligned Movement — ideas that challenged a modern vision of the human forged by the forces of whiteness, capitalism, and patriarchy. What role did sculpture play in developing this vision, and can it serve to re-imagine or dismantle it? What perspective can sculpture’s intimate relation to the body lend to a fuller understanding of the human, its problems and potentials? We explore a range of art historical, literary, and philosophical frameworks to consider works by artists including Meta Warrick Fuller, Barbara Hepworth, Louise Bourgeois, Melvin Edwards, Paul Thek, Senga Nengudi, and Atsuko Tanaka. These works act as our lens to see more clearly an interconnected set of political contests to transform humanism from an Enlightenment-era worldview built on notions of innate human nature and universal values into a flexible, evolving understanding of human difference, struggle, and solidarity. We ask what it might look like to understand a history of sculpture shaped by Aimé Césaire’s “humanism made to the measure of the world” — one that remains alive to what sculpture might tell us about being human in relation to the non-human, less than human, and natural world. This course includes visits to university art collections and archives, as well as close engagement with the international conference, “Surrogates: Embodied Histories of Sculpture in the Short 20th-Century,” which will be held at Yale during the fall semester. HU

* HSAR 466a, The Technical Examination of Art Irma Passeri and Anne Gunnison
Introduction to methods used in the technical examination of works of art, including critical assessment of the information such methods provide. What technical examination can reveal about the materials and techniques used in a particular work’s creation and about its subsequent history.

* HSAR 499a, The Senior Essay Jacqueline Jung
Preparation of a research paper (25-30 pages in length) on a topic of the student’s choice, under the direction of a qualified instructor, to be written in the fall or spring term of the senior year. In order to enroll in HSAR 499, the student must submit a project statement on the date that their course schedule is finalized during the term that they plan to undertake the essay. The statement, which should include the essay title and a brief description of the subject to be treated, must be signed by the student’s adviser and submitted to the DUS. All subsequent deadlines are also strict, including for the project outline and bibliography, complete essay draft, and the final essay itself. Failure to comply with any deadline will be penalized by a lower final grade, and no late essay will be considered for a prize in the department. Senior essay workshops meet periodically throughout the term and are also mandatory. Permission may be given to write a two-term essay after consultation with the student’s adviser and the DUS. Only those who have begun to do advanced work in a given area and whose project is considered to be of exceptional promise are eligible. The requirements for the one-term senior essay apply to the two-term essay, except that the essay should be 50-60 pages in length.