

History of Art 398 - Senior Conference I

Fall 2026

Tues, 2.10-4.00pm; Taylor Hall G

Professors Houghteling and Kim

Course Description

Senior conference provides a forum for majors to delve intensively into the methods and materials of the History of Art, expanding and refining the modes of disciplinary inquiry first encountered in the “Critical Approaches” seminars and establishing the tools necessary for a productive intellectual experience in the major. The final project for the course consists of the proposal and initial bibliography for the thesis (to be completed in the spring semester).

Requirements and Expectations

Weekly Readings and Discussion

Students are expected to complete all assigned readings prior to class and to participate in (and periodically lead) weekly discussion of topical scholarly articles (all available on Moodle) in dialogue with selections from the course textbook, Michael Hatt and Charlotte Klonk, *Art History: A Critical Introduction to its Methods* (Manchester University Press, 2006, available new and used in the Bryn Mawr Bookshop and on Carpenter Reserve).

Blog Posts

As part of class participation, students will submit periodic Moodle blog posts in advance of class sessions to help with development of the thesis topic in relation to weekly readings and themes. These short assignments are required and will be read but not be graded by the instructors. Full credit is earned by submitting the blog posts on time.

Writing Assignments

There are five formal written assignments for the course, each geared toward establishing a sound foundation for a successful thesis in the spring semester. Detailed assignment prompts are on Moodle; please consult them for further instructions.

- Assignment One: Brainstorming Potential Thesis Topics (ca. 3 pages):

The first assignment asks students to brainstorm three potential thesis topics, each accompanied by a brief discussion of methods or approaches that would structure discussion and analysis, and an image of a representative work of art that would be a focus of your inquiry.

Due to Moodle by midnight, Monday, September 14

· Assignment Two: Mapping Scholarly Methods (3-4 pages):
The second assignment entails analysis of a full-length article of your choosing from recent issues of *The Art Bulletin*, the flagship scholarly journal in the field of art history.

Part one (selection of article) due to Moodle, by midnight, Monday, September 21

Part two (essay) due to Moodle, by midnight, Monday, October 5

· Assignment Three: Preliminary Thesis Proposal (4-6 pages):
In the third assignment, students select one of the possible topics identified in Assignment One and further develop it as a potential thesis. Students will refine their articulation of the topic, pose a set of central questions, identify a core methodological approach, specify the key work(s) of art/objects for the study, list an initial bibliography, and begin consulting potential faculty advisors.

Due to Moodle, by midnight, Monday, October 19 (just after Fall Break)

· Assignment Four: Annotated Bibliography (4-6 pages, including at least 8-10 sources):
The fourth assignment requires an updated thesis topic statement and an in-progress annotated bibliography (ca. 1-3 sentences per bibliographic citation, noting how each reading informs or intersects with your topic). Students will also furnish a revised list of images/objects, demonstrating progress in establishing the focus of the study.

Due to Moodle, by midnight, Monday, November 23

· Assignment Five: Final Thesis Proposal (8-10 pages):
The fifth assignment formalizes the thesis topic and research plan. Students stake a claim to a structuring question (or set of questions); elaborate on the methods and materials to be mobilized; reflect upon the ambitions and parameters, possibilities and limits of the project; and complete an annotated bibliography of sources, both works already read and those identified as relevant to the study to be explored more deeply in the spring. In addition, students provide a schedule to guide research and writing in the spring semester.

Due to Moodle by 12.30pm, Tuesday, December 15

Recommended Events and Extra Credit

All majors are strongly encouraged to attend the weekly **Colloquium in Visual Culture (most Wednesdays, 12:30-2pm, Ely Room)**, the **Special Collections Friday Finds Series (mid-day Friday throughout the semester)**, and other relevant events (lectures, symposia, exhibitions) sponsored by History of Art, Film Studies, Museum Studies, Archaeology, Cities, Special Collections, or other departments, programs, and offices at the College, as well as at other regional institutions. Many organizations across the country and the world continue to hold lecture series virtually, which makes available a wide range of options for expanding exposure to new ideas in History of Art and related fields.

Students may submit for extra credit a one-page response to an event of relevance to the major that they have attended (e.g., a lecture, workshop, exhibition, etc.); the extra credit does not contribute additional points to the overall grade but will be taken into consideration if a student's final grade falls on a cusp.

Evaluation

Grades for this course will be assessed as follows:

- 20% Class participation, including attendance, presenting, responding, contributions to in-class discussions (both quality and quantity), and blog posts
- 5% First Writing Assignment
- 15% Second Writing Assignment
- 15% Third Writing Assignment
- 15% Fourth Writing Assignment
- 30% Fifth Writing Assignment

Policies

Attendance

If you need to miss class because of a personal obligation (e.g., religious holiday) or illness, please notify the instructors to secure an excused absence. Students who believe they have a communicable illness should not attend class in person. If you are well enough to participate remotely, please notify the instructors as early as possible so as to ensure that the necessary technology is in place. Unexcused absences are discouraged and will impact the class participation portion of your grade.

Due Dates and Late Work

The assignments for this course have been carefully scaffolded so as to prepare you gradually for the submission of your final thesis proposal. For this reason, you are strongly advised to submit assignments on time and in the assigned sequence. In order to earn a passing grade in the course, students must complete all five Writing Assignments. Extensions on due dates for these papers will be approved at the instructors' discretion; please be in touch immediately if you will be unable to meet a deadline. Students who have not submitted all five Writing Assignments by 12.30pm Friday, December 18 will receive a final grade of "Incomplete" and must submit a plan for completion of work to the Dean's/Registrar's Office. In instances where an extension is not granted, a portion of the student's participation grade will be lowered based on the number of days the submission is delayed. Students are encouraged to complete blog posts on time; only partial credit will be granted for late blog posts.

Technology in the classroom

Senior Seminar offers the opportunity to engage in rigorous, focused discussion with your fellow majors. In order to cultivate a dynamic of mutual respect and full attention, we ask that students who are not presenting to the class refrain from using phones, laptops, and tablets during in-person sessions unless you have special circumstances that require one. Please be in touch immediately if this is the case.

Accommodations

The instructors are committed to providing full support for documented accommodations. Students who require accommodation in this course should contact the Access Services Offices at Bryn Mawr (610-526-7351) or Haverford (610-896-1324) as soon as possible to verify their eligibility. Please provide an accommodations letter to the instructor(s) at least two weeks prior to the first graded assignment. Any student whose accommodations require tape recording must first speak with the Access Services Director. Students may not record class sessions without written permission from the College.

Title IX Statement

Bryn Mawr/Haverford College is committed to fostering a safe and inclusive living and learning environment where all can feel secure and free from harassment. All forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic violence, and dating violence are violations of Bryn Mawr/Haverford's policies, whether they occur on or off campus. Bryn Mawr/Haverford faculty are committed to helping to create a safe learning environment for all students and for the College community as a whole. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination, harassment, or violence, know that help and support are available. Staff members are trained to support students in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more.

The College strongly encourages all students to report any incidents of sexual misconduct. Please be aware that all Bryn Mawr/Haverford employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors, clergy, and healthcare providers) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the Bi-College Title IX Coordinator. Information about the College's Sexual Misconduct policy, reporting options, and a list of campus and local resources can be found on the College's website:

- Bryn Mawr Sexual Misconduct Policy: <https://www.brynmawr.edu/titleix/sexual-assault-policy>
- Haverford Sexual Misconduct Policy: <https://www.haverford.edu/sexual-misconduct>

Schedule

September 1: Preliminaries

* Michael Hatt and Charlotte Klonk, *Art History: A Critical Introduction to its Methods* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 1-20.

September 8: On the Origins and Futures of Art History: Foundations and Foundational Biases (Discussion leader: Professor Houghteling; Respondent: Professor Kim)

- Michael Hatt and Charlotte Klonk, *Art History: A Critical Introduction to its Methods* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 21-39.

- Shao Yiyang, “Wither Art History,” *The Art Bulletin* 98.2 (2016), 147-150.
- Alicia Walker, “‘The Art that Does Not Think’: Byzantine ‘Decorative Arts’ – History and Limits of a Concept,” in Colum Hourihane, ed., *From minor to major: the minor arts in Medieval art history*, Index of Christian Art occasional papers 34 (Princeton, NJ, 2012), 169-93.

* Student preferences for presentation topics submitted to Moodle by midnight, Monday, September 7

*Blog post due Friday, September 4, 5 pm on Moodle

September 15: Critical Questions in a Global Art History (Discussion Leader: Professor Kim; Respondent Professor Houghteling)

- Hatt and Klonk, *Art History*, 223-40.
- Dasol Kim, “Domesticating the Body of the Exotic Other: The Multisensory Use of a Sixteenth-Century Brass Candlestick,” *Das Mittelalter, Zeitschrift des Mediävistenverbandes* 25, issue 2 (November 2020): 311–337.
- Linda Nochlin, “The Imaginary Orient,” *The Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-Century Art and Society* (1989), 33-59.

*First Writing Assignment (Brainstorming Thesis Topics) due to Moodle by midnight, Monday, September 14

September 22: Workshop: Archives and Collections (Meet in Special Collections Seminar Room, Canaday Library, second floor, room 205)

- Monique Scott, “Excavating Whiteness in the African Archive,” *Penn Museum African Galleries: From Maker to Museum*, 1-11.
- Constance Classen and David Howes, “The Museum as Sensescape: Western Sensibilities and Indigenous Artifacts,” in *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2006), 199–222.

* Second Writing Assignment (Part I: selection for Art Bulletin article analysis only) due to Moodle midnight, Monday, September 21

September 29: Formalism (Student discussion leader[s]/respondent[s])

- Hatt and Klonk, *Art History*, 65-95.
- Alois Riegl, *Stilfragen: Grundlegungen zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik* (1893), excerpt from the translation: *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*, trans. Evelyn Kain (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 3-13 and 48-53.
- Margaret Olin, “‘Look at Your Fish’: Science, Modernism and Alois Riegl’s Formal Practice” in *German Art History and Scientific Thought*, ed. Mitchell B. Frank and Daniel Adler (Routledge, 2012) 33-55

October 6: Social Art History (Student discussion leader[s]/respondent[s])

- Hatt and Klonk, *Art History*, pp. 120-142.
- T.J. Clark, “Olympia’s Choice,” in *The Painting of Modern Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 79-95, 116-119, 146
- Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, “Still Thinking about Olympia’s Maid,” *The Art Bulletin* 97.4 (2015): 430-51.

* *Second Writing Assignment (Part II: Art Bulletin article analysis)* due to Moodle midnight, Monday, October 5

October 13: Fall Break, no class

October 20: Connoisseurship (meet in Special Collections classroom, Canaday Library)

Connoisseurship (Meet in Special Collections Seminar Room, Canaday Library, second floor, room 205)

- Hatt and Klonk, *Art History*, 40-64.
- Catherine B. Scallen (Case Western Reserve University), ‘Do mistakes always matter? Jakob Rosenberg’s *Rembrandt Life and Work*’” *Journal of Art Historiography* 16 (2017), 1-8.
- Freyda Spira et al., “What is printmaking?” online essay with video demonstrations of different printmaking techniques, Metropolitan Museum of Art
- https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/23/arts/design/rembrandt-the-adoration-of-the-kings-reattributed.html?campaign_id=9&emc=edit_nn_20240226&instance_id=116078&nl=the-morning®_id=72045047&segment_id=159155&te=1&user_id=82ec596b4fa1dcb4867028fcc5a7fdea

**Third Writing Assignment (Preliminary Thesis Proposal)* due to Moodle midnight, Monday, October 19

October 27: Materiality (Student discussion leader[s]/respondent[s])

- Jules David Prown, “Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 17.1 (1982): 1-19.
- Michael Yonan, “Toward a Fusion of Art History and Material Culture Studies,” *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 18.2 (2011): 232-48.
- Sylvia Houghteling, “Beyond Ice: Cooling through Cloth, Scent, and Hue in Eighteenth-Century South Asia” *Journal 18* 16 (Fall 2023).

November 4: Iconography (Student discussion leader[s]/respondent[s])

- Hatt and Klonk, *Art History*, pp. 96-119.
- Erwin Panofsky, “Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art” (1939), *Meaning in the Visual Arts: Papers in and on Art History* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957), 26-41.
- Jie Shi, “The Overseeing Mother: Revisiting the Frontal-Pose Lady in the Wu Family Shrines in Second-Century China,” *Monumenta Serica: Journal of Oriental Studies* (2015): 263–93.

November 10: Workshop: Research Methods and Library Skills

Session with Laura Surtees, Research and Instruction Librarian and Coordinator of Rhys Carpenter Library

* *Blog post* due to Moodle midnight, Monday, November 9

November 17: Semiotics (Student discussion leader[s]/respondent[s])

- Hatt and Klonk, *Art History*, 200-222.

- Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (1957), trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Noonday Press/ Farrar Strauss & Giroux, 1972) (selections)
- Homay King, “Myth for an Age of Lies and Marble for an Age of Walls” in *Myths of the Marble* (Sternberg Press, 2017).

November 24: Psychoanalysis (Student discussion leader[s]/respondent[s])

- Hatt and Klonk, *Art History*, 174-199.
- Sigmund Freud, “Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood” (1910; first English edition 1922) (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 2001), focus on pp. 82-118, 130-137 (Sections 3, 4, and 6).
- C.C. McKee, “Bare Feet, or, The Ambivalence of Emancipation: Camille Pissarro and the Caribbean,” in *Black Modernisms in the Transatlantic World*, eds. Huey Copeland and Steven Nelson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023), 56-77 and 232-34.

**Fourth Writing Assignment (revised bibliography, images, statement) due to Moodle midnight, Monday, November 23.*

December 1: Gender, Sexuality, and the Body (Student discussion leader[s]/respondent[s])

- Hatt and Klonk, *Art History*, 145-73.
- David J. Getsy and Che Gossett, “A Syllabus on Transgender and Nonbinary Methods for Art and Art History,” *Art Journal* 80.4 (2021): 100-115. File
- Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Screen* 16, 3 (1975): 6–18.
- Lisa Saltzman, “Reconsidering the Stain: On Gender and the Body in Helen Frankenthaler’s Painting,” in *Reclaiming Female Agency: Feminist Art History after Postmodernism*, Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 373-83.

December 8: Conclusion: Whither Art History? Whither your thesis? and Workshop on Writing Strategies

Session with History of Art Graduate Student Writing Tutor from the Bryn Mawr Writing Center

- Hatt and Klonk, *Art History*, 241-44.

**Blog post due to Moodle midnight, Monday, December 7*

Tuesday, December 16, 12:30pm

** Fifth Writing Assignment (Final Thesis Proposal) due to Moodle*