



AZTECS AND THE CONQUEST

Image: Codex Vaticanus A 3738 folio 87r

SPRING 2026 ARHS 537

Dr. William Barnes

Tuesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

From Splendor to Survival: The Aztecs Before and After the Conquista

By the early part of the 16th century the Aztecs of Central Mexico ruled one of the largest empires in the ancient Americas. The royal art produced in the imperial capital of Tenochtitlan was eclectic, consciously drawing on over a millennium of Mesoamerican artistic development. Surprisingly, many of these artistic traditions continued following the disastrous conclusion of the Aztec-Spanish war (the Conquest). Some artistic survivals, such as feather mosaic, flourished with Spanish patronage and church support. Others, like manuscript painting and cartographic histories, developed a hybrid existence as they were useful to both Spanish colonial officials and surviving indigenous nobles and communities. During the course of the semester, seminar participants will follow Aztec artistic developments from their humble beginnings to their imperial apogee, and, following the Aztec-Spanish war, trace the threads of artistic survival into the early colonial period and beyond where it played a role in cultural survival, subaltern agency, and, in later times, the development of indigenismo and cultural revival.

Background Reading:

Esther Pasztory, Aztec Art. U of OK Press (2000).

Michael D. Coe, Javier Urcid, and Rex Koontz, Mexico: From the Olmecs to the Aztecs, 8th ed. Thames and Hudson (2019).

The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico, expanded edition, by Miguel León Portilla (2006).

This course fulfills the Non-Western/Non-European and the Museum Studies requirements.

Department of Art History
College of Arts and Sciences





DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY

SPRING 2026 ARHS 545

Dr. Heather Shirey

Wednesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

Since its invention in 1839, photography has served as a means through which practitioners, both amateur and professional, have documented the world around them, enabling viewers to engage with experiences and perspectives beyond their own. Through its documentation of sites and events as varied as political demonstrations, industrial workplaces, metropolitan spaces, natural landscapes, battlefields, and domestic rituals, photography has operated as a cultural technology that both constructs and archives the visual vocabularies through which collective histories and private subjectivities have been represented and negotiated globally. This course considers the development of documentary photography as a global phenomenon and addresses broad questions such as the following: What social, cultural, and aesthetic functions has documentary photography fulfilled historically, and in what ways have these purposes evolved over time? What motivates photographers to engage in acts of visual documentation, and how do such practices mediate relations between image, reality, and the contested notion of “truth”? What ethical considerations emerge in the production, circulation, and reception of documentary images within various institutional frameworks, including photobooks, exhibitions, and online platforms? Readings and discussions will allow for a critical examination of photographic books and museum exhibitions as catalysts for social engagement and transformative action, with particular attention to case studies from Africa, the African Diaspora, and Latin America.

Image:

Gordon Parks, The Invisible Man, 1952

This course fulfills the Museum Studies requirement.



Image: "The Forum" in the Museum of Tolerance, Los Angeles, CA, June 2024. Photo by Amy Nygaard.

SPRING 2026 ARHS 570

Dr. Amy Nygaard

Thursdays 5:30-8:30 PM

Museum Studies is an interdisciplinary field that examines the theory, history, practice, and evolving purpose of museums as civic and cultural institutions. In this foundational seminar, students will explore how museums operate at the center of today's political and cultural debates—grappling with questions of truth, representation, justice, and belonging in a polarized society. Through readings, discussions, and community engagement, students will analyze urgent issues such as access, equity, and education, as well as the ethical responsibilities museums hold in shaping public memory and discourse. Engaging with museum professionals and advocates, we will consider how institutions confront demands to “decolonize” collections, repair historical harm, and address systemic inequalities of wealth and power. Students will also investigate how technology, activism, and inclusive programming are transforming museums into sites of resistance, reflection, and renewal in times of crisis.

This is a core course in the Museum Studies Certificate program.

Department of Art History
College of Arts and Sciences





MODERN CHINESE PAINTING

Image: Luo Ping, *Figures and Landscapes after poems by Jin Nong*, one of twelve leaves, 1759, Palace Museum, Beijing, China.

FALL 2024 ARHS 530

Dr. Elizabeth Kindall

- Blended -

Tuesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

In my dream I sit in a grotto and a serving boy offers tea and fruits. A book collection fills the shelves; I open a volume and look at it—there is a lot of seal script like tadpoles, bird tracks, and thunderbolts. In my dream I read it and seem to be able to make sense of its thorny abstruseness.

Zhang Dai, *Dream Reminiscences of Tao'an*

We will read six books that focus on modern Chinese painting in this seminar. Each book will introduce students to major areas of exploration in modern Chinese paintings created between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries. They deal with topics ranging from fourteenth-century architectural painting under the Mongol regime to the life of a ghost painter of the eighteenth century to plein air and transmedial landscapes of the early twentieth century and socialist-realist landscapes of the early People's Republic of China. All six books we will read have been published within the last four years. They therefore represent new areas of exploration in the field. We will further consider the investigative techniques of the Western and Chinese authors of the six books because each author utilizes different methodologies in relation to modern Chinese painting. Most importantly, each book critiques the elite "literati painting tradition" from a different perspective. Discussion topics will include connoisseurship, technical and mechanical perfection in architectural painting, painting as craft, biography and painting, theoretical texts on ink painting, the New Culture Movement and perception, revolutionary drawing, and the creation of a national painting style. After we have read and discussed each text in class, we will meet the author via Zoom for more in-depth discussion. Deep exploration and careful analysis of these six books will introduce students to basic principles of traditional Chinese art, while also allowing them to engage deeply with specific objects and contemporary methodologies relevant in the field.

Students are not expected to have a background in Chinese studies. All readings will be in English.

Background Reading: Richard M. Barnhart, et al, Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting. New Haven & London: Yale University Press; Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1997.

This course fulfills the Non-Western/Non-European requirement.

Department of Art History
College of Arts and Sciences





ISSUES IN EXHIBITING ASMAT ART

Image: "Asmat Museum of Culture and Progress. Agats, Papua Province, Indonesia." Dr. Amy Nygaard, 16 November 2019

FALL 2024 ARHS 536

- In Person -

Dr. Amy Nygaard

Thursdays 5:30-8:30 PM

The birth of the modern museum served the rise and maintenance of Euro-American imperialism and colonialism. Ethnographic collections and museums quite literally had/have the power to shape the image of 'other' people through the 'acquisition', interpretation, arrangement, and display of material culture. In this course, these powers are critically examined within the history of ethnographic collections and display practices. The course culminates in a focused examination of the critical issues involved in exhibiting Asmat art of present.

A selection of topics will be covered in the course, including theories and ideologies of display, how classificatory schemas communicate and contribute to western ontologies, the ethical implications of ethnographic collecting, decolonization, the decentralization of Eurocentric time, history, and perspectives, and so much more!

From this foundational study of the history and theory of ethnographic collections and displays, students will collaborate in the creation of museum policies, public programming, and curation for the American Museum of Asmat Art.

This is a core course in the Museum Studies Certificate program.

Department of Art History
College of Arts and Sciences





CAMPUS DESIGN AND ST. THOMAS

Image: University of St. Thomas aerial view, October 2022. Photograph by Mark Brown and courtesy of UST.

FALL 2024 ARHS 540

Dr. Victoria Young

- In Person -

Wednesday 5:30-8:30 PM

Every week you come to class on the St. Paul campus of the University of St. Thomas. What do you know about this place and our history? How does it connect to the history of campus design more broadly? What would you tell others about our campus if asked? Can architecture impact how an institution of higher learning fulfills its goals?

This graduate seminar considers the history of campus design in the United States from the seventeenth century to the present day. We will consider a variety of architectural and socio-cultural issues in our weekly investigations. Site visits will complement our time in the classroom. The first half of the semester will focus on understanding the essential elements of campus design and its history to the present day. Students will be asked to write and present on a campus site of their choice upon the conclusion of this part of the course. The last month will focus on the University of St. Thomas campuses and students will understand our sites in context with larger historical and thematic concerns, including sustainability, art, planning, memorials, etc. The final project of the semester will consist of creating lesson plans that can be used to teach others about the built history of the University of St. Thomas. Visits will be made to the University's archive to facilitate this work.

Useful background reading:

Skim any history of architecture in the United States to understand the larger context.

This course fulfills the European/American requirement in the M.A. in Art History program.

Department of Art History
College of Arts and Sciences





METHODS & APPROACHES TO ART HISTORY

Scattered, Dragomir Mišina, 2009

ARHS 500

Dr. Heather Shirey

Tuesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

Spring 2024

An introduction to the methods and problems of art history, including the theoretical approaches to art and its history, the examination and analysis of the work and its medium, the role of the museum and gallery in the study of art, ethical issues that arise in art history and bibliographic tools of the different disciplines of the field.

This course is required for all students in the M.A. in Art History program.



ARHS 510

SPRING 2024

Dr. Mark Stansbury-O'Donnell

Wednesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

The claims of the Greek government for the return of the Parthenon marbles from the British Museum have been a constant and controversial theme for over 200 years, and have become particularly heated in the last half-century. However, controversy on many levels, often less well known, has been associated with the building since its construction in 448-432 BCE. Beginning with funding sources and a broken oath, criticism and debate have been persistent. And for such a well-known building, scholarly controversy over what is represented in the sculptural program is still hotly debated.

This seminar will first review the archaeological information about the Parthenon, and then explore the issues surrounding the building and its decorative program from a historical, scholarly, and ownership perspective, including a consideration of how it has been displayed over the past two centuries and perhaps into the future.

This course fulfills the European/European-American requirement.



19TH CENTURY LANDSCAPE PAINTING

Image: Frederic Edwin Church, Twilight in the Wilderness (1860)

ARHS 520

SPRING 2024

Dr. Craig Eliason

Thursdays 5:30-8:30 PM

This course will investigate the traditions of landscape painting in Europe and the United States during the nineteenth century. In this period marked by accelerating urbanization and, in the U.S., Western expansion, painters of the outdoors not only reflected, but also helped shape, societal attitudes towards the land. The developments we explore will include German and English Romanticism, the Hudson River school, the Barbizon School, Impressionism, and Post-Impressionist trends including Neo-Impressionism, Aestheticism, and Tonalism.

Key concepts include ideas of the sublime and the picturesque; the Claudian legacy; definitions of modernity and the flâneur; exoticism; animal painting; and the historical landscape.

This course fulfills the European/European-American requirement.

Department of Art History
College of Arts and Sciences





CHINESE GARDEN CULTURE

FALL 2023 ARHS 530

Dr. Elizabeth Kindall

- Blended -

Tuesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

It is not so much that the name boards which people put up nowadays do not make sense, but that they are just vulgar and loathsome. On a winding path just within the gate, the first thing to be revealed is "An Urban Forest." A waterside enclosure overlooking a pond is bound to be called "Sky Light and Cloud Shadows." If it is "Thoughts of Hao and Pu" you usually see a fishpond. If it is "Water and Bamboo Lodging" they are bound to have put in a bank of bamboo... "Surrounded by Jade" and "Approaching Clouds" are always the signs on tall buildings. As for their vulgar couplets, they are even more unbearable. -- Five Miscellanies, Xie Zhaozhe

Every garden is a microcosm of its time and place. This course examines these constructed natural environments and their representation in other formats as created in China. We will consider classical gardens, miniature gardens, contemporary gardens, and their online presence. Using case studies, we will explore the topology and design aesthetics of these sites; the underpinning cosmological and geomantic beliefs they display; and their interaction with belief systems such as Buddhism and Daoism. Selections from secondary literature will allow us to consider the patrons, visitors, and reception of these sites. We will also consider how contemporary garden studies scholars are addressing issues such as nature and artifice, environmental awareness, and sustainability. Students will present directed research on historic and existing gardens and how they are presented on the internet.

Students are not expected to have a background in Chinese studies. All readings will be in English.

Background Reading:

Keswick, Maggie, Charles Jencks, and Alison Hardie. "The Chinese Garden: History, Art, and Architecture." Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2003.

This course fulfills the Non-Western/Non-European and the Museum Studies requirements.



MEXICAN MANUSCRIPT PAINTING

FALL 2023 ARHS 537

- In Person -

Dr. William Barnes

Wednesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

Carved in stone, the earliest known glyphic inscriptions in Mesoamerica appear in the first millennium BCE. The sudden appearance of complex glyphic scripts in permanent media strongly suggests a long history of development using archaeologically invisible media. We know that later in the history of this culture area, graphic communication using materials like parchment, cloth, and native paper was ubiquitous throughout. This class will focus on surviving ancient Mesoamerican manuscripts and painted documents that survived the Aztec-Spanish war and its aftermath, as well as indigenous visual traditions that continued long into the Colonial period. Topics covered will include traditional divinatory almanacs; annals histories; res gestae histories; royal genealogies and indigenous maps; as well as the cultural encyclopedias native intellectuals developed for a new European audience. Through investigating these symbolically and historically complex works, one can gain a more emic understanding of the indigenous cultures of Mesoamerica, particularly with regards to concepts of narrative, history, and the role of humans in the maintenance of the cosmos. We will also look into the materials and practices of traditional manuscript painting, as well as the colonial forces that landed most of these documents in collections scattered around the globe.

Suggested reading:
John Pohl's *Mesoamerica: Ancient Books: Highland Central Mexico*

This course fulfills the Non-Western/Non-European and the Museum Studies requirements.



Image: "Touch Tabel: Haitian Steel Sculpture" Milwaukee Museum of Art. Photo by Amy Mickelson.

FALL 2023 ARHS 570

Dr. Amy Nygaard Mickelson

- In Person -

Thursdays 5:30-8:30 PM

Museums Studies is an interdisciplinary field primarily concerned with the theory and history of museums. In this foundational seminar, students will investigate the critical issues facing museums such as access, accessibility, and education. Students will engage with and explore the practical skills necessary for successful careers in these cultural institutions through a community partnership and dialogue with museum professionals and advocates. We will consider the ways in which new audiences, technology, and innovative programming shape the museum field. Topics to be explored include the complexities of "decolonizing" museums; how to minimize harm to communities; what role do museums have in systemic inequalities of wealth and power; how can technologies aid survival, reach new audiences and lead to future success.

Required readings include:

Pressman, Heather and Danielle Schulz. "The Art of Access: A Practical Guide for Museum Accessibility." London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021.

Samis, Peter and Mimi Mickaelson, "Creating the Visitor-Centered Museum." New York, NY: Routledge, 2017.

This is a core course in the Museum Studies Certificate program.



EARLY RENAISSANCE FLORENCE

SPRING 2023 ARHS 515

Dr. Lois Eliason

Wednesdays 5:30-8:30 pm

At the Center of the World: Florence during the Early Renaissance

Historians often agree that the Early Renaissance began in 1400-01, with a major competition to find an artist to sculpt a second set of bronze doors for the Baptistery in Florence, Italy. The competition's two finalists, Brunelleschi and Ghiberti, would become leaders in shaping the Early Renaissance in Italy, a period in history when artists were largely driven by a newfound interest in the art, literature, and politics of ancient Greece and Rome. This course will investigate the art and architecture of 15th-century Florence, one of the most powerful cities in the Early Renaissance.

Throughout the 15th century, Florence increasingly positioned itself at the center of the world: where cutting-edge ideas in science and building coincided with equal innovations in the arts. In our investigation of this model city that shaped its material and spiritual identity through lavish artistic commissions, we will also consider the impact non-Western arts and material culture had on Italian art. Understanding the Early Renaissance through a global lens will illuminate the fact that this revolutionary period did not develop in isolation. Rather, we begin to understand the Early Renaissance as culture that was heavily informed by a complex network of global diplomacy and trade that began long before the period under question.

Students will be asked to lead discussion on topics and readings throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, students will present their independent research on a topic of their choice in a 20-minute oral presentation, and complete written research paper (approximately 12-18 pages).

Image: Uffizi.it Botticelli, Pallas and the Centaur (1480-1485)

ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE IN 10 SITES



SPRING 2023 ARHS 540

Dr. Victoria Young

Mondays 5:30-8:30 pm

This graduate seminar explores the variety of the built environment in England through ten sites, beginning with Stonehenge and continuing up to the present day. It will reveal the breadth of architectural history and how buildings and landscapes are a response to changing social, cultural, and economic conditions. Topics to be considered include (tentatively): prehistoric stone circles, medieval and Baroque cathedrals, monasteries before the dissolution, country houses and gardens, urban churches, Oxford universities, civic architecture, and contemporary museum or memorial design. One key building will be selected for our focus in reading and discussion during the first 10 weeks of class. Students will be asked to present other buildings in context with the key building as part of their coursework, as well as to lead discussion of readings.

The final weeks of the seminar will give time for each student to present research on a topic of their choice in a 20-minute formal presentation. A final 20-page semester research paper is required of all seminar participants.

Useful background reading: Any book or website on English architecture.

This course fulfills the European/American Art requirement

Image: Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire (1591-7). Photo by Victoria Young



ANCIENT AMERICAS TEXT AS IMAGE

SPRING 2023 ARHS 537

Dr. Stephanie Strauss

Tuesdays 5:30-8:30 pm

-- Online --

The Art of Inscription: Visual Narratives from the Ancient Americas

The pristine invention of writing occurred in just four regions of the ancient world: Sumer, Egypt, China, and Mesoamerica. The way in which these “first writing” systems engaged with public art and other elite representational modes was complex and indexical. In ancient Mesoamerica, the invention of hieroglyphic writing fundamentally altered the trajectory of urban public art and elite visual culture. In many indigenous languages of the Americas, the words for art and writing (and artist and scribe) are the same. The concepts of art and writing were thus inextricably tied in the indigenous Americas: art was a narrative practice and writing an artistic endeavor. This class offers a unique opportunity to develop visual literacy in both the art and writing of the indigenous Americas. There will be a particular focus on the ancient Maya, as art and hieroglyphic inscriptions enveloped elite Maya lives - from their soaring pyramids to the painted cups from which they drank fermented chocolate. We will then expand our lens to compare visual narrative practices from across the indigenous Americas. Case studies will range from incised Olmec jade and painted Aztec codices from Mesoamerica; to intricately patterned Wari textiles and Inka quipus from the Andes; to Tlingit wooden chests and Lakota beadwork from North America.

Students will serve as Discussion Leaders for at least one course meeting. An in-class group project will serve as our midterm evaluation and each student will submit a 20-page research paper for their final project. Opportunities to workshop topic ideas, develop an outline, and evaluate paper drafts will be built into the course progression.

Suggested Viewing: explore “Preserving Maya Heritage” (a British Museum/Google Arts and Culture collaboration): <https://artsandculture.google.com/project/british-museum-s-maya>

Image: The Tablet of 96 Glyphs from Palenque, Mexico. Schele Photograph Collection.

This course fulfills the Museum Studies requirement.



MUSEUM STUDIES: COLLECTIONS

FALL 2022 ARHS 571

Dr. Amy Mickelson

Thursdays 5:30-8:30 PM

How do collections define museums? This course provides students with the tools to investigate the role of museums in creating national identity and cultural constructions. Students will explore the work of curators, registrars, conservationists, collections managers, and visual resource managers in the museum world. Additionally, the practical knowledge gained in the course will be interwoven with discussions of collecting theory and museum controversies.

From ethics, looting, and contested provenance to NAGPRA, institutional critique, and social experiments gone wrong, this course will critique the "museum as temple" through the lens of collections. Museum Studies: Collections, Curation and Controversy will include opportunities for dialogue with museum professionals, hands-on projects, and field trips to apply museum studies theory to the visitor experience.

Image: Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK. Nyema Droma's exhibition, 'Performing Tibetan Identities' 2019, the main galleries of the Pitt Rivers Museum. Photograph by Ian Wallman.

This course fulfills the Museum Studies requirement

Department of Art History
College of Arts and Sciences





BLOOD IN THE ANCIENT AMERICAS

FALL 2022 ARHS 537

Dr. William Barnes

Wednesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

Flowers of the red liquor of life: The Symbolism of Blood in Mesoamerica and the Andes
[Blood in the Ancient Americas]

From the art of the Olmec at the dawn of Mesoamerican civilization in the second millennium B.C. to the art of the Aztecs in its twilight, the art of the ancient Americas brims with the imagery of blood and the implements used for its spilling. This most sacred of fluids was shed by gods, kings, queens, nobles, commoners, prisoners, and slaves to legitimize authority, nourish the gods, create worlds, and maintain the cosmos. This seminar will focus on the imagery of blood and blood sacrifice in the ancient cultures of Mesoamerica and the Andes. It will also look at ceremonialism in general, and critically reevaluate the colonial language used to describe sacrifice and its depiction both in the Pre-Hispanic and in the colonial record. Seminar participants will investigate how this divine liquor became a centerpiece of many ancient American civilizations and investigate the role that it played in the discursive rhetoric of its European colonizers and later interpreters.

Useful background reading:

- Mary Miller and Karl Taube, *An Illustrated Dictionary of the Gods and Symbols of Ancient Mexico and the Maya*. Thames and Hudson: New York (2004).
- Michael Coe and Rex Koontz, *Mexico: From the Olmecs to the Aztecs* 7th ed. Thames & Hudson: New York (2013)
- Rebecca Stone, *Art of the Andes: From Chavín to Inca* 3rd ed. Thames & Hudson (2012)

This course fulfills the Museum Studies requirement.

Department of Art History
College of Arts and Sciences



SPRING 2022

ARHS 537.01

The Poetics and Politics of Native American Art: Curation, Practice, Art History and Indigenous Futures

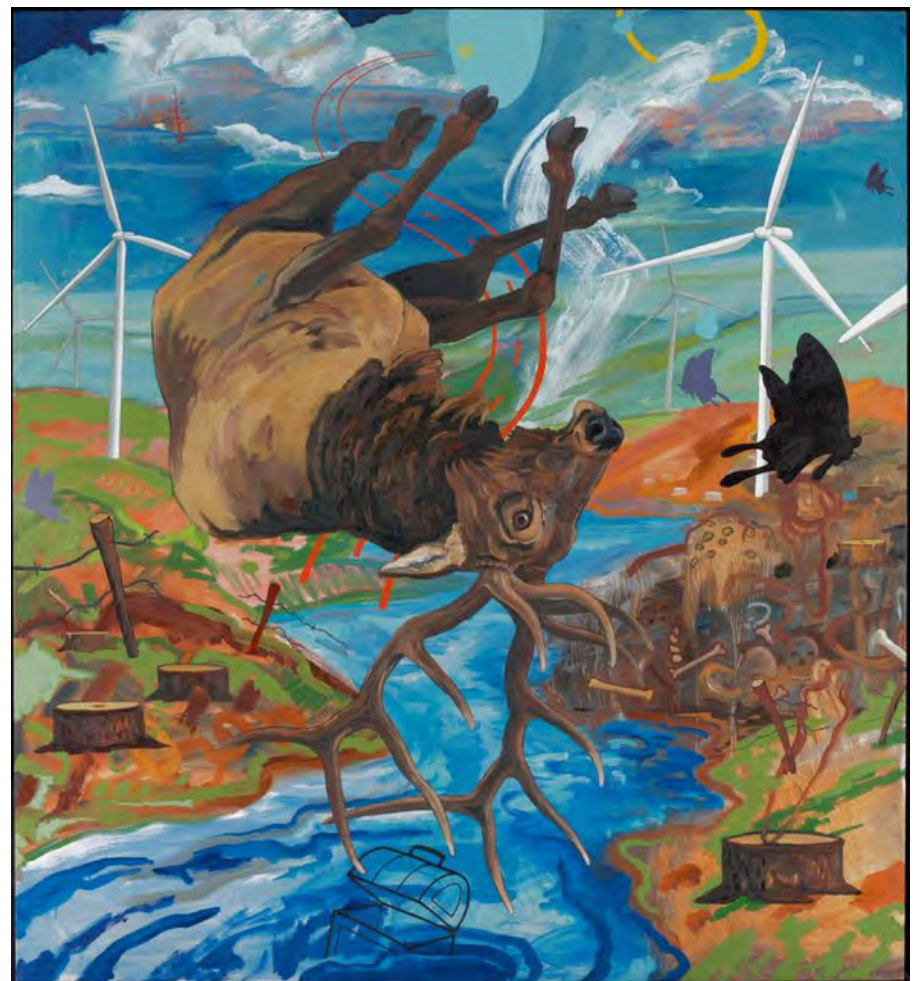
Dr. Jill Ahlberg Yohe

**Assoc. Curator of Native
American Art
Minneapolis Institute of Art**

Wednesdays
5:30-8:30 PM

OEC 311

**EARN A
MUSEUM STUDIES
CERTIFICATE!**



Norman Akers, Interference and a Tiny Spot of Hope, 2019

SPRING 2022

ARHS 537.02

Ancient American Gods: **Rethinking 'Pantheon' in Mesoamerica and the Andes**

Dr. William Barnes

Thursday

5:30-8:30 PM

OEC 311



SPRING 2022

ARHS 510

LOOTED ART: History, Legacies, and Remedies

Dr. Vanessa Rousseau

Mondays
5:30-8:30 PM

OEC 311



George Cruikshank, *Seizing the Italian Relics*, 1815

**EARN A
MUSEUM STUDIES
CERTIFICATE!**



METHODS & APPROACHES TO ART HISTORY

Scattered, Dragomir Mišina, 2009

FALL 2021 ARHS 500

Dr. Heather Shirey

Mondays 5:30-8:30 PM

- Blended Online & In-Person -

An introduction to the methods and problems of art history, including the theoretical approaches to art and its history, the examination and analysis of the work and its medium, the role of the museum and gallery in the study of art, ethical issues that arise in art history and bibliographic tools of the different disciplines of the field.

This course is required for all students in the M.A. in Art History program.

Department of Art History
College of Arts and Sciences





SIX GREAT BOOKS ON CHINESE ART

Image: Su Liupeng, *Scholars Examining Paintings*, 1884, ink on silk, fan painting, Minneapolis Institute of Art

FALL 2021 ARHS 530

- Online -

Dr. Elizabeth Kindall

Tuesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

In my dream I sit in a grotto and a serving boy offers tea and fruits. A book collection fills the shelves; I open a volume and look at it—there is a lot of seal script like tadpoles, bird tracks, and thunderbolts. In my dream I read it and seem to be able to make sense of its thorny abstruseness.

--Zhang Dai, *Dream Reminiscences of Tao'an*

We will read six books that focus on Chinese art in this seminar. Each book will introduce students to major areas of exploration in Chinese art and architecture created between 1200 and 1970, such as temple and palace construction technologies, objects related to Buddhist body art, imperial garden imagery, blue-and-white ceramics, and textile artistry. All six books we will read have been published within the last five years. They therefore represent new areas of exploration in the field. We will further consider the investigative techniques of the Western and Chinese authors of the six books, because each author introduces methodologies previously unused or underrepresented in Chinese art studies. Discussion topics will include feminist readings of material culture, architectural design reception, global commodities and consumption, and the role of GIS-based technology in understanding the negotiation of painted geographic space. After we have read and discussed each text in class, we will meet the author via Zoom for more in-depth discussion. Deep exploration and careful analysis of these six books will introduce students to basic principles of traditional Chinese art, while also allowing them to engage deeply with specific objects and contemporary methodologies relevant in the field.

Students are not expected to have a background in Chinese studies. All readings will be in English.

Background Reading: Craig Clunas. "Art in China." Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

This course fulfills the Non-Western/Non-European requirement.



THE CRAFT OF RESEARCHING VISUAL CULTURE

Image: Neon sign, Simon's Western Wear Store, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Image: ARTstor slide gallery, University of California, San Diego

FALL 2021 ARHS 545

- In Person -

Dr. Craig Eliason

Wednesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

Instead of furthering scholarship on artifacts that have long been accepted as “fine” or “high” art, students in this class will consider the roles in visual culture played by artifacts that have been historically overlooked. What can art historians bring to objects of study that have not been considered artistic, though their visual form impacts the world in which they circulate? Students will be pushed to engage with forms of visual culture that they have not before considered from an academic viewpoint.

Though we will discuss theories of visual culture and some case studies, much of the seminar will be given over to the methodical development of students’ individual research projects, through persistent discussion of “the craft of research.” This phrase is taken from the guide to creating well-argued scholarship first published by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams in 1995. This seminar will follow their lead in foregrounding what attitudes, practices, and tools facilitate effective research. Students will leave the course well versed in the requirements of research: developing strong claims, discerning reasons to believe them, finding evidence to support those reasons, and presenting the resulting arguments appropriately.

Suggested background readings:

Rampley, Matthew. “Visual Culture and the Meanings of Culture,” ch. 1 in *Exploring Visual Culture: Definitions, Concepts, Contexts*, ed. Matthew Rampley, 5-17. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctvxcrfsr.7>

University of Chicago Press. “An interview with Wayne C.Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, authors of *The Craft of Research*, Third edition.” <https://press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/065685in.html>

This course fulfills the European/European-American requirement.

Department of Art History
College of Arts and Sciences





Image: Screenshot of the British Museum and Google Cultural Institute's "Museum of the World" interactive platform.

FALL 2021 ARHS 570

Dr. Amy Nygaard Mickelson

- In Person -

Thursdays 5:30-8:30 PM

2021 will be yet another year of rapid transformation for museums—that is, for the museums that are able to keep their doors open. In July the American Alliance of Museums reported that potentially one-third of all museums could close permanently. Without a doubt 2020 was an exceptionally difficult year for the museum world. Responding to the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and racial violence became the most urgent and vital issues that museums faced and will continue to reckon with for the foreseeable future. This course will consider the human impact of these transformations. Students will investigate the critical issues facing museums and explore the practical skills necessary for successful careers in these cultural institutions. We will consider the ways in which new audiences, technology, and innovative programming shape the museum field. Topics to be explored include the complexities of decolonizing museums; how to minimize harm to communities; what role do museums have in systemic inequalities of wealth and power; how can technologies aid survival, reach new audiences and lead to future success. Additional topics will be explored, like what's the deal with ICOM's definition of "museum"? Will the controversial move to update the definition ultimately unravel in committee debate? Why does this matter?

This is a core course in the Museum Studies Certificate program.



THE MODERNIST PAGE

Radical typography in early-20th-century Europe

Mécano no. red, ed. Theo van Doesburg (1922).

SPRING 2021 ARHS 520

Dr. Craig Eliason

Wednesday 5:30-8:30 PM -ONLINE-

The modernist movements that transformed the visual arts found important expression not only in paintings and sculptures, but also in books and journals. This seminar will investigate modernist typography centered in Europe of the 1920s, considering the page as a site for inventing and disseminating new visions of modernity.

Among the topics we will investigate are: the Dada movement and the invention of photomontage; Jan Tschichold and the Neue Typographie movement; modernist type designs such as Paul Renner's Futura; El Lissitzky and International Constructivism; the roles of the De Stijl and Merz journals; and the publications of the Bauhaus.

We will pursue answers to questions like: What fueled the traditionalist typography against which the modernists reacted? What did asymmetrical layout signify? How did changes in the distribution and technology of mainstream illustrated journals impact avant-garde publishing efforts? Is the traditional codex an amenable format for modernist messages? How was the call for a modernist type design answered? How did experimental typography relate to modernist poetry and performance? What patrons sustained modernist typography, and why? What changed when modernist typographic styles were co-opted by commercial interests more broadly?



FROM SPLENDOR TO SURVIVAL: Aztec Art and the Conquest

Spring 2021 ARHS 537

Dr. William Barnes

Thursday, 5:30-8:30 PM -ONLINE-

By the early part of the 16th century the Aztecs of Central Mexico ruled one of the largest empires in the ancient Americas. The royal art produced in the imperial capital of Tenochtitlan was eclectic, consciously drawing on over a millennium of Mesoamerican artistic development. Surprisingly, many of these artistic traditions continued following the disastrous conclusion of the Aztec-Spanish war (the Conquest). Some artistic survivals, such as feather mosaic, flourished with Spanish patronage and church support. Others, like manuscript painting and cartographic histories, developed a hybrid existence as they were useful to both Spanish colonial officials and surviving indigenous nobles and communities. During the course of the semester, seminar participants will follow Aztec artistic developments from their humble beginnings to their imperial apogee, and, following the Aztec-Spanish war, trace the threads of artistic survival into the early colonial period and beyond where it played a role in cultural survival, subaltern agency, and, in later times, the development of indigenismo and cultural revival.

This course fulfills Museum Studies Certificate requirements.



ART IN THE STREETS

SPRING 2021 ARHS 545

Dr. Heather Shirey

Tuesday, 5:30-8:30 PM. -ONLINE-

Street art—including graffiti, murals, and other installations in public space—provides expressive avenues for marginalized voices, shapes urban space, and promotes competing visions of community development. In contrast to art that is created for museums or the commercial art market, street art is uniquely positioned to engage with social issues from a critical perspective. This class will involve an analysis of street art projects from the United States, situated in comparison with projects from around the world. Topics to be explored include the history of street art over time (from its origins in graffiti to contemporary mural festivals); the impetus for street art in communities in the USA and globally; models for creating, preserving, and presenting street art; the institutionalization of street art; street art as it relates to diversity and inclusion; and, ultimately, the potential for street art to play a role in social change.

Recommended background reading:

Ross, Jeffrey I. Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art. Taylor & Francis, 2016.

This course fulfills Museum Studies Certificate requirements.



THE RENAISSANCE REIMAGINED

Cultural and Artistic Exchange between the East and Western Europe, 1400-1600

Mantegna, Madonna and Child, from The San Zeno altarpiece (1457-1460), Basilica di San Zeno, Verona, Italy

FALL 2020 ARHS 515

Dr. Lois Eliason

Wednesdays 5:30-8:30 PM


This seminar will explore the role non-western arts and culture had in shaping the Renaissance in Italy and the North during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Beginning with the Crusades in 1096, we will consider how these earlier contacts with the East were motivated by the zeal of Christian missionaries. Guidebooks, maps, and journals, for example, established a paradigm for how westerners could begin to imagine the peoples, culture, and landscapes of the non-Christian East. In addition to considering the imaginary projections of the western eye, we will also trace the cultural exchange that was facilitated by the Silk Road. For example, a study of the import and export of material goods will reveal the impact that the Middle East and Far East had in shaping the artistic foundations of the Renaissance.

By the fifteenth century, artistic commissions reflected this exchange in multiple ways. Mantegna's San Zeno altarpiece (1456-59) was made with the finest imported paints, and shows the Virgin and Child wearing imported textiles and enthroned atop a Turkish carpet. Other details within the painting reflect the desire to incorporate identifiable Eastern motifs into the altarpiece. After 1500, an intense interest in the Middle East was supported by ongoing trade and exchange with the Ottoman Empire (1300-1924) as well as the emerging Safavid Empire (1501-1722). By the sixteenth century, cross-cultural exchange and influence become less noticeable in Renaissance art, as artists and writers choose to highlight aspects of their culture that were rooted in its western foundations. A main focus of this class will be a reconsideration of the Renaissance, seeing it less as a "rebirth" of Classical Greece and Rome, but a complex synthesis of cultures inherited from a rich global legacy.

This course fulfills the European/European-American requirement.

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COLLECTING AND DISPLAYING CHINESE OBJECTS

Ladies shoes, Shanghai History Museum

FALL 2020 ARHS 530

Dr. Elizabeth Kindall

Tuesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

This seminar will examine the historical development and present state of collection practices and exhibition culture of Chinese objects in China and the West. The course will begin with an exploration of the cultural history of the accumulation and display of objects in dynastic and Republican China. We will then focus on the emergence of the idea of Chinese art in the West in the late 19th-mid 20th century and its interpretation by private collectors and within museums. In the final section of the course students will analyze the strategies and effects of the heritage, historical, commemorative, private, and ethnographic museums that have appeared across China since the founding of the People's Republic of China. Aesthetic, intellectual, ethical, and political issues will be addressed in each section. These will include: traditional collecting practices in late-Imperial China; private collectors and the development of museums in Republican China; the effects of officially-sanctioned pedagogy in state-funded, ideologically-oriented museums; the diverse approaches to display strategies and effects utilized in contemporary Chinese museums; early European and Western collectors; constructions of the 'Orient,' 'Chinoiserie,' and 'China' in object choice and display culture of the West; and the production of meaning and value to Chinese objects by contemporary European and American museums.

Students are not expected to have a background in Chinese studies. All readings will be in English.
Background Reading: Craig Clunas. *Art of China*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

This course fulfills the European/European-American requirement.
This course fulfills the Museum Studies requirement.

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MUSEUM STUDIES: COLLECTIONS

FALL 2020 ARHS 571

Dr. Amy Mickelson

Thursdays 5:30-8:30 PM

How do collections define museums? This course provides students with the tools to investigate the role of museums in creating national identity and cultural constructions. Students will explore the work of curators, registrars, conservationists, collections managers, and visual resource managers in the museum world. Additionally, the practical knowledge gained in the course will be interwoven with discussions of collecting theory and museum controversies.

From ethics, looting, and contested provenance to NAGPRA, institutional critique, and social experiments gone wrong, this course will critique the "museum as temple" through the lens of collections. Museum Studies: Collections, Curation and Controversy will include opportunities for dialogue with museum professionals, hands-on projects, and field trips to apply museum studies theory to the visitor experience.

This course fulfills the Museum Studies requirement



EPIC NARRATIVE IN GREEK ART

SPRING 2020 ARHS 510

Dr. Mark Stansbury-O'Donnell

Wednesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

Greek artists and viewers faced challenges in visually representing a story that the production teams of *Game of Thrones* and *Lord of the Rings* do not face, including the fact that in most cases a single image had to represent the entire story and cue the viewer to the background and consequences of the action. Unlike most modern visual narratives, Greek stories were shared as part of the oral tradition and there was rarely an authorized canonical version; Greek viewers knew better than archaeologists both the stories and how to decode narrative images. This seminar will explore how visual narrative worked in ancient Greek art by focusing on the Trojan War in a range of media and periods to see how narratives function visually and how the meaning of a narrative shifts over time and place as the greater context changes. Each student will work on an epic narrative apart from the Trojan War, such as the story of the Argonauts or the Amazonomachy, for a seminar project.

This course fulfills the European/European-American requirement.



CONFLICT CONGRESS, AND PLACE IN MEXICAN MANUSCRIPT PAINTING

Codex Nuttall 21 recto: The War of Heaven and the sojourn of Lord 12 Wind "Smoke Eye"

SPRING 2020 ARHS 536

Dr. William Barnes

Thursdays 5:30-8:30 PM

Only a few Pre-Hispanic painted manuscripts survived the arrival of Europeans in Mesoamerica. However, the visual traditions of the region did not disappear overnight, and, for a few generations at least, documents continued to be made in the Native pictorial style. The content and focus of these documents varied greatly across the Late Postclassic (AD1325-1520s) and the early colonial and viceregal periods (ca. 1521-1570), as well as across various cultural and geographic boundaries – but they all share a few commonalities. This seminar will focus on some of those shared traits, namely the sense of place communicated by the artists and patrons of these documents and the significant events recorded as taking place within those spaces. Seminar participants will delve into the pictorial conventions used by the people of Mesoamerica to transmit information, the significance of books and book makers during this time, and the use that painted books were put to record history, interpret events (past, present, and, even, future), and, in the face of conquest and colonialism, preserve culture.

This course fulfills the non-European/European-American requirement.
This seminar is Museum Studies Certificate designated.

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UNIVERSITY OF
St. Thomas

The background image is a reproduction of the painting 'The Death of Socrates' by Jacques-Louis David. It depicts the philosopher Socrates in the center, surrounded by his students and family in a prison cell. Socrates is shown in a heroic, idealized manner, pointing upwards with his right hand while holding a cup of hemlock with his left. The scene is set in a classical architectural space with arches and a large torch on a stand. The overall tone is somber and dramatic, characteristic of Neoclassical art.

NEOCLASSICISM IN EUROPEAN ART & DESIGN

Jacques Louis David, The Death of Socrates (1787), Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC.

SPRING 2020 ARHS 545

Dr. Craig Eliason

Tuesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

In the second half of the eighteenth century, spurred by Enlightenment philosophies and new discoveries of the ancient world, a Neoclassical aesthetic emerged across all the visual arts in Europe. As the name given to this phenomenon suggests, Neoclassicism was both “new”—a radical change from the previous Rococo visual culture—and “classical”—committed to reviving the forms modeled by the ancient Greco-Roman world. Even the most studied emulations of antiquity, though, often betray an unmistakable character of the era in which they were made. What was the appeal of the Greco-Roman world in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western Europe? Beyond references to the past, what were the key characteristics of the style? How did the movement intersect with revolutionary politics, imperial identity, rationalist philosophy, international travel, and academies of the arts? Does Neoclassicism’s overt relationship to the past obscure the importance it had in laying the foundation for its future—that is, our modern world?

We will consider art and design as varied as paintings by David and Kauffmann, sculptures by Canova and Thorvaldsen, architecture by Soufflot and Adam, theoretical writings by Laugier and Winckelmann, and typeface designs by Bodoni and Didot. We will discuss the aesthetics of purity, restraint, and whiteness, and consider how gender maps onto Enlightenment binaries as reflected in the arts.

Student research projects can offer a deeper focus on material we cover together, or can extend consideration to other mediums (e.g., costume design, furniture design), other periods (e.g., the “neoclassicism” of mid-twentieth-century Fascist architecture or of late-twentieth-century postmodernist architecture), or other areas (e.g., American Neoclassical sculpture, British colonial architecture in India).

This course fulfills the European/European-American requirement.



MUSEUM STUDIES: COLLECTIONS

SPRING 2025 ARHS 571

Dr. Amy Nygaard

Thursdays 5:30-8:30 PM

How do collections define museums? This course provides students with the tools to investigate the role of museums in creating national identity and cultural constructions. Students will explore the work of curators, registrars, conservationists, collections managers, and visual resource managers in the museum world. Additionally, the practical knowledge gained in the course will be interwoven with discussions of collecting theory and museum controversies.

From ethics, looting, and contested provenance to NAGPRA, institutional critique, and social experiments gone wrong, this course will critique the "museum as temple" through the lens of collections. Museum Studies: Collections, Curation and Controversy will include opportunities for dialogue with museum professionals, hands-on projects, and field trips to apply museum studies theory to the visitor experience.

Image: Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK. Nyema Droma's exhibition, 'Performing Tibetan Identities' 2019, the main galleries of the Pitt Rivers Museum. Photograph by Ian Wallman.

This course fulfills the Museum Studies requirement



Image: Wangechi Mutu, "MamaRay" (2020), installation view, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

SPRING 2025 ARHS 535

- In Person -

Dr. Heather Shirey

Wednesday 5:30-8:30 PM

In this graduate seminar, we will work together to scrutinize public art as a visual form of power. We will seek to make evident erased or silenced histories while probing at the racialized structures of power that have shaped the creation and consumption of representations of Blackness in public space. Considering a wide range of art forms, including monuments, memorials, murals, historic sites, and performance art over the course of time, we will examine questions such as: Whose history is remembered in public space? How are history and culture embedded in the public sphere? How has monumental art been used to create and correct false narratives? How is public art used to address past injustices and envision a more equitable future? Why is the public representation of marginalized identities so important? And how have public institutions such as museums, archives, and art councils inhibited and/or facilitated such representations? This course takes a global scope, exploring monumental, public art and the representation of Blackness in Europe, Africa, and the Americas. While the core readings and discussions focus on Black history and identities, students may choose to focus on other marginalized identities for their research papers.

This course fulfills the Non-Western/Non-European requirement and the Museum Studies Certificate program.



DESIGN ACROSS CULTURES

Image: James McNeill Whistler and Thomas Jekyll, *Harmony in Blue and Gold: The Peacock Room* (1877), now in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington DC.
Photo: Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler Galleries, CC BY-SA 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>>

Spring 2025 ARHS 520

Dr. Craig Eliason

Tuesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

This seminar will investigate the history of modern design as it has crossed cultural borders. How have “other” cultures been represented in the design world? What happens when designs produced in one cultural context find reception by another? Do encounters with different communities expose cultural biases built into the structure, practices, and vocabulary of the design world? How has cultural insensitivity held design back, and how have cross-cultural exchanges enriched design?

The primary case studies for this exploration will come from the world of typography and type design. In the tradition begun by Gutenberg, the tools, procedures, and systems of typography—the apparatus by which letterforms are made into moveable type and printed—were developed almost exclusively with the Latin alphabet in mind (our familiar AaBbCc...). When this apparatus has confronted foreign writing systems, accommodation is required, whether of the apparatus or, often, of the alien scripts. Such cases attest not only to technical problem-solving, but also to the relationships to, and representations of, foreign cultures.

Though most of the examples we cover together in the seminar will focus on typography and type design, student research projects may venture into any other areas of modern and contemporary design. Such areas might include graphic design more broadly, industrial design, decorative arts, fashion, textile design, or architecture.

This course fulfills the European/American requirement.

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CHINESE OBJECTS AND CRAFT

Image: Daoist priest's robe (jiangyi), 1662-1722, Unknown artist, China, Embroidered satin, The John R. Van Derlip Fundexpandmore 42.8.300, Minneapolis Institute of Art

FALL 2025 ARHS 530

Dr. Elizabeth Kindall

- Blended -

Tuesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

The sight of these cups when they arrived both alarmed and delighted Grannie Liu. What alarmed her was their size. The largest was as big as a small hand-basin and even the smallest one was twice as big as the cup she held in her hand. What delighted her was the consummate artistry of the carving. On each of the ten cups, in smaller and smaller replicas, was the same landscape with little trees and human figures in it and even some lines of minute 'grass character' writing and a tiny carved representation of an artist's seal.

*The Story of the Stone
Trans. David Hawkes*

This course will consider Chinese objects generally excluded from Chinese and Western art-historical narratives of "fine art" that focus on calligraphy, painting, sculpture and bronze vessels. The object types under examination will encompass imperial, scholar, and merchant family collectables including ceramics, jewelry, silks and tapestry, paper sculpture and prints, stone and marble items, wood carving, and silver and gold utensils. We will examine not only the objects and art-historical narratives surrounding them, but also various current methodologies museum professionals, social historians and material culture historians are applying to their study. The issues and methodologies we address in relation to these objects will include production and technique; surface aesthetics; craft and craft history; folk art; commerce, colonialism, and consumption; museology; private and public collecting practices; Orientalism and self-Orientalism; the local and global lives of objects; the miniature; the economic history of luxury objects in global perspective; and cultural encounters, artistic exchange and hybridity.

Students are not expected to have a background in Chinese studies. All readings will be in English.

Background Reading:

Craig Clunas. "Art in China." Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

This course fulfills the Non-Western/Non-European requirement and the Museum Studies requirement.

Department of Art History
College of Arts and Sciences





ART & TRAUMA: Histories & Healing

Image: Penny Siopis, "How Do I Love Thee?," 2011, ink and glue on canvas, 2 x 1.3m

FALL 2025 ARHS 520

- In Person -

Dr. Amy Nygaard

Thursdays 5:30-8:30 PM

Trauma is endemic in modern society and art has always played a vital and expressive role in testifying to its presence and aiding in recovery. Artists have used their work to address and confront traumatic experiences—including war, genocide, racialized violence, ecological disasters, and personal trauma—among other forms. This course investigates the history of trauma through representations in the visual arts. We will examine the formal qualities of artworks and how they communicate traumatic experiences; and what they can tell us about the nature of trauma. Additionally, we will consider ethical questions such as what responsibility we (the viewers) have when encountering the pain and suffering of others. Any examination of trauma is also an examination of survival. Thus, an essential thread throughout this course will be a consideration of how artists leverage their art to claim their experiences, forge connections with audiences, and restore agency while also raising critical consciousness. Students will gain a foundational understanding in the interdisciplinary field of trauma studies before moving into art historical case studies from the Renaissance to today.

This is a course fulfills the Museum Studies and Art History requirements

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METHODS & APPROACHES TO ART HISTORY

Image: Alternative reconstructions of the Peplos Kore by Vinsenz Brinkmann and Ulrike Koch-Brinkmann, from the exhibition Gods in Color, National Archaeological Museum, Athens, January 30-March 24, 2007.

FALL 2025 ARHS 500

Dr. Mark Stansbury-O'Donnell

- In Person -

Wednesdays 5:30-8:30 PM

An introduction to the methods and problems of art history, including the theoretical approaches to art and its history, the examination and analysis of the work and its medium, the role of the museum and gallery in the study of art, ethical issues that arise in art history and bibliographic tools of the different disciplines of the field.

This course is required for all students in the M.A. in Art History program.

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