

HISTORY OF ART

Director of undergraduate studies: Craig Buckley
(craig.buckley@yale.edu); arthistory.yale.edu

Art history is the study of all forms of art, architecture, and visual culture in their social and historical contexts. The History of Art major can serve either as a general program in the humanities or as the groundwork for more specialized training. Unless otherwise indicated, all courses in History of Art are open to all students in Yale College.

COURSE NUMBERING

100-level courses are broad introductory lecture courses that address basic art history from a number of thematic perspectives. Prospective majors are encouraged, but not required, to take these courses as early in their course of study as possible. Under certain circumstances, students who have taken the Advanced Placement test in art history may earn acceleration credit and, in consultation with the director of undergraduate studies (DUS), may substitute an upper-level class for one required 100-level course.

Intermediate and advanced courses, numbered above 200, encompass more specialized surveys and themes in art history.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Twelve term courses are required to complete the major: two introductory courses at the 100 level; four intermediate and advanced courses at the 200 and 300 levels; two seminars at the 350-498 level; a methods seminar, HSAR 401; two electives; and the senior essay, HSAR 499.

The major requires that the six intermediate and advanced courses must satisfy both a geographical and a chronological distribution requirement. These courses must be chosen from four geographical areas and four time periods. The geographical requirement is divided into five areas: Africa and the Pacific; the Americas; Asia and the Near East; Europe; and transregional. The chronological requirement is similarly divided into five segments: earliest times to 800; 800-1500; 1500-1800; 1800 to the present; and transchronological. A single course can fulfill both a geographical and a chronological requirement. Only classes originating in the History of Art department can fulfill the distribution requirements.

Junior seminar The methods seminar HSAR 401, *Critical Approaches to Art History*, is a wide-ranging introduction to the practices of the art historian and the history of the discipline. It is to be taken during the fall or spring term of the junior year.

Credit/D/Fail courses Courses taken Credit/D/Fail may not be counted toward the requirements of the major.

Searchable attributes YC HSAR: Pre-800; YC HSAR: 800-1500; YC HSAR: 1500-1880; YC HSAR: Post 1800; YC HSAR: Africa & Pacific; YC HSAR: Asia & Near East; YC HSAR: Europe; YC HSAR: The Americas; YC HSAR: Transchron; YC HSAR: Transregional

SENIOR REQUIREMENT

The senior essay is a research paper written usually in one term in HSAR 499. Students choose their own topics, which may derive from research done in an earlier course. The essay is planned during the previous term in consultation with a qualified instructor and/or with the DUS. It is also possible to write a two-term senior essay, however students wishing to do so must submit a petition to the DUS and the prospective adviser, normally by the first week after spring break of the junior year.

ADVISING

Electives may include courses from other departments if they have direct relevance to the major program of study. Approval of the DUS is required.

History of Art majors are urged to study foreign languages. Students considering graduate work should discuss with their advisers the appropriate language training for their field of interest.

Graduate courses Courses in the Graduate School are open to undergraduates with permission of the instructor and of the director of graduate studies. Course descriptions are available in the History of Art office in the Jeffrey H. Loria Center, 190 York St.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisites None

Number of courses 12 term courses (incl senior req)

Specific courses required HSAR 401

Distribution of courses 2 courses at 100 level; 6 courses numbered above 200, 2 of which must be 350-498 level seminars, fulfilling distribution requirements in 4 geographical and 4 chronological categories; 2 electives

Substitution permitted With DUS permission, electives from related depts

Senior requirement Senior essay (HSAR 499)

Requirements

12 courses (12 credits), including the senior requirement

- HSAR 401
- 2 courses at 100 level
- 6 courses numbered above 200, 2 of which must be 350-498 level seminars, fulfilling distribution requirements in 4 geographical and 4 chronological categories
- 2 electives
- HSAR 499

Art history is the study of all forms of art, architecture, and visual culture. The History of Art major can serve either as a general program in the humanities or as the groundwork for more specialized training.

Courses in the department are organized into three levels. Courses at the 100 level are broad introductory lecture courses that cover basic art history from several thematic perspectives. Majors are required to take two introductory courses and should consider

taking them as early as possible. Courses at the 100 level are normally not prerequisites for higher-level courses in the department. Intermediate courses are numbered 200–349. Courses numbered 350–498 are limited enrollment seminars.

Students with AP credit should consult the director of undergraduate studies (DUS).

Representative 100-level courses include:

- HSAR 110, Introduction to the History of Art: Global Decorative Arts
- HSAR 176, Introduction to the History of Art: The Politics of Representation

Representative 200- and 300-level courses include:

- HSAR 247, Art and Myth in Greek Antiquity
- HSAR 266, Introduction to Islamic Architecture
- HSAR 293, Baroque Rome: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture
- HSAR 347, Feminism and Contemporary Art

Representative 400-level course:

- HSAR 459, Contested Monuments

FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY OF ART

Professors Carol Armstrong, Tim Barringer, Marisa Bass, Edward S. Cooke, Jr., Milette Gaifman, Jacqueline Jung, Pamela Lee, Kishwar Rizvi, Nicola Suthor, Mimi Yiengpruksawan

Associate Professors Molly Brunson (*Slavic Languages and Literatures*), Craig Buckley, Jennifer Raab

Assistant Professors Nana Adusei-Poku, Allison Caplan, Alexander Ekserdjian, Joanna Fiduccia, Morgan Ng, Quincy Ngan, Catalina Ospina

See the visual roadmap of the requirements.

View Courses

Courses

*** HSAR 016b / EAST 016b, Chinese Painting and Culture** Quincy Ngan

This course focuses on important works of Chinese painting and major painters from the fourth century CE to the twentieth century. Through close readings of the pictorial contents and production contexts of such works of art, this course investigates the works' formats, meanings, and innovations from social, historical, and art-historical perspectives. In this course, students become familiar with the traditional Chinese world and acquire the knowledge necessary to be an informed viewer of Chinese painting. Discussions of religion, folkloric beliefs, literature, relationships between men and women, the worship of mountains, the laments of scholars, and the tastes of emperors and wealthy merchants also allow students to understand the cultural roots of contemporary China. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. HU

*** HSAR 022a / CLCV 022a, Imagining the Invisible in the Roman World** Alexander Ekserdjian

Ancient Mediterranean people were surrounded by images of ‘invisible’ things – the gods, the dead, and even a few ghosts. Seeing the gods themselves ‘in the flesh’ happened only rarely for the Romans, but images of those same divinities were everywhere – at home, in the marketplace, and at colossal scale in temples and sanctuaries. This course analyzes the ways in which Romans imagined these ‘invisible’ beings, excavating their imaginings through texts and objects. The material covered traces ancient imagination of invisible beings from Celtic cauldrons to Roman poets, and marble statues to painted synagogues. By looking at how the ‘invisible’ was represented we may discover much about how these unseen beings were understood, but also something about how Roman art worked as a representational system. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. WR, HU

HSAR 150a / ARCH 272a / RLST 262a, Introduction to the History of Art: Art and Architecture of the Sacred Jacqueline Jung

A wide-ranging, cross-temporal exploration of religious images, objects, and architecture in diverse cultures, from ancient Mesopotamia to modern Manhattan. Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and various polytheistic traditions are represented. Thematic threads include the human body; transformations of nature; death, memory, and afterlife; sacred kingship and other forms of political engagement; practices of concealment and revelation; images as embodiments of the divine; the framing and staging of ritual through architecture. HU o Course cr

HSAR 160b, Art and Technology Pamela Lee

This global introductory course broadly surveys the relationship between art and technology from parietal art (the art of prehistoric caves and rock art) to the rise of NFTs (“non-fungible tokens”) within contemporary digital culture. Departing from the notion of “techne” as craftsmanship or art, we consider the ways in which the history of art is always informed by histories of technology; and that histories of technology are often advanced through practices of art making. Topics include technologies for representing space in European and Asian painting and the centrality of Arab science in the development of linear perspective during the Renaissance; histories of textiles as data storage before the advent of the computer; the cybernetic revolution and the rise of computers; biometrics and surveillance; machine learning and art without artists. Objects include textiles, sculpture, painting, prints, photography and video, as well as sound, digital platforms and AI-generated artifacts. The course aims to de-center triumphal and universalist notions of technological achievement and ideologies of “progress” that inform contemporary cultures of media and technology. We pay special attention to the interests of race and gender throughout the semester. This course is open to all, including those with no prior background in art history. Sections may include visits to collections and sites across Yale campus. HU o Course cr

HSAR 210a / EAST 119a, Asian Art and Culture Quincy Ngan

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 217a / AMST 117a, American Art to 1900** Jennifer Raab

This course offers a survey of American art from European colonization of the continent to the establishment of a US overseas empire circa 1900. Through paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, photographs, and material culture, we consider the role of the visual arts in settler colonialism and nation building, in the invention of race and enforcement of its categories, and in the construction of citizenship. Throughout the term we think about how American art is shaped within wider Atlantic, Pacific, and Caribbean worlds. We look at plantation and “frontier” landscapes, the art of natural history, the cult of presidential images, the emergence of photojournalism, the creation of the modern museum, and the politics of public monuments. The aim of this course is three-fold: to acquire a foundational understanding of the art and visual culture of the United States, to situate the visual in the context of a historical and cultural framework, and to learn how to think and write about objects. The course is open to students at all levels, including those with no prior background in art history. HU o Course cr

HSAR 220a, Introduction to Contemporary Art Pamela Lee

Introduction of the pivotal figures, tendencies, and criticism of the art of the last three decades, exploring questions of material, form, media, process, and aesthetics relative to social, political, and economic issues. Popular media depict contemporary art as luxury goods for celebrities, oligarchs, and elites. This class provides a historical and theoretically nuanced picture of recent art and its critical reception. Some art history recommended but not required. HU o Course cr

HSAR 221b / RUSS 220b, Russian and Soviet Art, 1757 to the Present Molly Brunson

The history of Russian and Soviet art from the foundation of the Academy of the Arts in 1757 to the present. Nineteenth-century academicism, romanticism, and realism; the Russian avant-garde and early Soviet experimentation; socialist realism and late- and post-Soviet culture. Readings and discussion in English. HU TR o Course cr

HSAR 247a / ARCG 161a / CLCV 161a, Art and Myth in Greek Antiquity Milette Gaifman

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 252a, The Mexican Codices: Art and Knowledge Allison Caplan

This lecture course examines painted manuscripts (or codices) among the Nahua, Mixtec, and Maya people of Mexico, from the 15th through 16th centuries. We explore the Mexican codices as carriers of social, historical, and divinatory knowledge; the role of painted almanacs, histories, and maps in Mesoamerican thought and societies; and how Indigenous and European book traditions shaped the colonial encounter. HU

HSAR 257a, Modernism's Social Life Joanna Fiduccia

What was the social life of modernism? What might it still be today? This course is an introduction to European and North American modern art through its social networks and structures: gathering spaces, salons, schools, and stomping grounds, along with

political solidarities and coalitions. We meet key figures from the history of modernism and the avant-garde (artists such as Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Marcel Duchamp, Augusta Savage, and Isamu Noguchi) in the context of their pedagogical, political, and intimate associations. Along the way, lectures introduce a fresh cast of characters whose vision, labor, or material support made possible more familiar narratives of art history. We focus on artworks that ask us to think anew about modern art's collective purpose as well as its communal pleasures. HU o Course cr

HSAR 282b / HSHM 237b / WGSS 282b, Renaissance Bodies: Art, Magic, Science

Marisa Bass

An introduction to issues surrounding the representation of the body in both art and science, spanning from the late Middle Ages to the seventeenth century, and with a particular focus on the Northern Renaissance. Topics include medicine, reproduction, witchcraft, the gender spectrum, torture, race, disability, desire, dreams, and theories of imagination and invention. Sections and assignments will make ample use of the Yale collections. Previous experience with art history welcome but not required. HU

HSAR 286a / ARCH 302a, Renaissance Architecture: A Global History Morgan Ng

The period known as the Renaissance (1400–1600) witnessed the rise and spread of ambitious new forms of architecture. During this era, builders pushed an earlier tradition of gothic design toward unprecedented heights of structural daring and ornamental expression. At the same time, they found inspiration in ancient pagan and non-European monuments, which offered alternative models of technical virtuosity, material splendor, and magnificence. Engineers invented fortifications of colossal scale to combat powerful gunpowder weapons, while new media such as print transmitted architectural designs across the globe. This course explores such developments across Europe and its cultural and colonial networks in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It surveys a wide range of Renaissance building types, from palaces and gardens to churches, civic buildings, and urban infrastructure. Lectures consider how buildings and cities were reshaped by urban elites, absolutist monarchs, religious warfare, paper and print, and global expansion. Along the way, the course equips students with critical visual-technical skills and language to describe and interpret the built environment. Majors and non-majors of all years are welcome. Graduate students may register with advanced coursework. HU

HSAR 290b, Arts of the Silk Road Mimi Yiengpruksawan

This course offers a visual history of the art objects and other material goods that people set in motion, physically and imaginatively, across the Silk Roads regions of Eurasia from antiquity through the beginnings of the medieval era. It ranges across a variety of cultural productions and sites encompassing the agrarian and nomadic zones of Eurasia from the Bronze Age through the 7th-century rise of the first Caliphates in the west and the efflorescence of the Sui-Tang cosmopolis in the east. HU o Course cr

HSAR 315a, Nineteenth-Century French Art Carol Armstrong

European art produced between the French Revolution and the beginning of the twentieth century. Focus on French painting, with additional discussion of Spanish, English, and German art. Some attention to developments in photography, printmaking, and sculpture. HU o Course cr

HSAR 348a, Arts of Japan I Mimi Yiengpruksawan

Survey of major monuments in the visual arts of ancient and early medieval Japan with attention to the conditions and thought worlds of cultural production. Emphasis on the arts practices and philosophies of Buddhism and Shintō in juxtaposition with the courtly arts from narrative handscrolls to integrations of poetry and painting in landscape screens and picture albums. HU o Course cr

*** HSAR 354a / RSEE 309a / RUSS 309a, Art and the Arctic** Molly Brunson

This seminar asks how the arctic took shape as an aesthetically contested ground in the visual art, literature, material culture, and popular media of the nineteenth century. How did national styles make claims on a stateless landscape? In what ways was the circumpolar region gendered and racialized? And how did these questions shape the emergence of a northern modernism too often neglected in histories of art? Questions of whiteness, exploration, and exploitation will be considered in the works of Russian, Nordic, and Sami artists from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. HU

*** HSAR 401a, Critical Approaches to Art History** Allison Caplan

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. WR, HU

*** HSAR 420a / LAST 420a, Techniques of the Body in Latin American Art** Catalina Ospina

In a 1934 article titled “Techniques of the Body,” anthropologist Marcel Mauss argued that culture defines the ways bodies are used and trained. Mauss’s insight has sprung a series of studies on embodiment that examine how bodies are culturally construed. Engaging literature on embodiment from diverse disciplines—including philosophy, anthropology, and cognitive science—this course investigates how cultural understandings of the body inform the meaning of artmaking and art-experiencing practices. Discussions center on artworks from Latin America from the Pre-Hispanic to the Contemporary period—including Nazca lines, Maya ceramics, colonial-era mopa mopa, the early 20th-century Anthropophagy movement in Brazil, Hélio Oiticica’s and Lygia Clark’s works from the 1950s and 1970s, and the works of Beatriz Gonzales and Doris Salcedo from the 1980s and 1990s. Discussing these works, students address questions ranging from super-human scale to the diverse strategies artworks use to invoke bodies metonymically. Comparative artworks from other cultures and periods show the applicability of this methodology beyond Latin American art. The course incorporates hands-on components and employs artifacts from Yale’s museums. HU

*** HSAR 447b / AMST 310b, The American West: Art, Land, Politics** Jennifer Raab

The American West holds a powerful place in the cultural and political imagination of the United States. This seminar considers changing conceptions of the land across media—from maps and guidebooks, to paintings, panoramas, and photographs, to earth art and satellite imagery. We examine the politics of water rights; artists’ engagement with ecological questions; the representation of railroads, National Parks, ghost towns, and highways; the mythology of the frontier; and the visual construction of settler colonialism and indigenous resistance. The course emphasizes close attention to works of art, archival research, and developing term papers that engage with the Beinecke’s extraordinary Western Americana Collection. Classes are held at the

Beinecke as well as the Yale University Art Gallery, the Yale Center for British Art, and the Peabody Museum. HU

*** HSAR 455b, Conceptualization of Space** Craig Buckley

Introduction to the discipline of architecture through the elusive concept of space. This course traces key shifts in the conceptualization of space in aesthetics and architectural theory from the eighteenth century through to the present. HU

*** HSAR 456a / MMES 456a, Art and Politics in the Modern Middle East** Kishwar Rizvi

Political ideologies have either unified the modern Middle East, such as Pan-Arabism of the 1960s and Islamism of the 1980s, or caused deep ruptures, such as Zionism and sectarianism. Examination of the art and architectural productions that have gone hand-in-hand with these political developments from the nineteenth century until present day. Poetic, visual, and urban interventions document the profound changes that have defined the countries of this region, while connecting them to political movements throughout the world. WR, HU

*** HSAR 457a, Japanese Gardens** Mimi Yiengpruksawan

Arts and theory of the Japanese garden with emphasis on the role of the anthropogenic landscape from aesthetics to environmental precarity, including the concept of refugium. Case studies of influential Kyoto gardens from the 11th through 15th centuries, and their significance as cultural productions with ecological implications. HU

*** 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 469b / EAST 469b, Contemporary Art and Culture in China** Quincy Ngan

This course is an introduction to the art and culture of contemporary China, covering the period from 1960s to the present day. It focuses on art objects, performances, propaganda, and exhibitions produced by the government, the business sector, curators, and avant-garde artists in Mainland China. We also look at China's Olympic stadiums, the Three Gorges Dam, and skyscrapers (including those in Hong Kong and Taiwan). Class meetings discuss the required readings and investigate artworks, films, and events that speak to China's political ideologies, society, and economy, as well as its role in globalization and international conflicts. To establish a cross-cultural interpretation, this class also explores how Euro-American artists and filmmakers used their arts to express their views on contemporary China.

*** HSAR 474b, Histories and Critiques of the Art Museum** Tim Barringer

The art museum is an institution with an active ideological and social role, which has a decisive impact on the formation of art historical knowledge. Urgent questions in contemporary museology include: Can we decolonize the museum? How can museums become more inclusive? Should collections be returned to communities of origin? This course examines the recent literature on the history of art museums, opening up theoretical and methodological as well as substantive and historical issues. It also provides a broad survey of the development of the art museum from the French

Revolution to the present day. Issues under investigation include: the formation of histories for art through the hanging of collections; questions of representation of women, ethnic and cultural groups in museum collections; the definition and promulgation of nationalism and 'schools' of art; the relationship between the art museum and Modernism; contemporary artists and the museum gallery spaces and the making of publics for art; the processes of acquisition, cataloguing and display by institutions; the social and educational role of the art museum; the relationship between art museums and colonialism; museums in the post-colonial world; museums and race today. Permission of the instructor is required. HU

*** HSAR 476a, Energy Cultures of Modern Architecture** Craig Buckley

It is estimated that the construction and operation of buildings accounts for nearly 40% of carbon emissions globally. If a radical decarbonization of architectural practice stands as the discipline's central challenge today, this calls not only for new solutions, but for different engagement with architecture's history. This discussion seminar reinterprets histories of modern architecture through the concept of "energy cultures." An energy culture (Sheller, 2014; Szeemann and Diamanti, 2019) can be defined as the specific assemblage of fuel, matter, practice, labor, and meaning that have informed architecture's conceptualization and construction. In contrast to approaches that stress quantitative, technical, and instrumental approaches to energy accounting and energy efficiency, this course looks at how different representations, concepts, and behaviors emerged in response to historic shifts in energy production and consumption. The first portion of the course surveys a range of historical approaches to concepts of energy and environmental justice within and adjacent to architecture. The bulk of the course then turns to case studies, examining particular buildings and projects in order to develop new interpretations and questions about these monuments based on an energy cultures approach. HU

*** HSAR 489b / CLCV 305b / GMAN 489b, Pathos-Figures: Affection-Images in the Visual Arts** Nicola Suthor

Images with high pathos inform our perception of human life and define our stance in the world. The seminar wants to foster a critical awareness of the formative power that pathos figures exert on our moral beliefs concerning human behavior. The course covers the timespan from Antiquity to Modernity in Western culture and deals with historical moments that reflect different attempts to cultivate and temper strong emotions. We discuss the transfer of pathos and how the dissemination of eminent pathos figures of antiquity have shaped the imagery of the Western canon; we tackle with one of the most far-reaching concepts of art history, Aby Warburg's Pathos formula that encourages us to draw in broad strokes connecting lines of affection over centuries and different cultures; we look into the discourse on human suffering in Medieval times and how it has defined the Christian doctrine of the affective image; we have a close look at treatises of the 17th century that worked on theorizing human passions and discuss the Enlightenment perspective that aimed at interiorizing pathos by dint of the discourse of beauty; we discuss the Modern "close-up" and how it unfolds the moment of pure bodily presence as highly affective entity. We ask if we are in need of new pathos images that reflect our current emotional stakes, and how they might look. HU

*** HSAR 490b / FILM 320b, Close Analysis of Film** Oksana Chefranova

Close study of a range of major films from a variety of periods and places. Apart from developing tools for the close analysis of film, we consider such topics as genre and mode; the role of sound; cinema as a structure of gazes; remakes and adaptations; approaches to realism; narration and resistance to narration; film in relation to other moving image media; and the relationship of close analysis to historical contextualization and interpretation more generally. Prerequisite: FILM 150. WR, HU