

Medieval Castles: Bastions of War and Peace

HISTART
194-001

In this seminar we will explore the extraordinary history of the medieval castle from its inception in the centuries following the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century to the advent of efficient siege artillery about a thousand years later. We will investigate the massive keeps of Romanesque England and France; the sprawling hilltop fortresses of the Hohenstaufen emperors in Germany and southern Italy; the awesome Crusader castles in the Holy Land and their equally daunting Muslim counterparts; the impregnable castles of Edward I in Wales; and the towering brick fortresses of the Order of the Teutonic Knights in the eastern Baltic.

The course contains a strong element of visual analysis, for example of architectural plans and topographical maps. Students will also learn how to read relevant primary sources, for instance a medieval chronicle's description of a siege, and how to distinguish popular from scholarly accounts of medieval castles and their development. Important questions that this course raises and aims to answer include the following: What sites were chosen for the construction of castles? How did technological change affect the design of castles? Were castles simply utilitarian structures or perhaps also bearers of symbolic meaning? And what was life like in a medieval castle in times of war and peace, both for the lord and his family and for the garrison stationed within its walls?



Course requirements:

Attendance and participation - 40%;

1st class project (Design a Medieval Castle!), assigned 9/12, due 10/5 - 20 %

2nd class project (30-minute Powerpoint presentation toward the end of the term on a course-related topic developed in one-on-one conversations with me) - 40 %

The conversations about your second project begin 10/3 and end 11/2; I recommend that you schedule at least your first appointment as early as possible.

Attendance: Mandatory, attendance will be taken before each class.

Class Powerpoints: Will be posted on CANVAS after each class.

Bibliographical suggestions: There is no comprehensive, text-book survey in English on the phenomenon of the medieval castle. For an up-to-date, if hefty and wordy, study on castles in England, see John GOODALL, *The English Castle, 1066-1650* (New Haven & London: Yale, 2011); still useful on the same subject is R. Allen BROWN, *English Castles* (London: Boydell, 2004; first published 1954). On Crusader castles, see Hugh KENNEDY, *Crusader Castles* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), which is fairly accessible if a bit dry. Daily life in medieval castles and its complex material culture is explored in Joseph and Frances GIES, *Life in a Medieval Castle* (New York & San Francisco: Harper Colophon, 1979), which centers on Chepstow Castle, and Joachim BUMKE, *Courtly Culture: Literature and Society in the High Middle Ages* (Woodstock & London: Overlook Duckworth, 2000), esp. Chapter 3. On the overall impact of castles on medieval artistic and literary culture, see Abigail WHEATLEY, *The Idea of the Castle in Medieval England* (York: York Medieval Press, 2004). For the ethos and techniques of medieval warfare, see Philippe CONTAMINE, *War in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984). In addition, the Osprey *Fortress* series offers a wide range of short monographs on different types of castles and fortifications

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe, Middle East, Ancient, Medieval

Achim Timmermann
3 Credit Seminar
M W 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Introduction to African Art

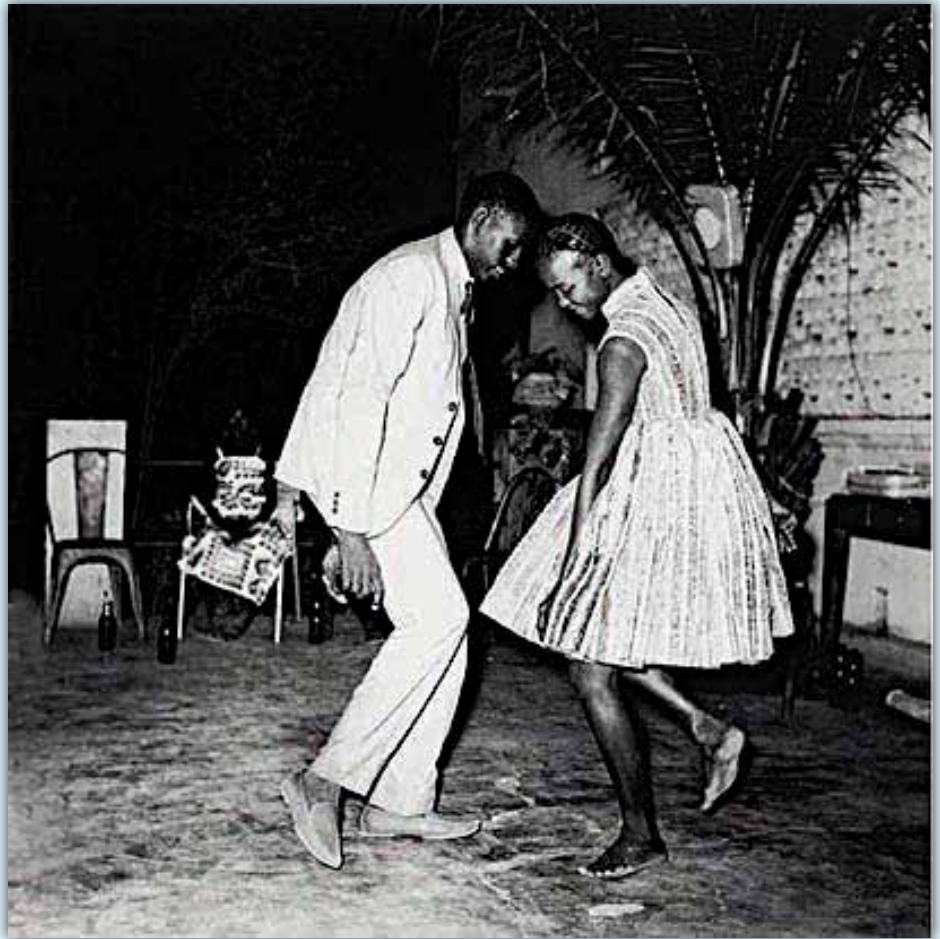
**HISTART
208-001**

Sure, Africa is big. So are the histories of its expressive cultures. But by studying just a selected group of African and African Diaspora cultures, we'll be able to begin thinking about pivotal issues and stories behind the surfaces of some extraordinary objects and practices.

African people have their own stories to tell about these things: tales of mythic power expressed as living form, histories of contact with other cultures, stories of struggle, redemption, and ordinary, everyday life. And we in "the West" have also had a decisive, often disturbing hand in the framing of African peoples, objects and stories. Histories of colonialism and the Atlantic slave trade, alongside distorted views and images of what African people are and what they do, have affected us all to the core. When we look at and think critically about "African Art," then, we must also look at and think critically about ourselves. The goal is to understand aspects of African cultures in terms by which Africans understand them—to know African ideals and realities as shaped in word, sound, matter and movement. Dialogue is always key. In lectures and weekly discussion sections, in words, pictures, films, sounds, and live performance, we'll examine objects and the stories that surround them. Looking and listening closely, we'll learn to see and understand a wide range of African visual practices including architecture, textiles, body adornment, painting, graphic communication systems, photography, dance, ritual performance and, of course, sculpture—not only as these practices continue to unfold on the African continent, but also as they are transformed, and as they endure, in the African Diaspora and the world at large.

Fulfills LSA Race & Ethnicity Requirement

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Modern and Contemporary



David T Doris
4 Credit Lecture
T Th 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

History of Photography

**HISTART
210-001**

Photography has grown up with modern life. Making sense of its history requires an understanding of its social and political functions, its integration with everyday experience, and its complex relationships to the history of art and the modern media. This course surveys photography from its public debut in 1839 to the present day and introduces students to the tools needed to interpret its varied uses and meanings.

Photography comprises a wide range of technologies and cultural practices. The significance of photographs has historically been centered in their persuasiveness as records, yet the medium has also served, from its inception, as a vehicle for fictions and fantasies, surveillance and control. Tracing photography's evolution as an art form while attending to its operation within fields like science, politics, sociology, journalism and medicine, we will open the persuasive nature of the photograph to closer scrutiny.

Students will learn to analyze photographs as constructed images, to incorporate visual analysis within historical argument, and to approach the diversity of photographic production from a broad historical and geographical perspective. The course will acquaint students with core principles and problems in the history of photography, with a selection of key historical sources and recent scholarly writings on the medium, and with a range of historically significant photographic practices and forms. For those without prior experience, the course also functions as an introduction to thinking and reading in the discipline of art history.

Textbooks/Other Materials: Will be available through Canvas. No textbook.

Course Requirements:

Lecture, sections, readings, class discussion in section. There are three major take-home examinations. Exam 1 and Exam 2 consist of three questions each, two short answers (250 words each), and one longer essay (500 words). Exam 3 consists of two essays (500 words each). The exams are handed out one week before they are due. The major examinations are not cumulative

Intended Audience: Undergraduates

Class Format: Two 80-minute lectures per week and discussion section

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0-50

Keywords: camera, representation, documentary, fiction

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe and the US, Asia, Modern and Contemporary



Matt Biro
4 Credit Lecture
M W 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Visual Cultures of Ancient Rome

HISTART 228-001
ARCHAM 228-001

Roman rulers waged war with images, vying with each other in life-and-death battles for supreme control of the ancient Roman world. Cities were aggrandized from Britain to Syria with great marble monuments to Roman leisure and wealth. Private individuals set up complex sculpted memorials to family, inserting their loved-ones into the material fabric of the city's, and the Empire's, claim to stability and status. Meanwhile, Roman homes glowed with multi-coloured mosaics and frescos, mapped onto floors, ceilings, walls, and matched in the carved detail of wooden furniture, and precious trinkets of silver and gems. The Roman Empire was awash with a rich and lively visual culture. This course surveys these vibrant visual arts of the Roman world from the late Republican period, down to the reign of Constantine (100 BC - AD 336). It explores Roman visual culture across the provinces, and in a range of social spheres: civic, funerary, and domestic, among them. Students will be introduced to major objects and monuments produced for Roman patrons, as well as to lesser known works, which remain intriguing for the window they offer onto Roman aesthetic and social paradigms. Through this survey, the course will address the problematic question of how Roman art is ultimately to be defined. We will pay special attention to the function and significance of prominent themes such as portraiture, copying, naturalism, and classicism in Roman art. We will also engage with the difficult issue of how our own instincts about art, and our taxonomies of visual production, may actually hinder us in our attempt to grasp the priorities of effect inherent in Roman visual culture.



Textbooks/Other Materials: All readings will be available through Canvas, or on course reserve.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and participation in class 10%

Online forum postings 10%

Visual analysis paper, 3-4 pages, size 11 standard font, double spaced 20%

Mid-term 25%

Final paper c. 4000 words 35%

Intended Audience: Undergraduate - all welcome

Class Format: Two 80 minute lectures a week, with discussion and activities

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0-50

Keywords: Money; painting; fashion; architecture; army; women

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe and the US, Middle East, Ancient

Nicola Barham
3 Credit Lecture
T Th 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Art and Life in Nineteenth-Century America

HISTART 230-001
AMCULT 230-001

What can art history and American history tell us about each other? Painting, sculpture, photographs and popular media helped nineteenth-century Americans imagine race, nation, and the spirit while design shaped their environment. Ideas and images from this period inform the way we think today. We will study how the United States changed from a rural to an industrial, urban nation; slavery, the Civil War and Reconstruction redefined the country, Westward movement and the accompanying confinement of Native peoples enlarged it, and waves of immigration and border movement changed its population. The rise of a middle class and the accompanying ideal of the "American home" were all products of the nineteenth century.



American artists and architects sought to rival their European contemporaries and eventually produced distinctive works that responded to these national trends. Through hands-on research in archives and visits to see original works of art in museums and libraries, along with readings in primary-source documents and recent critical interpretations, we will examine both developments in the fine arts and the impact of historical change on the material and popular culture of everyday life in America. Among the artists and architects we will study are Thomas Cole, Winslow Homer, Henry Ossawa Tanner, Matthew Brady's photographic studio, Louis Sullivan, and the Cheyenne artist Howling Wolf.

The class will include a mandatory field trip to the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Estimated cost of materials: \$10.

Intended audience: people curious about art history; undergraduates at any level seeking a general introduction to 19th century art and culture; students who have studied related art literature, architecture, music or history but would like to learn the American context. No prior background in art history or American studies required, though it is welcome.

Class Format: Lectures with some opportunity for questions and class discussion.

Textbooks: Angela Miller et al, *American Encounters* available as a free download and as a used paperback (required), plus online readings. Recommended for beginners who would like background reading: Paul Boyer, *American History: A Very Short Introduction*; Anne D'Alleva, *Look! The Fundamentals of Art History* (any edition). Copies of all of these books will be available on reserve in Shapiro Library.

Course requirements:

Attendance and participation 15%

5 short reading responses posted in an online forum 20%

Visual analysis paper 15%

Midterm quiz 15%

Final exam 15%

Online group research project that builds a website based on your research about a historical exhibition 20%.

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe and the U.S., Modern and Contemporary

Rebecca Zurier
3 Credit Lecture
T Th 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Black Feminist Art and Visual Culture

**HISTART
241-001**

As an intergenerational approach to liberation and empowerment, Black feminism is deeply linked to demands for transforming the everyday conditions of women. In this course, we will consider the relationship between art and visual culture to modern and contemporary issues facing Black women and their minoritized status across communities and societies. The course critically engages how Black feminist art becomes a useful strategy to speak to issues of womanhood and girlhood, opposition, the gaze, tropes and stereotypes, reproductive and political rights, concepts of family both nuclear and chosen, environmental, enslavement, and futurity. Students engage key writings by Black feminist thinkers, as well as new trends in how Blackness and the femme body evolve meaningfully. Black feminist art is both a specific and general term for tracing ongoing traditions among women for self-possession and critique.

Textbooks/Other Materials: Joy James, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *The Black Feminist Reader*. New York: Wiley, 2000.

Course Requirements:

PARTICIPATION (30%) - Fishbowl activities throughout the semester around a Black feminist work of art or text

ASSIGNMENTS (30%) - Including Tracing Black Feminism in the Age of Social Media (15%), and creating a podcast episode related to Black feminist art in Michigan or the Midwest (15%)
Research Paper on a Single Work of Art (40%)

Intended Audience: undergraduate students willing to undertake the work of critically engaging intersectionality, those interested in developing an antiracist understanding of art production, those willing to undertake the time to read closely and critically

Class Format: Two 80-minute lectures per week

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$40

Keywords: Black feminism, Black diasporic feminism, black feminist visual culture

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe and the US, Latin America, Modern and Contemporary, Transhistorical



julia elizabeth neal
3 Credit Lecture
M W 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Medieval Animals - Introduction To Medieval Visual Art And Material Culture

**HISTART
242-001**

Animals are present in virtually every form of medieval art. Our focus in this course is on medieval Europe from 500 to 1500 and the role played by animals in the production of visual and material culture. With an emphasis on recurring themes, lectures will explore the period by prioritizing images of animals and studying their meaning, as well as asking how animal products and technologies shaped medieval culture. This offers insights into different aspects of medieval society: networks of trade, cross-cultural relations, conceptions of the cosmos, and practices of gift-giving involve animals and art objects alike. At the same time, the topic of animals addresses basic distinctions in art history, such as distinguishing ornamental from narrative imagery, or images we can read from those we cannot



decode. We will consider the complex signifying work animal imagery performed in multiple domains of medieval visual culture: the ornamental, the symbolic, the iconographic, the narrative, the moral, and the comic. Along the way, we will also examine some of our contemporary society's approaches towards animals and visibility.

Textbooks/Other Materials: All materials will be on Canvas.

Useful accompanying textbooks: Thompson/Harris, *Medieval Art 250-1450: Matter, Making, and Meaning*, Oxford University Press 2021; Caskey/Cohen/Safran, *Art and Architecture of the Middle Ages: Exploring a Connected World*, Cornell University Press 2022.

Intended Audience: Undergraduates. No previous knowledge of medieval art required. All welcome.

Class Format: Two 80-minute lectures with 1/3 of that time in-class group discussions and tasks.

Estimated Cost of Materials: 0-50

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe and the US, Medieval

Tina Bawden
3 Credit Lecture
T Th 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM

Arts & Cultures of Star Wars

**HISTART
265-001**

This course explores the creation of peoples and their cultures in the Star Wars universe through the borrowing of visuals and materials from racial, ethnic and cultural groups in our own world. As the fictional universe draws upon a multitude of cultures and societies worldwide, so does it bring to bear a multitude of racial and ethnic inequities, and the narratives that perpetuate them. In this course, students will explore the many media used to illustrate fictive alien 'races' alongside discussions of the real-world otherings and discriminations they embody.

Textbooks/Other Materials: all materials on Canvas

Course Requirements:

participation (15%)

weekly assignments as reading reviews, object summaries, or planet summaries (60%)

final exam (25%)

Intended Audience: undergraduates, non-majors

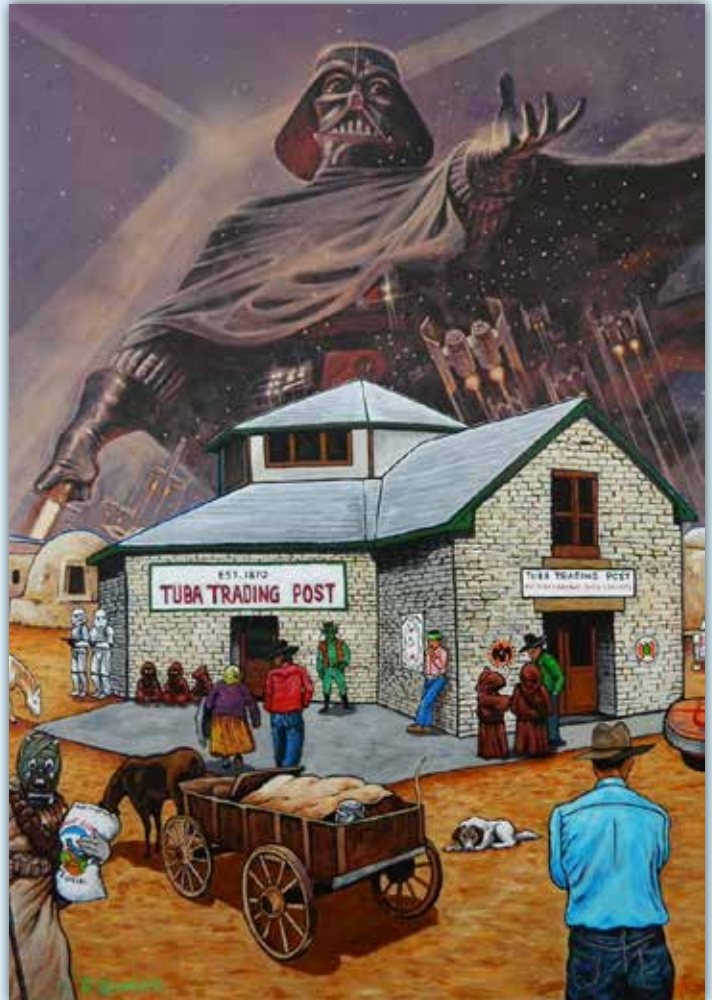
Class Format: two 80-minute lectures and one discussion section per per week

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0

Keywords: Star Wars, cultures, Orientalism, Indigenous, othering

This course satisfies the LSA Humanities (HU) and Race and Ethnicity (R&E) requirements.

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Transregional, Transhistorical



Bryan Miller
4 Credit Lecture
M W 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Modern Art: Avant-Garde to Contemporary Art

**HISTART
272-001**



This course is an introduction to the twentieth-century avant-garde in Europe and the United States. It will give you an understanding of visual art produced in the period of rapid modernization and political upheaval since 1900. We examine both the different mediums and styles developed by modern art and the ways in which that art responded to and provoked broader socio-political change. Our principal objectives are to explore:

- Artists' experiments with new media—including photography, film, video, and performance—as well as their interrogation into the nature of painting and sculpture;
- The nature and significance of abstract or non-representational art produced at various moments throughout the century;
- How artistic modernism relates to the industrialization and urbanization of everyday life, including modern warfare;
- How artists developed forms of art which engaged and, at times, intervened in social and political reality, thus blurring the boundaries between art and life;
- How various avant-garde groups integrated modern philosophical and theoretical models;
- Ways in which works of art negotiate complex intersections of gender, sexuality, race, and class.

As we look at the developments that have taken place in art since 1900, we shall be focusing on two key issues. What major changes took place in the conceptions of visual art in the period? What do these artistic developments tell us about how groups and individuals shaped and inflected the political and social realities of both twentieth century and our own modern world?

Requirements: section attendance and participation; two exams, four vocabulary quizzes, and one short paper.

Keywords: art history, contemporary

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Modern and Contemporary, Europe and the US.

Heather Jeanne Vinson
4 Credit Lecture
T Th 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Special Topics - Ways of Seeing

**HISTART
294-001**

This course is designed to teach students how to look at, think about, and engage critically with the visual arts and architecture. Taking a cue from John Berger's 1972 television program and series of essays, *Ways of Seeing*, we will analyze specific artists, works, and buildings through the centuries. Our case-studies will take us from Athens to Persepolis, Florence to New York, and Paris to Chandigarh. The course will offer students training in analyzing the formal aspects of artworks and architecture, an understanding of the materials and techniques used, and a discussion of the political and social contexts in which artmaking is situated. While not a historical survey, there are chronological and conceptual arcs running through the course, which will enable students to draw transhistorical connections and prepare them for future academic and everyday engagements with the visual world that surrounds them.

Textbooks/Other Materials: Will be available through Canvas. No textbook.

Course Requirements:

- Attendance and Participation 25%
- Mid-term Examination 25%
- Paper 25%
- Final Examination 25%

Intended Audience: This class will be open to any interested undergraduate student

Class Format: **Estimated Cost of Materials:** \$0-50

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Transregional, Transhistorical



Rattanamol Singh Johal
3 Credit Lecture
M W 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Art and Architecture of the Mediterranean World

**HISTART
294-002**



This course explores the art, architecture, and material culture of the Mediterranean world from late antiquity to the early modern period, or between the late 3rd and 18th centuries. We will study the geographies of the Mediterranean Sea—including Italy, Spain, Egypt, North Africa, the Balkans, Anatolia, and Middle East—focusing on their rulers, kingdoms, merchants, craftsmen, pilgrims, and travelers in order to explore the means and spread of artistic exchange across the area. We also will explore the role of art and architecture in the sacred and secular lives of the region's Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities. We will learn about monuments (architecture, mosaics, wall paintings), objects (ceramics, metalwares, coins, and textiles), and historical texts to better understand the artistic, cultural, and political dynamics of the pre-modern and early modern Mediterranean.

Course Readings: Available through Canvas. There is no textbook.

Course Requirements: Visual analysis assignment (10%); comparative visual analysis assignment (10%); midterm (20%); short essay assignment (20%); final exam (20%); attendance and participation (20%)

Intended Audience: All interested undergraduates. There are no prerequisites

Estimated cost of materials: \$0

Class format: Two 80-minute lectures per week with in-class discussions and activities

Keywords: art, architecture, late antiquity, medieval, Europe, Africa, Middle East, Mediterranean

HISTART Distribution Requirements: Transregional; transhistorical

Jennifer Gear
3 Credit Seminar
M W 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Crushing and Grinding: The Arts of Global Extraction in Early Modern Europe

**HISTART
310-001**

Throughout the long early modern period (ca. 1300-1800), artists in Western Europe engaged in new ways with natural materials from across the globe. They crushed tiny insects from Mexico to make a brilliant red paint; they ground ivory from African elephant tusks into sculptures of staggering intricacy; and they sipped coffee from porcelain saucers made of special clay mined outside of Jingdezhen, China. This course explores the production of material culture—things we commonly refer to today as “art” and some things that we might call “objects”—made from substances extracted from distant ecosystems.

Each week we will seek to understand how the unique properties of a particular material shaped the creation of the objects made from it. We will also determine how the same material became precious for European audiences, and how its increased value informed the ways it was extracted and transported. The resulting itineraries will help us to explore the broad reach of European networks of exploitation, along with the diverse communities, environments, and systems of knowledge upon which they depended. These histories will demonstrate that European art was not simply the product of individual artists (often white and male), but also of the skills of vast networks of individuals scattered across the globe. As we think materially about the past, we will also reflect on the networks of extraction that profoundly shape our present.

Textbooks/Other Materials: None

Course Requirements:

Engagement 10%
In class presentation 20%
Writing assignment one 20%
Writing assignment two 20%
Final project 30%

Intended Audience: All interested undergraduates

Class Format: Two 80 minute lectures

Estimated Cost of Materials:

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Transregional, Early Modern



Brendan Cory McMahon
3 Credit Lecture
T Th 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Sound Art

HISTART
334-001

This undergraduate seminar explores a diverse range of art practices in sound that exist outside of, or are grouped under, the category “sound art.” Sound art entered the public lexicon in 1983 after “Sound/Art,” an exhibition at the Sculpture Center in New York City. It has, however, existed as a primary element for constructing and experiencing works of art prior to this moment once we consider cross-disciplinary attempts at undermining conventional modes of art-making. This class will consider how 20th- and 21st- technological developments were linked to the incorporation of sound across works on paper, installations, performances, painting, and sculpture. As a physical phenomenon and metaphorical reference, sound offers aesthetic alternatives to a opticality and its centrality within art experiences.

Textbooks/Other Materials: David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny, *Keywords in Sound*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2015. <https://read-dukeupress-edu.proxy.lib.umich.edu/books/book/166/Keywords-in-Sound>

Course Requirements:

PARTICIPATION (50%)

ASSIGNMENTS 50%:

Book/Exhibition Review (10%)

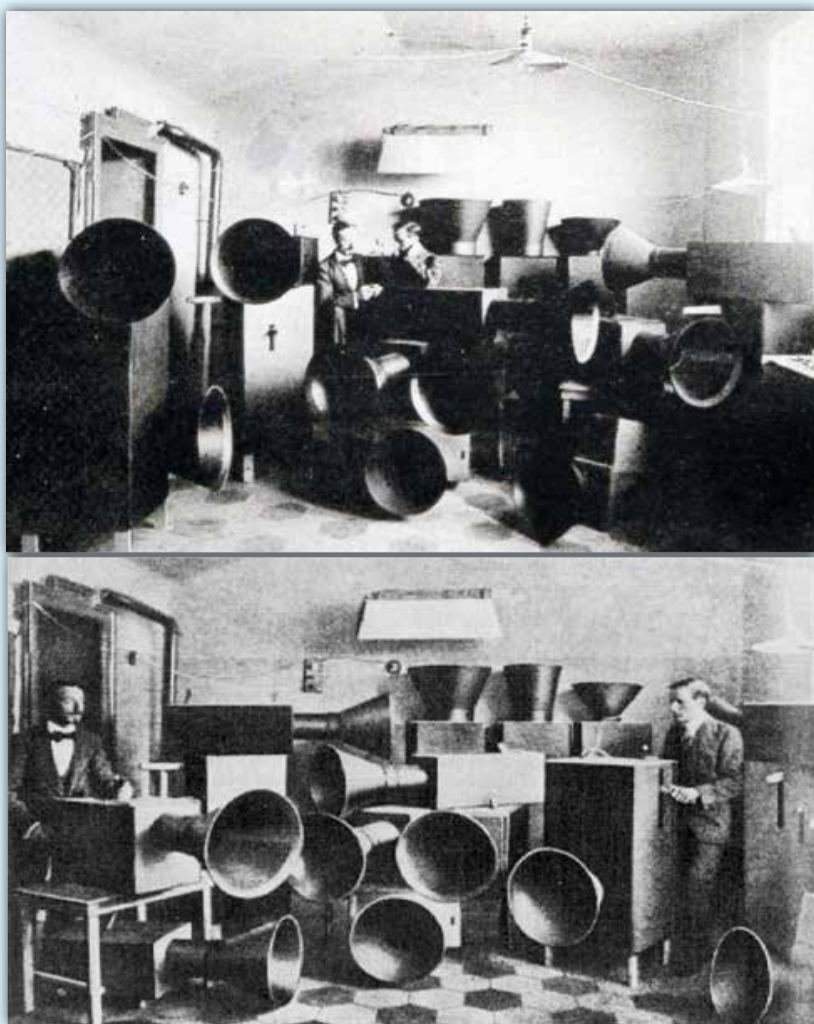
Podcast Series (40%)

Intended Audience: Undergraduate students interested in alternative modes of art production, and willing to undertake the challenge of reading deeply and engaging in critical discussion each seminar session.

Class Format: Two 80-minute seminar meetings.

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$50

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe and the US, Latin America, Modern and Contemporary, Transhistorical



julia elizabeth neal
3 Credit Seminar
T Th 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Medieval Architecture

**HISTART
345-001**

This course provides an introduction to the built environment of the Middle Ages from the fall of Rome to the Protestant Reformation. Students will integrate the study of architecture with the study of medieval culture, exploring for example the impact of the cult of saints, princely courts and civil authority, religious reform and radicalism and rising urbanism.

Course requirements:

A short architectural analysis paper, assigned 1/25, due before or in class 2/22 - 20%

A class project on a monument of your choice that will result in a research PowerPoint, to be submitted via email before or in our last class at the end of the semester, on 4/23. In preparation for the research PowerPoint, you will compile an annotated bibliography, assigned 2/8, due in class 3/7. Your research project, i.e., the bibliography and the PowerPoint, will count 45% toward your final grade

Attendance of, and participation in, class – 35%

Please note that attendance is mandatory. Attendance sheets will be circulated before each class.

Laptops, cell phones, and other mobile devices are NOT allowed and have to be switched off and stowed away during class time.

Course books: Suggested course books are: Roger Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*. *Oxford History of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Christopher Wilson, *The Gothic Cathedral: The Architecture of the Great Church, 1130-1530* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1990).

Online study gallery: The PowerPoint presentations shown in class will be posted on our CANVAS site.

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe, Middle East, Ancient, Medieval



Achim Timmermann
3 Credit Lecture
M W 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Special Topics - Art and Sports in the Middle Ages

HISTART
347-001

Chariot-racing, tennis, football, and archery were just some of the sports enjoyed over the 1000 years (4th-15th centuries CE) known as the "Middle Ages." Kings and queens, monks and nuns, nobles and peasants engaged in these in order to gain athletic prowess, fame, status, wealth, love, sex, and fun. This course examines the powerful visual expressions of the sports and games developed, and encouraged or discouraged over the medieval era. We will look at athletic monuments, illustrated manuscripts, tapestries, and also unexpected objects such as mirrors and combs. Modern material such as films and TV excerpts shall also be used.

Key issues explored are: the spectatorship of medieval sports; gender, class, and religion in sports; the role of fashion; and comparisons between the medieval and modern versions of the sports played.

Textbooks/Other Materials: No required textbooks; everything online

Course Requirements: 1 short paper, a mid-term, and a final exam.

Intended Audience: Undergraduates

Class Format: Two 80-minute lectures per week

Estimated Cost of Materials: 0

Keywords: sports, tennis, archery, chess, fashion, stadiums

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe, Middle East, Medieval, Transhistorical



Paroma Chatterjee
3 Credit Lecture
M W 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

The Medieval Book as Object

HISTART 348-001
MEMS 348-001

Illuminated manuscripts are books written, ornamented, and illustrated by hand. This course will introduce you to their history in medieval Europe, which is intertwined with ancient and contemporary practices from geocultural centres beyond the European Continent. Manuscripts contribute more images to the study of medieval art than any other visual medium. As repositories of acquired and produced knowledge, illuminated manuscripts serve as complex sites of looking, reading, and touching, while also preserving languages no longer in use, and difficult-to-read scripts. In ritual contexts, their function as objects could sometimes be as important as the texts they contained. Four larger perspectives will help us unlock their complexity and make manuscripts approachable:

- A. Production: where and how manuscripts were produced
- B. Use: medieval book types and their functions, as well as traces of reception
- C. People: patrons and artists of illuminated manuscripts, their status and representation
- D. Manuscript aesthetics: the specific interrelations of script and image, layout and content, book bindings and covers.

This is a course with a large critical making component, meaning that you will learn about medieval manuscripts by making different aspects of them and reflecting on and historically contextualizing the choices you have made. This includes an opportunity to try your hand at writing medieval script, building a quire, and collaborating to design a bifolium. In addition, we will get you as close to medieval manuscripts as possible, by studying manuscript fragments, handling and analysing early modern books, and a visit to the Special Collections Research Center to examine original manuscripts.

Textbooks/Other Materials: All materials will be made available on Canvas.

Intended Audience: Undergraduates, all welcome.

Class Format: Two 80-minute seminars per week.

Estimated Cost of Materials: 0-50

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe/US, Medieval



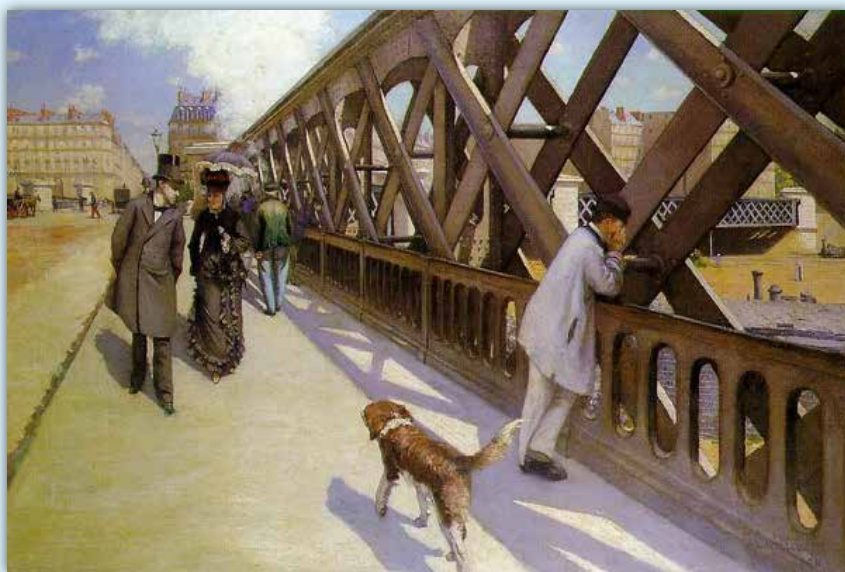
Tina Bawden
3 Credit Seminar
M W 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Realism And Impressionism

HISTART 370-001
FRENCH 346-001

This course focuses on Parisian visual culture during the second half of the nineteenth century. This is the period during which progressive painters, grouped loosely under the rubrics Realism and Impressionism, dramatically transformed the formal and thematic possibilities of their medium, despite stubborn resistance from the Académie des Beaux-Arts, the Paris Salon, and the general public. It is also the period that witnessed massive increases in the availability and marketability of print media, including photography, caricature, and advertising posters. Our objectives include:

- evaluating Realism and Impressionism from multiple critical perspectives.
- exploring the complex relationship between painting and print culture.
- tracing the connections between the visual arts and emergent forms of popular and mass culture.
- assessing the social and political dimensions of the Parisian art world.



One of our principal goals is to look carefully at the various interpretive models deployed by nineteenth-century critics to evaluate contemporary artistic practices. What were the advantages and limitations of these models? And how do they help us to better understand the work of artists such as Courbet, Manet, Degas, Monet, Pissarro, Cézanne, Seurat, and Toulouse-Lautrec?

Textbooks/Other Materials: None. All readings are available on Canvas.

Course Requirements: Attendance in class, three take-home essay tests, and two in-class quizzes. Each of the three take-home tests counts for 20% of the final grade. Each of the two quizzes counts for 15% of the final grade. Participation in section counts for 10% of the final grade.

Intended Audience: Undergraduates interested in French art and culture.

Class Format: Two ninety-minute lecture/discussions, and one fifty-minute discussion section per week.

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0-50

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe and the US, Modern and Contemporary

HISTART 370/FRENCH 346 is taught in English. It counts as a 300-level course taught in English toward the French major or minor.

Howard G Lay
4 Credit Lecture
T Th 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Weimar Culture

HISTART
371-001

The Weimar Republic, Germany's first experiment in democracy, lasted between 1918/19 and 1933. It began with the fall of the German monarchy at the end of World War I and ended a little more than fourteen years later when the National Socialist Party assumed power through a mixture of legal and illegal means. Although brief, the Weimar Republic witnessed a rich and diverse array of "high" and "popular" culture; including visual art, performance, sculpture, film, theater, literature, posters, illustrated books and magazines. Empowered by the breakdown of the established order, and with the firm belief that not only society but also the individual had to be remade from the ground up, the creators of Weimar culture engaged all the means at their disposal to visualize a new world and a new consciousness to go with it. This



course will examine various competing visions of the new individual and new society as they are presented in Weimar Culture, and how fascist, socialist and democratic forces battled to define the modern individual and society.

Textbooks/Other Materials: almost all readings will be available in the electronic coursepack; two paperback books will be required.

Course Requirements: Students are required to (1) read carefully for class, (2) participate fully in class-room discussions, and (3) complete three take-home examinations according to the schedule listed on the calendar below. Each exam will be a 6-8 page typewritten paper (approximately 2100-2600 words) in response to one or two questions posed by the instructor. Students will be given a choice of questions to answer.

Intended Audience: anyone welcome

Class Format: two 80-minute seminars per week

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0-50

Keywords: film, psychology, anthropology, media, sociology

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe and the US, Modern and Contemporary

Matthew Nicholas Biro
3 Credit Seminar
M W 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Anime to Zen: Exploring “Japan” through Popular Visual Cultures

HISTART 392-001
ASIAN 394-001

This course examines examples of modern and contemporary popular visual culture (late 19th century to present) in order to reveal fundamental themes of common concern to many people and times throughout the Japanese archipelago. By exploring cultures that may seem distant and exotic to many of you, we will create a mirror in which we can view ourselves. If we do our work well throughout the semester, you will understand Japan in a deeper way while also denormalizing and defamiliarizing the cultural constructs that shape our daily lives and personal, local worldviews.

A wide variety of films, photography, painting, sculpture, architecture, animation and comics, advertisements, websites, and other media will serve as lenses through which we will focus our explorations of three main themes: “Japan,” bodies, and fantasy. These will provide the broad frames for considering concepts about nature and place, personal and collective intersectional identities, indigeneity and hybridity, sex and gender, humanity and its borders, notions of beauty and ugliness, fantasy and virtual realities, violence and war, as well as cultures of consumption. We will also explore parallels between the United States and Japan in recent decades, considering the ways that visual cultures manifest and shape soft power, national identities, and personal experience. Throughout the class, we will also explore generative AI as a tool for exploring and assessing visual cultures.

In May 2026, students who enroll in this class are eligible to apply for the Global Course Connections (GCC) class that will go to Tokyo. Applications will be due through the MCompass website in the fall. For more information, please check the website of the Center for Global and Intercultural Study (CGIS) or contact the head instructor.

Textbooks/Other Materials: No textbooks are required. All readings and other preparatory materials will be provided in pdf format.

Course Requirements: The requirements for the course will be determined part in consultation with students. We use a gameful learning approach that will maximize flexibility and student agency while emphasizing engagement and group work. In addition to background reading and other preparatory materials, most students will write multiple short papers and various creative or hands-on exercises. Attendance in general meetings and sections is required.

Intended Audience: undergraduates of any level and any background

Class Format: two 80-minute general meetings and one 50 minute discussion section meeting per week

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0-50

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Asia, Modern/Contemporary



Kevin Gray Carr
4 Credit Lecture
M W 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Undergraduate Seminar - Visual Art and Incarceration

HISTART 393-001
RCHUMS 393

This experiential learning seminar takes inspiration from lawyer and judicial activist Bryan Stevensons claim that “proximity” is a precondition for significant social change and criminal justice reform. With a focus on visual art created in the context of US mass incarceration, the course is folded into the University of Michigan Prison Creative Arts Project (PCAP) program. Students, working in teams of five, facilitate a 12-week Visual Arts Workshop in a local Michigan prison. The course is organized with class meetings twice a week, with one of these sessions reserved for workshop planning, and the other for learning about artmaking inside prisons and the visual culture of incarceration. The weekly art workshop meetings in prison take place outside of class time, on a weekday evening or weekend, and involve about 3 ½ to 4 hours of travel and prison time. No prior art experience is required but is most welcome.



Prisons are dynamic sites of artistic activity, with incarcerated artists engaged in drawing, painting, 3D construction, and tattoo designs, among other forms of visual art. In class students study the richness and characteristics of this art, while facilitating and co-creating art alongside incarcerated participants in the weekly workshops. We will explore the relationship between the restrictive conditions of incarceration, on the one hand, and the expression of vibrant creativity and a visual imaginary, a “carceral aesthetic,” and the socio-economic and cultural dimensions of prison art, on the other hand. There will be several inspiring guests, and we will actively engage with the annual PCAP Exhibition of Work by Artists in Michigan Prisons in March, writing response letters to participating artists.

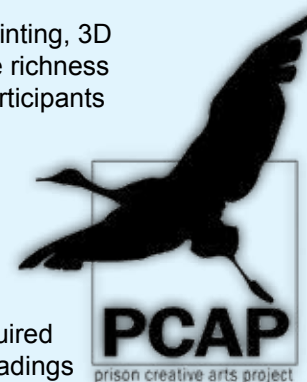
Assessment is based on participation and completion of the assignments. Students are required to attend class and facilitate weekly prison workshops, and to submit weekly posts on the readings and workshop experience, three artist response letters, and brief mid-semester and final reflections.

Image: Rafael deJesus *The Way It Is*, 2014

Instructor’s permission is required to enroll; please contact Megan Holmes: holmesml@umich.edu.

Enrolled students must sign up to attend the PCAP workshop training in early January

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Modern and Contemporary, Europe and US



Megan L Holmes
3 Credit Seminar
T Th 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Undergraduate Seminar - Dancers, Nymphs, and Sex Workers: Artists/Subjects in Paris, 1860-1910

HISTART
393-003



The seminar interrogates the artistic, psychic, and physical relationships between avant-garde Parisian artists and the subjects/objects of their output: working women. We will ask questions about the explosion of genre paintings, prints, pastels, drawings, and posters by artists like Manet, Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, Chéret, Mucha, and Picasso, as well as lesser-known artists, such as Émile Bernard and Félicien Rops. All of these artists reveled in picturing the “anonymous” woman worker and many garnered quite the profit. Our task is to examine the relationship between the draftsman, his experiments, and his working-class feminine subject: the ultimate signifier of commodity fetishism. Along the way, we will consider how empathy, disavowal, sadism, and overidentification might factor in women’s iteration across men’s artistic experiments. The readings will position the women worker within specific artistic practices (drawing, posters, paintings, etc.), allowing us to study them as both subjects in representation and objects of representation. Our goal is to understand how women of the lower classes came to represent modernist art, even as the burgeoning art market constructs the myth of great modern master.

Textbooks/Other Materials: all readings will be available via Canvas

Course Requirements: seminar meetings, readings, discussion, 3 short writing assignments

Intended Audience: anyone welcome

Class Format: two 80-minute seminar meetings per week

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0-15

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe and the US, Modern and Contemporary

Heather Jeanne Vinson
3 Credit Seminar
T Th 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM

Undergraduate Seminar - Venice: Timeless City, 697-1797

HISTART 393-004
ITALIAN 310-001

From its mythical origins in 421 AD to its fall in 1797 to Napoleon's troops, Venice was a city like no other. A cosmopolitan republic built out of the sea, Venice flourished into one of the wealthiest cities of the Mediterranean world during the medieval and early modern periods. For centuries, the Venetian Republic dominated trade networks in the Mediterranean and served as the gateway between Europe and Asia. During the Renaissance, La Serenissima—"the most serene republic"—thrived as a center for innovations in the visual arts and architecture. Early modern Venetians were masters of self-definition and diplomacy. In this course, we will explore the art and material culture of the Republic of Venice, from the election of its first doge in 697 to the waning of the city's power throughout the 18th century. Lagoon ecology and the city's unique geography emerge as crucial factors defining the urban infrastructure and shaping artistic production. We will examine how visual art and architecture defined the built environment and civic identities at home and abroad.



Course Readings: Available through Canvas. There is no textbook.

Course Requirements:

visual analysis essay (20%);
midterm essay (20%);
final paper (2,000-2,500 words) (30%);
attendance and participation (30%)

Intended Audience: All are welcome. No prerequisites.

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0

Class Format: Two 80-minute seminar sessions per week, with in-class discussions, workshops, on-campus field trips, and activities

Keywords: art, urban architecture, landscape, ecology, material culture, identity, Italy, Mediterranean, Renaissance

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe and the US, Early Modern; transhistorical

This course is taught in English. Course counts toward the Italian major or minor as a course taught in English.

Jennifer Gear
3 Credit Seminar
T Th 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Undergraduate Seminar - Imaginary Worlds in Renaissance Italy

HISTART 393-005
ITALIAN 317-001

During the Italian Renaissance, many artists, writers, and thinkers imagined themselves as cultural heirs to ancient Greece and Rome. This fascination with the past embraced an even larger span of antiquity and encompassed contemporary “others.” From inventing their own interpretation of Egyptian hieroglyphs and re-erecting obelisks, to recreating the Holy Land as a premodern tourist attraction in northern Italy, the Italian Renaissance defined itself through an embroidery of invented histories and imagined worlds.

In this course, we will consider a selection of fantasies about the past formulated in early modern Italy (c.1400–1750). These fantasies influenced visual art at every level, from elite commissions to popular culture. Ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt, and Etruria were revival hot spots from history, while the contemporaneous Middle East and New World served as reference points for fabricating various in-groups and out-groups. The rhetorical collapsing of time and place will be explored.

Topics covered in this class include: Egyptomania, faux archaeology, tourism and pilgrimages, maps, costume books, memory and memorials, and most especially how storytelling defines self.

Assigned readings will relate to the topic of the course and will serve as guides and models for effective writing. In this class, you will have the opportunity to improve your writing through small writing assignments and a substantial research paper (15–20 pages), which you will submit in multiple drafts.

Students will receive feedback on their writing through peer review, during in-class workshopping sessions, and from the instructor's written comments and assessment.

This course satisfies the Upper-Level Writing Requirement in the College of LSA.

Course Readings: Available through Canvas. There is no textbook.

Course Requirements: visual analysis assignment (10%);
clarity and concision essay (15%);
outline and 2–3 pages of research paper (15%);
first draft of research paper (20%);
final, revised research paper (20%);
attendance and participation (20%)

Intended Audience: Undergraduates who have already satisfied the LSA First-Year Writing Requirement (FYWR).

Estimated cost of materials: \$0

Class format: Two 80-minute seminar sessions per week, with in-class discussions, workshops, on-campus field trips, and writing activities

Keywords: art, Italy, fantasy, imagination, maps, costume, Renaissance, memory

HISTART Distribution Requirements: Europe and the US; Early Modern

This course is taught in English. Course counts toward the Italian major or minor as a course taught in English.



Jennifer Gear
3 Credit Seminar
M W 8:30 AM - 10:00 AM

Undergraduate Seminar - Birds Are Real: Avian Art, Past and Present

HISTART
393-008

Birds aren't real, or so the conspiracy theory would have us believe. Certainly, birds are increasingly becoming invisible: since 1970, nearly three billion birds have vanished from the skies above North America, according to a 2019 article published in Science Magazine. A need to make birds more visible—to contemplate, celebrate, and even appropriate their exquisite beauty and unique biological characteristics—has



motivated artists across time and space, just as it does today. In this seminar, participants will trace artistic engagement with species from a series of different bird families in a wide array of contexts, ranging from prehistoric rock paintings to contemporary cinema, taking a comparative view of the visual and material culture produced as a result of the direct engagement between human creators and avifauna. In addition to examining how makers in diverse contexts responded to the challenges of representing different species, and, in turn what those artistic strategies can tell us about the makers themselves, their goals and needs, this course will also consider the question of birds as visual artists themselves: as sculptors and performance artists, and, more controversially, as shapers of the creative force of evolution through processes of mate choice based on specific aesthetic criteria. Birds, these human and non-human artists want us all to know, are real, and they're spectacular.

Textbooks/Other Materials: All readings available on CANVAS

Course Requirements:

Engagement (20%)
Discussion leader (2 at 10% totalling 20 %)
Short written response to reading (10%)
Annotated bibliography (20%)
Research paper (% 30)

Intended Audience: All interested undergraduate students

Class Format: two 80-minute seminar meetings

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0

Keywords: birds, feathers, art, ornithology, nests

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Transregional, Transhistorical

Brendan Cory McMahon
3 Credit Seminar
M W 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Special Topics in the Humanities - The Yangzi River and Chinese Landscape Painting

HISTART
394-002



This course proposes to take the Yangzi River as a mainspring in understanding a history of Chinese landscape painting. The Yangzi River, with its waters running from the Tibetan Plateau in Qinghai, through the Three Georges, to today's Shanghai, cultivates Chinese civilizations from Stone Ages to the present. During the second millennium, the development of Chinese landscape painting often corresponded to artists' experience with, and imagination of, the river's water systems. We will take a fresh look at how this happened over time, and how the correlation between painting-making and place-making consolidates an intertwined human-environment relationship. Among various issues we will discuss, we will pay close attention to investigating an aesthetics of water as well political ecology associated with the riverine art and culture. Beyond examining a plethora of paintings and related literary writings, students are expected to learn about historical geography and the ecological spheres of the Yangzi River that informed and inspired those artworks. Both undergraduate and graduate students are welcome to enroll.

Image: Zhao Fu, *Ten-Thousand Miles of the Yangzi River*, ca. 1160s-70s. Handscroll, ink on paper, 45.1 x 992.5 cm. Beijing: Palace Museum.

Keywords: China, the Yangzi River, art history, landscape

HISTART Concentration Distributions: China, Asia, Transhistorical, Early Modern

Lihong Liu
3 Credit Lecture
M W 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Special Topics in the Humanities - “Staying with the Trouble”: Contemporary Art and the Environment

**HISTART
394-003**

How do contemporary artists help us sense, think, and feel amid environmental crises? This course takes its title from Donna Haraway’s directive to “stay with the trouble,” exploring 1) how contemporary art challenges us to consider the multidimensional and unevenly distributed impacts of climate change, and 2) how environmental thought expands the parameters and possibilities of contemporary art. Through weekly thematic units, we will examine how artistic practices intersect with ecocritical theories and environmental justice. Topics covered include land art, extractivism, petrocultures, pipelines and water protectors, toxicity, feminist and queer ecologies, and multispecies relations.



Image: Mel Chin, *Revival Field*, 1991–1993

Readings/Other Materials: All materials will be made available on Canvas.

Course Requirements: Attendance and active participation (10%); in-class presentation (10%); midterm exam (20%); final exam (20%); midterm project (20%); final project (20%)

Intended Audience: Undergraduates

Class Format: Two 80-minute sessions per week. Sessions typically combine lecture, class discussion, and student presentations.

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0-50

Keywords: Contemporary art, environmental art, ecocriticism, environmental justice, climate change, Anthropocene

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Modern and Contemporary, Europe and the United States

Kevin Hong
3 Credit Lecture
M W 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Undergraduate Seminar - Wearing Art: Body Modification in Sub-Saharan Africa

HISTART
393-011



The practice of body modification in sub-Saharan Africa includes scarification, tattooing, body painting, and piercing. This seminar offers insights into the histories of African body modification from 18th century to the present. The primary goal is to investigate the symbolism of body modification through an examination of its visual vocabulary. We will analyze the interconnectedness of art, body modification, and cultural heritage. We will critically review the inherent value of body modification as a mode of communication within and outside of these societies. We will also explore the appearance of motifs from body modification in the context of architectural design and sculpture.

Textbooks: All readings will be available on Canvas

Intended Audience: The seminar assumes no prior knowledge of African Art. All interested undergraduates are welcome to enroll.

Course Requirements:

Class Attendance (20%)

Class Participation (20%)

Reports (30%)

Readings and Discussions (30%)

Class Format: Two 80-minute seminar meetings

HISTART Concentration Distribution: Sub-Saharan Africa; Modern and Contemporary

Alice Korkor Ebeheakey
3 Credit Seminar
M W 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Special Topics in the Humanities - The Past in the Present: Archaeology and the Politics of Cultural Heritage in the Middle East

HISTART 394-006
MUSEUMS 394-006



This course examines the role of archaeology, museums, and cultural heritage in shaping the socio-politics of the Middle East from the 19th century to the present. We will consider how the archaeological past has been leveraged to advance imperial, colonial, and nationalist agendas, how it has been used to construct ethnic and religious identities, and how it has at times been the object of targeted attacks in projects of cultural erasure. Major themes include archaeology and colonialism, orientalism and the “universal museum,” archaeology and nation building, cultural heritage (definitions and constructs), UNESCO and the concept of “universal value,” the destruction of cultural heritage in armed conflict, preservation initiatives, looting and the antiquities trade, debates around repatriation, and current ethical standards in archaeological and museum practice.

HISTART Concentration Distribution: Ancient, The Middle East

Katherine Burge
3 Credit Lecture
M W 8:30 AM - 10:00 AM

Upper-Level Seminar - Architecture and Memory

HISTART
394-008

"There is nothing more invisible than a monument," Austrian novelist Robert Musil wrote in 1936. Nothing seems further from the truth right now. During 2020, in Bristol, England, protesters tossed a statue of slave trader Edward Colston into the harbor; in Antwerp, Belgium, activists are defacing bronzes of King Leopold II, once the absolute ruler of the Congo in Africa; in the United States, protesters are toppling Confederate and other monuments in response to the murder of George Floyd; and across the world statues of Christopher Columbus are falling. The vanquishing of



these monuments speaks to the welling up of rage and discontent against them—Confederate, patriarchal, colonial, racist, genocidal—, all spatial reminders of structural and representational inequality. It also reveals a special affinity between social protests and monuments; between citizens occupying the streets to demand justice and the dead bronzes standing in their way. Simply put, our monuments no longer reflect who we are. Acknowledging that the way we represent our past is changing, this course asks: How do current monuments “stand up,” and what can we do about it?

This seminar examines the ever-fluctuating relationship between memory and the built environment in light of recent associations between memorialization and hegemonic racism. Pierre Nora's *Lieux de Memoire* (1984), a foundational work on memorialization, describes how modern places of memory—monuments, memorials and buildings—provide a refuge against constant change, and an anchor for the nation-state. Acts of public commemoration, for example, were one of the most visible ways to deal with the aftermath of the Holocaust, producing a vast array of memorials and monuments across the world. And street-names, monuments, museums, memorials, ruins, plaques and guided tours are constant reminders of deep historical roots.

Analyzing objects, buildings, and landscapes through memory, we explore race, gender, postcolonialism, the Holocaust, dark tourism, nostalgia, and memorial activism. As racialized monuments are removed across the world, we might also note the overpowering presence of male figures in public space that is now contested, as memorialization has evolved into a multidirectional global phenomenon. Reading widely across history, memory studies, and the built environment from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, the seminar will give students the ability to trace memorialization as an historiographical artifact and to analyze its role in contemporary cities. In addition, the seminar will include visits and study of a variety of local sites in Detroit and its surroundings if students are on campus, or of monuments, memorials and museums in students' hometowns if teaching is remote.

The course will be run as a reading and “looking” seminar for most of the semester, but a significant part of the seminar is a workshop in which students will present and critique one another's work in a supportive environment. The ultimate goal will be the production of a piece of writing that has the potential to be published. Alternatively, students may propose a design project, with a significant written component, such as an entry in a design competition.

HISTART Distribution Requirements: Modern and Contemporary, Europe and the US, Latin America and the Caribbean

Valentina Javiera Rozas-Krause
3 Credit Seminar
M W 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Heroes, Heroines, and Sinners of the Bible in the Arts: Gender and Narrative in Painting, Photography, and Film

HISTART
394-015

It goes without saying that the Bible exerted a tremendous impact upon European culture, but how did such famous masters as Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Rembrandt, and modern artists interpret biblical subjects and depict its men and women? This course focuses upon heroes and sinners from the Bible, with emphasis also upon such female figures as Eve, Sarah, Rebecca, Dinah, Potiphar's wife, Delilah, and Esther, and such male figures as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Saul, David. Impressive biblical characters and their narratives will be studied in the context of the art and culture of Italy, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. We will consult biblical text in relation to masterpieces of painting, prints, film, and photography. Three campus field trips during class times are planned.

Textbooks/Other Materials: none, readings on Canvas

Course Requirements: Attend Seminar, class discussion, class presentations

Intended Audience: Undergraduates

Class Format: Lecture, class discussion, student presentations

HISTART Concentration Distribution: Europe and the US, Early Modern, Modern and Contemporary



Shelley Perlove
3 Credit Lecture
T Th 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM

Mini Seminar Course - Gaming as Method: Japanese Art, Role-Playing Games, and Creative Scholarship in the Humanities

**HISTART
395-001**

After many years of often being relegated to marginalized subcultures, role-playing games (RPGs) are experiencing a renaissance. From *Stranger Things* and *Community* to *Critical Role* and *Dimension 20*, RPGs are appearing more frequently in and are more accepted by mainstream cultures. At the same time, independent designers are publishing a stunning variety of games, engaging with diverse mechanics, structures, and themes, often creating play spaces fostering self-reflection, social critique, and expanding perspectives on the world. This class aims to bring this creative efflorescence into the classroom in order to explore key issues in the humanities, empowering participants to understand how scholarship is actually done while imagining work that goes beyond the current limitations of academia.



Although we will focus on tabletop role-playing games (TTRPGs), we may also consider computer/console RPGs (CRPGs), board games, and “game adjacent” practices and structures, including aspects of religious cultures, literature, performance art, and philosophy. In this class, you are strongly encouraged to share your academic expertise, hobbies, and personal experiences. We also will all work to foster a space for experimentation and fun. Despite the breadth of the course, however, we are not going to learn (at least directly) how to design games. Instead, we will focus on “hacking” pre-existing games to spark innovative ideas and ask new questions of other cultures and times, while reflecting on ourselves and our society.

This class invites you to take the next step in developing CR-RPGs, thoroughly integrating elements of tabletop games into a semester-long exploration of historical and cultural topics. Throughout the semester, we will explore techniques of collaborative storytelling, negotiated world-building, solo journaling, and various aspects of game design to cultivate skills of historical and cultural empathy, imagination, self-reflection, critical thinking, and analysis. Together, we will use modified game structures to imagine ways of bringing diverse thinkers (including you) into the dialogues and processes of knowledge creation and interpretation... Along the way, we hope to have a lot of fun!

Are you ready to join us at the table?

Textbooks/Other Materials: All readings will be provided as pdfs, but students are encouraged to purchase one or more role-playing or other games for their research.

Course Requirements:

Assignments and rubrics will be determined in consultation with the students in the seminar, but tentatively, the requirements would likely include:

attendance and engagement (35%)

journal (15%)

a one-page RPG design (10%)

a “Choose Your Own Adventure” project (15%) in which you will study an object or set of objects, connect your topic to broader stories in the course, and present your findings to your classmates

a final project (individually or in teams, 25%) that will be based on original research and playtested in the classroom

Intended Audience: Although experience in gaming, game design, Asian Studies, and art history are all helpful, no prior knowledge or experience is required. All undergraduate and graduate students are welcome!

Class Format: Two 110-minute seminar meetings per week for 7 weeks

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0-\$50

Keywords: RPG, game theory, play, creative scholarship, game design

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Transregional, Transhistorical

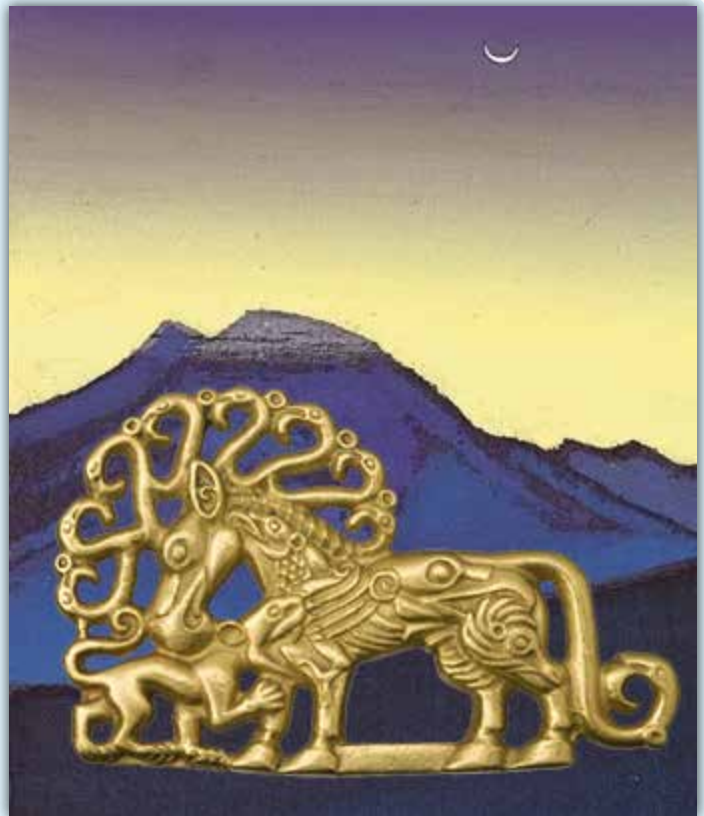
Kevin Gray Carr
2 Credit Mini-Seminar
T Th 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Mini Seminar Course - Fantastic Beasts (and how to see them)

HISTART
395-002

Fantastic beasts have often been rendered as grotesque or monstrous beings heralding social chaos, in which animal and human worlds collide. Yet in many cultures visual formulations of composite creatures present instead apex animalistic beings as icons of authority and power. This course probes into new ways of seeing that embrace post-humanist mind frames and indigenous perspectives. Through a myriad of visual compositions from “animal art” of the steppe nomads, students will dive into animal-dominated worlds, dissect a myriad of fantastic beasts, and reconstruct the logics of animal-centric artistic creations.

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Ancient, The Middle East (includes Western and Central Asia, and North Africa), Asia



Bryan Miller
2 Credit Mini-Seminar
T Th 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Mini Seminar Course - Spaces of Confinement, Spaces of Care: An Architectural History of Hospitals

HISTART
395-003

This mini seminar explores the architectural history of a ubiquitous civic institution: the hospital. Starting in the late eighteenth century, charitable medical clinics were gradually transformed into prodigious “machines” for curing the masses. Over the years, changes to the physical structure of hospitals have reflected the industrial West’s political and medical rationales, along with its imperial ambitions.

This course offers a transnational and colonial history of medical infrastructures. Drawing on the work of historians invested in the re-appropriation of spaces of care and

confinement, it attempts to show how these infrastructures have, in some cases, led to the emergence of alternative communities and new political subjectivities. By consulting archival materials and a wide array of visualizations, students will develop strategies for the interpretation of architectural plans, while engaging productively with both visual and oral histories.

Textbooks / other materials: All course readings will be available on Canvas.

Course Requirements: Attendance in class; readings; student projects

Intended Audience: Undergraduates

Class Format: Two 80-minute seminar meetings per week for 7 weeks

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0-50

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Transregional; Modern and Contemporary



Gaetan Johanny Thomas
2 Credit Mini-Seminar
M W 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Mini Seminar Course - Japanese Art Fieldwork Practicum

HISTART
395-004



Global Course Connections (GCC) programs are 3-4 week-long extensions of courses taught on campus during winter term. GCCs are open only to students enrolled in the on-campus course, and students earn an additional 2 credits for the abroad portion of the class. Thus, participants must enroll in HistArt 392 /Asian 394 in Winter 2026 and apply to the [GCC program](#) through [M-Compass](#) by December 10, 2025.

https://mcompass.umich.edu/_portal/tds-program-brochure?programid=12140

During this 3-week experience in Japan, students earn a total of two credits while travelling to Tokyo and other sites to explore various aspects of Japan's modern and contemporary visual and material cultures. Students will explore shrines, temples, museums, festivals, galleries, commercial spaces, and street cultures across the city. Participants will expand the insights from the winter semester portion of the class to understand the complex interactions of cultures and perspectives in Tokyo and beyond. To cap off the on-site experience, each student will develop a project of their choosing that explores an aspect of Japanese visual culture through first-hand research in the city.

Students need not have studied any Japanese language competency, though those who do will find plenty of opportunities to apply it.

Inquiries should be directed to CGIS or Prof. Kevin Carr (kgcarr@umich.edu).

Kevin Gray Carr
2 Credit Mini-Seminar
Time and Location TBD

Mini Seminar Course - Objective Pictures? A Visual History of Modern Science

HISTART
395-005

Photographs, charts, curves, plans, maps, tables, digital images: visualizations are omnipresent in modern science. The advent of mechanical reproduction and photography in the nineteenth century made possible the production of images that bore no trace of the human hand, while seeming to embody an ideal of objectivity.

Scientists, however, soon discovered the limitations of mechanical instruments for image making. For despite ongoing technical advances, such instruments are unable to generate wholly satisfactory images for any number of scientific procedures. Individuals must still interpret what can't be adequately depicted, thereby bringing their own subjectivity into the process of representation. Since visualizations shape our understanding of phenomena, some representations have become contestable, especially in fields such as immunology, where pictures remain highly stylized.

This seminar offers a visual history of modern science, from physics, astronomy, and biology to medicine and public health. It historicizes notions of objectivity, standardization, simplicity and legibility, and examines controversies surrounding the making and interpretation of scientific pictures.

Textbooks / other materials: All course readings will be available on Canvas.

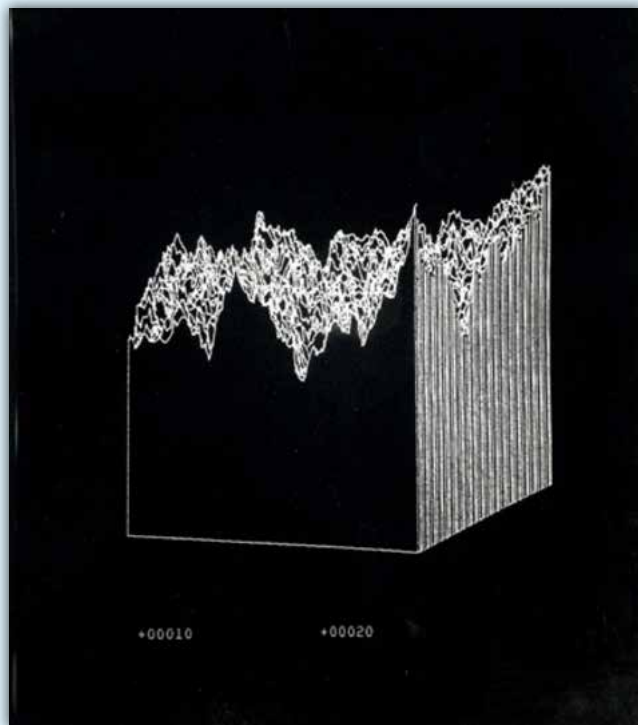
Course Requirements: Attendance in class; readings; student projects

Intended Audience: Undergraduates

Class Format: Two 80-minute seminar meetings per week for 7 weeks

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0-50

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe and the U.S.; Modern and Contemporary



Gaetan Johanny Thomas
2 Credit Mini-Seminar
M W 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Mini Seminar Course - The Book in the Renaissance

HISTART
395-006

This course offers an in-depth introduction to the history of manuscript and printed books in early modern Europe, spanning from the early fifteenth to the late-seventeenth century. Using a rich array of materials from the Special Collections Research Center at the University of Michigan Library, students will examine the production, circulation, and reception of books during this transformative period. Through hands-on sessions, they will acquire practical skills in analyzing Renaissance books as both physical artifacts and instruments of intellectual exchange.

Major topics include the transition from manuscript culture to print, the mechanics of early printing, and the material components of the book—such as paper, typography, format, and binding. The course also explores the contributions of scholar-printers to the humanist movement, techniques of illustration (including relief and intaglio), the development and cultural role of early libraries, the effects of religious reform and censorship, and, drawing on our extensive holdings in early astronomy and medicine, the impact of printing on the advancement of scientific thought.

Additionally, students will be introduced to key research tools and curatorial practices fundamental to the study, interpretation, and preservation of early printed books.

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Early Modern, Europe and the U.S.



Pablo Alvarez
2 Credit Mini-Seminar
M 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Issues in Museums

MUSEUMS 401-001



This course is intended to complement MUSEUMS 301's historical orientation with an examination of major areas of concern in the contemporary museum world. Certain themes are expected to receive treatment on an annual basis (e.g., the depiction of ethnic, racial, religious, and gender issues in museum displays, ethics, the ownership of cultural heritage materials, changes in museum funding and its impact on museums, etc.), while other themes will receive attention as merited by news of the day. Of key pedagogical importance is the seminar format for the class which will allow for dynamic group discussion and in-depth examination of the issues at hand. A case study approach will predominate but will be supplemented by appropriate additional readings to create the necessary theoretical context for discussion.

Because of the contemporary focus of the course, students will be encouraged to further supplement their understanding of issues through participation in listservs, web searching, following the popular media, and research on positions taken by various professional organizations. Similarly, students will learn about contemporary issues facing museums through direct engagement with host partner museums who will identify an issue of institutional concern for the class to research during the term. Student teams will engage with museum staff to learn about the issue, understand its impact on the museum, study best practices at other institutions, conduct a literature search, research the greater context for the problem, and develop a set of recommendations. Such an approach allows students to engage with historical precedent, relevant theory and scholarship, and the reality of practice. The small seminar setting (fewer than 25 students) will allow students to engage closely with faculty, visiting lecturers, and other students, resulting in a deeper understanding of the issues facing contemporary museums.

Deirdre LC Hennebury
3 Credit Seminar
T Th 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Special Topics - Soviet Visual Culture: 1917-1953

**HISTART
489-001**

The course focuses on interfaces of Soviet visual arts and political propaganda that characterized the years of Revolution, the NEP Period, and Stalinism in the USSR, i.e., the years between the revolutions of 1917 and Stalin's death in 1953. Among other things, we will study modern print media, ranging from poster art to publishing projects such as the propaganda magazine USSR in Construction, but also phenomena which, although displaying distinct visual aspects, have largely been neglected, e.g., such as picture postcards, wall newspapers, and the like. Another major topic are visual aspects of public festivities and, overall, visual aspects of the public space. We will also discuss profiles of artists who were active in forging the bridge between the avant-garde and political art (Klucis, Lissitski, Rodchenko). Time permitting, some of these domains will be compared— and contrasted— with similar phenomena in interwar Germany, especially as regards the culture of photo-illustrated magazines, visual aspects of the public space, or the cult of personality. Western contributions to Soviet visual culture will also be discussed. Students unfamiliar with Russian history will be encouraged to look for phenomena of visual propaganda in other national cultures, including the present times; knowledge of Russian is not required.

Course Requirements: Class participation, a brief power-point presentation, and a final paper will be required. Testing for this course will include short in-class tests.

Class Format: In person, weekly class meetings will require synchronous participation.

Jindrich Toman
3 Credit Lecture
M W 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Upper-Level Seminar - The Avant Gardes and Their Legacy Today

HISTART
497-002

Art today is in many ways shaped by the legacy of the avant-gardes. The avant-gardes arise after the devastations of the First World War and aim to link artistic experimentation (already a hallmark of modernism) to a utopian commitment to bring about a radically new, and better world, in other words to politics. In order to achieve these goals, the avant-gardes to formulate themselves into movements of political solidarity, and they rely on the force of the manifesto, a combination of theory and aesthetics with a high dose of poetry, to empower their experiments with what they believe is political force. We will explore the rise and practice of the avant-gardes in detail, how they arise from, and depart from, the modernism of Picasso, Braque, et al. And their gravitation to new media. We will then turn to the legacies of the avant-gardes in post-World War II American artistic practice: the American interest in identity politics framed as the critique of representation, the creation of solidarities, resistance to the domination of the art world as a financial form.

Textbooks/Other Materials: most materials can be found on the Canvas Site

Course Requirements: One midterm paper of 3 pages and one final paper of 10 pages.

Intended Audience: undergrads and first year grad students.

Class Format: One three hour class per week (so that film clips etc. can be shown)

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$50

Keywords: modernism, avant-gardes, experimental, new media, politics

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe and America, 20th century



Daniel Alan Herwitz
3 Credit Seminar
T 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Space and Power

HISTART
497-004 / 689-004



This course asks you to rethink how the world is made—through space. We study how power is built into landscapes, neighborhoods, borders, and infrastructures, and how everyday practices of dwelling, movement, and protest assemble counter-spaces and alternative geographies of justice. Rather than treating places as closed containers, we approach them as relational formations shaped by specific histories, political economies, culture, and materials. This perspective trains you to read the built world as evidence: to see how territorial imperatives, spatial discipline, and governance organize daily life—and how people generate livelihood, community, resistance, and refusal within and against those arrangements.

Core themes include Enlightenment geographical imaginaries and their afterlives; racial, imperial and colonial spatial projects; political technologies of cartography, surveillance, and regulation; diasporic and transnational belonging; the cultural

politics of borders and partitions; affective and forensic landscapes of ruin and repair; and the spatial strategies of social movements across uneven urban terrains. We look at redlining in the US, segregation policies in Latin American cities, urban renewal projects in Detroit, antisemitic housing policies in Nazi Germany, and neocolonial settlements, as well as infrastructures of containment, including the Berlin Wall and the Mexico-US border. Together, these strands will give you a strong conceptual and methodological toolkit for carrying out original, evidence-based research into the spaces you inhabit and study.

For graduates across history of art, architecture, urban studies, geography, American studies, geography, public policy, sociology, and related fields, the course offers three decisive benefits. First, critical spatial literacy: the ability to interpret maps, plans, visual media, art, architecture and everyday urban form as instruments of power and as sites of contestation. Second, analytic range: connecting fine-grained local cases to global processes so you can build persuasive, well-grounded arguments about complex social worlds. Third, public-facing scholarship: clear writing and compelling visual argumentation that can inform civic debate, design decision-making, and policy work. In short, “Space and Power” is an essential graduate step for anyone who wants to analyze the present with precision and imagine more just spatial futures.

Attendance and participation are essential in this course. Evaluation accrues from cumulative work in class and assignments throughout the semester. For the final project, students may choose between a final research paper or a design, mapping, visual, film, or public intervention-based project with a significant written component.

Your grade in the class will be based primarily on the work presented and submitted throughout the semester and the final paper and its presentation but will also take into account attendance, class participation, and the quality of your feedback and questions.

- Attendance 10%
- Participation 10% (questions submitted on Canvas, active participation in class)
- Reading presentations 20%
- Assignments and workshop presentation 20%
- Final presentation 10%
- Final Paper or Project 30%

Valentina Rozas-Krause,
3 Credit Seminar
F 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Islamic Art and South Asia: From Mughal Miniatures to Contemporary Abstraction

HISTART
497-005 / 689-005

How have the practices and legacies of Islamic image-making been negotiated in South Asia across the centuries? This class explores such questions by looking at artworks—such as manuscripts, paintings, sculptures, and photographs—from the 16th century until today. Some of the key themes for discussion include narrative forms of creative expression, book paintings and miniatures,



manifestations of spiritual (especially Sufi) thought and imagination, the conceptualization of power, authority, and lineage, female presence and patronage, and historical practices of calligraphy and their related contemporary politics of abstraction. Conjoining the past and present, we aim to put in critical dialogue premodern and modern works of art that overtly engage with Islamic forms of identity and representation, raising important questions about religious and cultural politics in South Asia and its diasporas. Materials that will be explored include Mughal illustrated manuscripts and single-page paintings, calligraphies, neo-miniatures, contemporary narrative and abstract paintings, photographs, prints, and sculptures by modern artists such as M.F. Husain, Nilima Sheikh, Sadequain, and Shahzia Sikander. The seminar will provide students with the opportunity to work with South Asian artworks in UM's Hatcher Library and the Detroit Institute of Art, and it also will include an optional fieldtrip to Chicago's Art Institute and South Asia Institute.



Textbooks/Other Materials: Will be available through Canvas. No textbook.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation (30%)

Final Oral Presentation (30%)

Final Paper (40%)

Intended Audience: Advanced undergraduates and graduate students

Class Format: 3-hour seminar, once per week

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0-50

Keywords: Islam, South Asia, Abstraction, Sufi, Mughal, Miniatures

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Middle East, Asia, Early Modern, Modern and Contemporary

Christiane Gruber and
Rattanamol Singh Johal
3 Credit Seminar
T 2:30 PM - 5:30 PM

Upper-Level Seminar - Art and Meteorology

HISTART
497-006 / 689-006



This course explores the visualization of meteorological phenomena across various artistic traditions, with a focus on Chinese art history. We will approach this topic through the lenses of sensory experiences and scientific explanations of the intangible forces at planetary scales, including wind, clouds, the aurora, and the cycles of day and night. We will examine artistic representations of heavenly bodies and geophysical systems, as well as how these realms influence and are influenced by the living world. Students will critically engage with primary and secondary sources from art history, the history and philosophy of science, and other relevant fields. Students will also learn to conduct visual analyses of artworks and explore how they visualize the non-visual. By the end of the course, students are expected to develop interpretive skills for investigating interdisciplinary issues through artworks.

Image: Chen Jiru, *Misty Mountains after Mi Youren*, Handscroll (detail), ink on paper, 20.8 x 233 cm. Tianjin: Tianjin Museum.

Keywords: art, meteorology, China, art and science

HISTART Concentration Distributions: China, Asia, Transcultural, Early Modern, Transhistorical

Lihong Liu
3 Credit Seminar
Th 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Art and Race in Nineteenth Century America: An Exhibition Seminar

HISTART
497-007 / 689-007
MUSEUMS 497-007



How did Americans learn to visualize race? How did certain groups resist others' efforts to depict them? Who were the first Americans? Was the United States a nation of many races, one race, or an idea that transcended race? How did artists address these issues in the century of Manifest Destiny, Civil War, mass immigration, and the widespread display and reproduction of pictures? How can we change the way museums exhibit this material today?

These are the questions our seminar will address as we design new displays and interpretation of 19th century US art for an exhibition at the University of Michigan Museum of Art.

We'll study paintings, drawings, sculpture, illustrations, photographs, cartoons, advertisements, and even some buildings designed in the United States in the period, consider the role of exhibitions in 19th century US culture, then propose portions of a new exhibition. We will work with archival sources on campus and visit the Clements Library and area art museums. Our readings will include primary documents as well as recent interpretations.

The class will include a field trip to meet with curators at a museum that is currently rethinking its display of 19th century US art.

Textbooks/Other Materials: Angela Miller et al, *American Encounters* (textbook available for free online); Paul Boyer, *American History: A Very Short Introduction* recommended; online readings in Canvas

Course Requirements: Attendance and informed participation in class discussion; Posts to online discussion forum; short writing assignments to draft and revise museum labels. These assignments will involve historical research and critical analysis.

Intended Audience: Students ready to take on a challenge and participate in class discussion. Some prior background in art history, American Studies or museum studies is helpful, though not required.

Class Format: undergraduate seminar with an option for graduate students to take on extra projects.

Estimated Cost of Materials: less than \$15

Keywords: art history, race, curating, museums, Civil War

HISTART Concentration Distributions: Europe and the US, Modern and Contemporary

Rebecca Zurier
3 Credit Seminar
M W 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Honors Thesis

**HISTART
499-001**



This course is a continuation of HISTART 498, the Honors Colloquium. In the second semester of this year-long seminar, students will complete the honors thesis projects begun in the fall. Special emphasis will be placed on research, organizational strategies, and writing techniques.

Textbooks/Other Materials: None

Course Requirements: Multiple drafts and revisions. The completed honors theses (@ 50 pages) are submitted in April.

Intended Audience: History of Art honors students.

Class Format: One three-hour seminar per week.

Estimated Cost of Materials: \$0-50

HISTART Concentration Distributions: HISTART 499 does not count towards distribution

Howard G Lay
3 Credit Seminar
F 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM