

# HISTORY OF ART

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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

1000-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 1000-level course.

Intermediate and advanced courses, numbered above 2000, encompass more specialized surveys and themes in art history.

## REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

See Links to the attributes indicating courses approved for History of Art major requirements.

Twelve term courses are required to complete the major: two introductory courses at the 1000 level; four intermediate and advanced courses at the 2000 and 3000 levels; two seminars at the 3500-4497 level; a methods seminar, HSAR 4401; two electives; and the senior essay, HSAR 4499.

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 4401, 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** No course taken Credit/D/Fail may be applied toward the requirements of the major.

## SENIOR REQUIREMENT

The senior essay is a research paper written usually in one term in HSAR 4499. 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 4401

**Distribution of courses** 2 courses at 1000 level; 6 intermediate or adv courses, as specified, which must fulfill 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 4499)

### *Courses*

\* **HSAR 0024a, Nation and Empire in British Art** Tim Barringer

To celebrate the reopening of the Yale Center for British Art, this course investigates the key themes of national identity and imperial history by looking at works of art. It offers first year students an opportunity to study the world's finest collection of British paintings, sculpture, drawings, prints and rare books. Developing skills in visual analysis and engaging with historical contexts, the class will examine works of art in the relation to the fraught history of Britain and its empire. The industrial revolution, the role of women, the growth of cities and the rise of democratic politics will emerge as major themes. Looking at Britain's role in the world, we will undertake a critical appraisal of works of art produced in the North America, Caribbean, India, Australia and South Africa. HU

**HSAR 1110a / ARCG 1110a, Introduction to the History of Art: Global Decorative Arts**  
Staff

Global history of the decorative arts from antiquity to the present. The materials and techniques of ceramics, textiles, metals, furniture, and glass. Consideration of forms, imagery, decoration, and workmanship. Themes linking geography and time, such as trade and exchange, simulation, identity, and symbolic value. HU o Course cr

**HSAR 1170a / HSHM 2240a / HUMS 4570a, Nature and Art, or The History of Almost Everything** Staff

This global introductory course surveys the interrelation of nature and art from antiquity to the present. Throughout the semester, we consider a controversial question: is it possible to understand the history of art and science as a more-than-human story? Challenging traditional narratives of human progress, we attend to episodes of invention and destruction in equal measure. We discuss how art history is inseparable from histories of extracted resources, exploited species, environmental catastrophe, racialized and gendered understandings of the 'natural' and 'unnatural', and politicized understandings of land as power. At the same time, we explore how makers across cultures approached the natural world as a locus of the divine, a source of inspiration, and the ground for both scientific inquiry and the pursuit of self-knowledge. The very notions of art and artistic creation are impossible to define without recourse to nature as both a concept and a site of lived experience. This course is open to all, including those with no prior background in art history. Sections will include visits to collections and sites across Yale campus. HU o Course cr

**HSAR 3219a / AMST 1197a / ARCH 2600a / HIST 1125a / URBN 1101a, American Architecture and Urbanism** Staff

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 o Course cr

**\* HSAR 3230a / LAST 3230a, Illustrating Andean History: The Work of Guaman Poma** Staff

One of the most famous manuscripts to survive from the Spanish colonial Americas is the 1615 *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (The First New Chronicle, and Good Government, often called *Nueva corónica* or *New Chronicle*). The author was Indigenous Andean Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (c. 1535–c. 1616). This work is one of the most important sources for understanding Inka culture and colonial rule from an Indigenous perspective. It consists of 1,189 pages with 398 full-page ink line drawings. Few illustrated manuscripts survive from this period, and Guaman Poma's has no rival. The *New Chronicle* was written in Peru in Spanish, Quechua, Aymara, and Latin. But one might even consider the many images a fifth, purely visual language that combined Andean and European representation systems. Its images have become the most common illustrations of Andean history. In this course, we delve into the work's history and many-layered subtleties of its images to understand its import and the legacy of this Indigenous author. o Course cr

**HSAR 3243a / ARCG 2143a / CLCV 1701a, Greek Art and Architecture** Staff

Monuments of Greek art and architecture from the late Geometric period (c. 760 B.C.) to Alexander the Great (c. 323 B.C.). Emphasis on social and historical contexts. HU o Course cr

**\* HSAR 3270b / NELC 1040b, Art and Visual Culture in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia** Kathryn Slanski

In this course we investigate and compare the stunning visual culture of both ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. We look into the purpose and function of ‘art’ in these two ancient societies, the intended audiences and the stylistic development of many different kinds of art, from sculpture to two-dimensional representations. We are planning for visits to West Campus to look at actual objects from the Peabody collections, the Yale Babylonian Collection, and (Covid-19 restrictions permitting) we are planning a trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Additional aspects that are addressed in this course concern restoration and cultural heritage issues such as looting and repatriation of artifacts to their country of origin. HU

**HSAR 3271a, Medieval People and Their Art** Jacqueline Jung

Survey of the art and architecture of medieval Europe through a series of especially influential men and women who commissioned, inspired, designed, and used it, from 4th century CE through the early fifteenth century. Each lecture focuses on a different person (from kings, queens, emperors; revolutionary monks and visionary nuns; ascetic saints and extravagant nobles), and demonstrates how their historically particular concerns, interests, and ambitions played themselves out in the visual culture they sponsored. Field trip to the Met Cloisters. HSAR 112 is helpful, but not required.

HU o Course cr

**HSAR 3290a, Arts of the Silk Road** Staff

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 3293a, Baroque Rome: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture** Staff

Analyses of masterpieces by prominent artists in baroque Rome. Caravaggio’s “baroque” differentiated from the path of the classicist artists. Works by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, who dominated the art scene in Rome as sculptor and architect half a century after Caravaggio’s death. HU o Course cr

**HSAR 3305a / EAST 2403a, Time in Chinese Art** Staff

This class explores the theme of “time” in Chinese art from the traditional to the contemporary period. Drawing upon scholarship on Chinese philosophical understanding of time and clockworks, this course explores how art made manifest notions of the future, past, and present, the passage of time, *ksana*, aeons, eternity and deadlines. This class also investigates manipulations of time – how the unique format, artistic ideas and medium and materials of Chinese art helped to pause, rewind, compress and shorten time. Observing such temporalities, we analyze narrative murals and handscrolls, “this life” v. afterlife in funeral art, paintings of immortality, the significance of bronze corrosion in antiquarianism, uses of the past in traditional Chinese painting and contemporary art, the future and agelessness in movies and digital art, the materiality and nostalgia of old photography and time-based artworks, as well as the history of People’s Republic of China as presented at the Tian’anmen Square. HU o Course cr

**HSAR 3326a / ARCH 2001a, History of Architecture to 1750** Staff

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 4351a / CLCV 4771a, Ancient Art at the Edge of Empire** Alexander Ekserdjian

This seminar treats the art made in imperial contact zones, the 'edges of empire.' Focusing on two regions, Roman-period Syria—home of multiple linguistic and religious traditions and the point of convergence between the Parthian and Roman empires—and pre-Roman southern Italy, where Greek, Etruscan, Roman, and Indigenous Italian cultural elements co-existed, the course first explores the theories concerning art and empire formed for modern historical periods before turning to antiquity. The two main contexts under discussion allow us to investigate one 'edge' shared between two empires (Roman Syria) and in the other a world of many overlapping 'edges' (southern Italy ca. 400-100 BCE). The Yale University Art Gallery collections from the city of Dura-Europos in Roman Syria are used extensively. HU

**\* HSAR 4361a / ARCH 2104a, How to Design a Renaissance Building** Morgan Ng

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, European architects and their patrons conceived buildings of newfound scale and artistic ambition—buildings that vied in grandeur with the monuments of classical antiquity. Before realizing such structures, however, architects first had to draw and model them. What graphic mediums and tools allowed them to visualize such large, complex works? What imaginative processes fueled their creativity? What innovations did they borrow from other disciplines, such as painting, sculpture, archaeology, and the geometrical sciences? And to what extent can scholars today reconstruct these past practices? HU

**\* HSAR 4375a / HIST 3197a / HSHM 4410a, Museums: Power and Politics** Elaine Ayers

Museums are in a state of crisis. From calls for decolonization and repatriation to protests over human remains collections and unethical donor policies, museums and related cultural institutions find themselves at a crossroads, reckoning with their violent colonial histories while handling ongoing concerns about workers' rights, systemic inequality, and their role in shaping knowledge in the public sphere. Whether addressing climate change policy, Black Lives Matter protests, fights for unionization, or Indigenous representation, it's clear that museums are rich sites for critique in the history of science and beyond. How did we get here, and where do we go from here? Beginning with early modern cabinets of curiosity and moving through nineteenth century encyclopedic museums, controversial anatomical collections, and more recent natural history institutions, we investigate how museum politics and power produce knowledge, from the depths of their archives to sensationalized exhibits while questioning what an ethical, holistic museum might look like in the future. Amidst ongoing debates over controversial collections like the Benin Bronzes, human remains

stored in universities across the United States, the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 2023 admission of looting practices, and the American Museum of Natural History's shallow apology for its eugenic past, the role of museums has expanded beyond the bounds of the academy, stoking universal struggles around human rights, international repatriation policies, and the politics of preservation, display, and loss. We bridge the classroom and the collection, visiting institutions around New Haven, practicing skills like provenance research and ethical handling of difficult objects while working towards a practice-based final project that suggests ways forward for museums and collections.

WR, HU

**\* HSAR 4380a, Originality** Joanna Fiduccia

An investigation of originality as a critical concept for modern thought and visual culture. Traveling across the spectrum of its divergent meanings – novelty, ingenuity, unconventionality, distinctiveness, authenticity, fundamentality, fidelity – we will track how originality came to be a desideratum of modern subjects, and how “originals” came to be their proper object of study and love. We will also consider how appeals to the elsewhere and erstwhile have buttressed the concept, reinforcing the presumed priority of a European center against a peripheral rest-of-the-world supposedly under its influence. Is originality a value to defend, or is it a resource claimed by some and denied to others? How have our increasingly sophisticated technical capacities for reproduction, replication, and most recently, generation, tested our intuitions about originality? Facing a seeming infinity of sources, as well as their forceful algorithmic channeling, what is original work today? Themes include: authorship and authenticity, sources and influence, anachronism and pseudomorphism, seriality, reproduction, appropriation and citation, style and similitude. HU

**\* HSAR 4393b / EAST 4401b, The Transcultural Life of Things: Case Studies from East Asia** Staff

From production to circulation and consumption, the life of an artifact often unfolds across multiple geographic locations and varied environments. The movement of things in space and time offers valuable insights into the waxing and waning of maritime and terrestrial networks that fostered transregional connectivity. This course introduces students to a variety of objects from premodern East Asia with a view to understanding the histories of intercultural exchange inscribed into their designs, materials, and itineraries. It begins by familiarizing students with methodologies, interpretive frameworks, and critical vocabulary for studying interconnected material cultures. The rest of the course is organized as a series of case studies on specific object types and structured into four modules, each focusing on a different sphere of exchange defined by shared geography, trade, religion, or ecosystem. Through this diverse group of objects, we will explore the entanglement of material culture with evolving structures of power, networks of interregional and long-distance exchange, and the physical environment in East Asia. HU

**\* HSAR 4401a, Critical Approaches to Art History** Alexander Ekserdjian

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 4405a / HUMS 3386a / ITAL 3386a, The Dark Side of The Italian Renaissance: Sex, Scandals, and Secrets** Simona Lorenzini and Deborah Pellegrino

The course explores the more controversial, hidden, and overlooked aspects of the Italian Renaissance. While this period is celebrated for its artistic, cultural, and intellectual achievements, it also had its fair share of intrigue, corruption, and moral complexities. Through love poems, secret letters, intricate networks, and political conspiracies, the course paints a vivid picture of the social and cultural landscape of Renaissance and early modern Italy. We look at the complex figure of Michelangelo, both as an artist and poet, focusing on his queer relationship with Tommaso de' Cavalieri and his friendship with Vittoria Colonna. We then discuss how Renaissance art, often commissioned by powerful individuals—such as Isabella D'Este's patronage of Leonardo da Vinci—was used to promote political or social agendas. We examine the alliances, betrayals, and murders that took place in Renaissance courts and how they shaped the political arena. Topics include the assassination of Lorenzo de' Medici's brother, Caterina de' Medici's agency, and Borgia's rise to power as well as the use of poison as a political instrument in power struggles and schemes to eliminate rivals. The course highlights radical and sharp-witted women writers, such as Moderata Fonte and Arcangela Tarabotti, who protested against a patriarchal society, and gave voice to those who challenged gender norms. By uncovering these compelling narratives through the intersection of literature, religion, history, art, and sexuality, the course offers a more nuanced and critical view on this acclaimed era. This course counts as language across the curriculum (LxC). HU

**\* HSAR 4418a, Seeing, Describing, and Interpreting** Nicola Suthor

Study of select works of art from the period between 1500 and 1800, all on display in the Yale Art Gallery. Required readings of articles and theoretical text are meant to encourage discussion in front of the artwork. The importance of both visual and written information to better understand how artists communicate messages and engage imagination. All sessions held at the Yale Art Gallery. HU

**\* HSAR 4421a / RLST 4210a, Saints and Relics in Medieval Europe** Jacqueline Jung

In medieval Europe, the dead were always present, and none had a greater impact on visual arts, material culture, and architecture than the "very special" dead known as saints. This course examines the men and women whose holy lives and often spectacular deaths loomed so large in the Christian imagination, including biblical saints such as the apostle Peter and Mary Magdalene, early martyrs such as St Stephen and St Foy, and thirteenth-century celebrities such as Francis of Assisi and Christina the Astonishing. We look at how their stories inspired iconic and narrative representations in various media (textual and visual), and how their bodily remains, enshrined in various forms of reliquaries, forged communities of the faithful over centuries. HU

**\* HSAR 4449a / EAST 3401a, Nanban Art: Japan's Artistic Encounter with Early Modern Europe** Mimi Yiengpruksawan

Exploratory and investigative in nature, this seminar is conceived as a baseline engagement with the intersections of art, religion, science, commerce, war, and diplomacy at Kyoto and Nagasaki in the age of Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and English political and mercantile interaction in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It addresses a set of themes whose point of entry is the entangled character of visual production and reception in Japan at a tipping point in the emergence of



global modernity, when what were called the Nanbans – “Southern Barbarians,” i.e. Europeans – began to arrive in Japan. The question of whether or not much-theorized nomenclatures such as *baroque*, *rococo*, *mestizo*, and even *global modernity* are pertinent to analysis from the Japanese and Asian perspective constitutes the backbone of the course and its primary objective in the study of a corpus of visual materials spanning the European and Asian cultural spheres. As such the seminar is not only about Japan, per se, or about Japanese objects, or the shogunal eye. It is equally 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 hegemony. HU

\* **HSAR 4452a, Landscape, Mobility, and Dislocation** Jennifer Raab and Tim Barringer

The study of landscape, during the long nineteenth century, as a powerful and contested artistic medium that could express the ideologies of empire, philosophies of nature, the relationship between geography and vision, and constructions of self and other. Review of such issues in American landscape painting in both a transatlantic and transhemispheric context with specific attention to works in Yale collections. HU

\* **HSAR 4460a / ENGL 3454a / HUMS 1850a, 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. WR, HU

\* **HSAR 4477b / EALL 2050b / EAST 3204b / HUMS 181b, The Culture of Landscape in China** Pauline Lin

An introduction to Chinese philosophical, poetic, and visual explorations of landscape and the changing relationship between human beings and nature. Through texts, archaeological materials, visual and material culture, and garden designs from the 2nd c. BCE to modern times, we learn about the Chinese conception of the world, relationship to and experiences in nature, and shaping of the land through agriculture, imperial parks, and garden designs. We conclude with contemporary environmental issues confronting China, and how contemporary parks can help regenerate our ecosystem. HU

\* **HSAR 4492a / ER&M 3592a / SPAN 4600a, Visual Encounters in the Early Modern Atlantic** Catalina Ospina and Lisa Voigt

This course examines the visual, material, and human flows that connected Africa, Europe, and the Americas between 1450 and 1850 and gave its contours to the early modern Atlantic World. Students explore the role of the visual in key institutions and phenomena that emerged in the circum-Atlantic and continue to cast their long shadow over the contemporary world. Topics include: colonialism, the slave trade, blackness and indigeneity, scientific exploration, religious encounters, and revolt. HU

\* **HSAR 4499a, The Senior Essay** Joanna Fiduccia

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.