



Bowdoin College Art History

Course Offerings Fall 2020

ARTH 1017/ASNS 1014 Envisioning Japan: Landscapes, Cityscapes, and Seascapes
FYWS/Seminar Block 2 (Tuesday and Thursday 2-3:30 pm)

Professor Peggy Wang

Course Description

How do pictures of places incite pride, wonder, desire, or fear? How can they be mobilized to promote national unity or invite social disintegration? From images of the urban pleasure quarters to scenes of sacred mountains, Japanese artists during the Edo period (1603–1868) produced landscapes, cityscapes, and seascapes to enable people to see and consume the country in new ways. This course focuses on Japanese woodblock prints to unpack how artists invested pictures—such as the renowned Great Wave—with the power to shape attitudes towards nature, belonging, and Japan’s place in the world.

ARTH 1020 That’s Not Art!: Defining Contemporary Art
FYWS/Seminar Block 2 (Tuesday and Thursday 2-3:30 pm)

Professor Pamela Fletcher

Course Description

Contemporary art can be challenging. Black squares, white cubes, appropriated advertising images, activist posters, street art, and performances all pose viewers questions of intention, interpretation, and evaluation. Why did twentieth- and twenty-first-century artists redefine traditional media and invent new forms of artistic practice and experience? How do we know when something is “art”? How do we know if it is good art? Topics covered include: abstraction, appropriation, performance, activism, the workings of the contemporary art market, and theories of value and taste.

ARTH 1021 Faked, Forged, Stolen, and Repatriated: Crimes Against Art
FYWS/Seminar Block 1 (Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-10:50 am)

Professor Dana Byrd

Course Description

Examines crimes against art, including acts of theft, vandalism, and forgery representing challenges to our shared heritage. Students develop skills in art historical interpretation and ethical reasoning as they engage with historical examples including the history and controversies of such noted stolen cultural artifacts including the Elgin Marbles, the Benin bronze plaques, and Chugach burial masks. Examines the billion dollar “black market” for stolen art, and the legal tools for restoring plundered goods through repatriation.

ARTH 1710 Building a Virtual Exhibition: A 'Hands-On' Experience**Block 3 (Monday 1-2:20 pm; Wednesday 10-11:20 am; Thursday 3:30-4:50 pm)****Professor Kate Gerry****Course Description**

Students in this course work closely with Bowdoin College Museum of Art Staff to enhance the online presence of an exhibition that will be on view at the BCMA for part of the 2020/21 academic year. Working with medieval art, students are introduced to some of the basic skills of art history and explore digital and online strategies for sharing works of art and cultural knowledge with the general public. Subject matter includes African and European art from the medieval period (c. 500-c.1500). This course offers a starting point for anyone interested in art history.

ARTH 2100/ARCH 1102 Roman Archaeology**Block 1 (Monday 10-11:20 am; Tuesday 5-6:20 pm; Thursday 11 am-12:20 pm)****Professor Jim Higginbotham****Course Description**

Surveys the material culture of Roman society, from Italy's prehistory and the origins of the Roman state through its development into a cosmopolitan empire, and concludes with the fundamental reorganization during the late third and early fourth centuries. Lectures explore ancient sites such as Rome, Pompeii, Athens, Ephesus, and others around the Mediterranean. Emphasis upon the major monuments and artifacts of the Roman era: architecture, sculpture, fresco painting, and other minor arts. Considers the nature of this archaeological evidence and the relationship of classical archaeology to other disciplines such as art history, history, and classics. Assigned reading supplements illustrated presentations of the major archaeological finds of the Roman world.

ARTH 2120 Medieval Foundations: The Beginnings of Western Medieval, Byzantine, and Islamic Art**Block 9 (Tuesday 12:30-1:50 pm; Thursday 8-9:20 am; Friday 2:30-4:50 pm)****Professor Kate Gerry****Course Description**

Explores the art and architecture produced across Europe and the Mediterranean region in the late antique and early medieval periods (c.250-c.1050), with attention paid to how the artistic practices of a number of cultures grew out of the Roman imperial tradition. Students explore the visual characteristics of the art and architecture from this period, and the relationship between early medieval art and the social, religious, and political history of the earlier Middle Ages. Topics include Anglo-Saxon, Byzantine, Carolingian, early Islamic, and Viking art. Students from all majors are welcome.

ARTH 2210/ASNS 2201 From Mao to Now: Contemporary Chinese Art**Block 6 (Monday 7-8:20 pm; Wednesday 2:30-3:50 pm; Friday 10-11:20 am)****Professor Peggy Wang****Course Description**

Examines the history of contemporary Chinese art and cultural production from Mao's Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) until today. Traces experiments in oil, ink, performance, installation, video, and photography and considers these media and formats as artistic responses to globalization, capitalist reform, urbanization, and commercialization. Tracks themes such as art and consumerism, national identity, global hierarchies, and political critique. Readings include primary sources such as artists' statements, manifestoes, art criticism, and curatorial essays.

ARTH 2230 The Arts of Venice**Block 7 (Tuesday 8-9:20 am; Wednesday 4-5:20 pm; Friday 11:30 am-12:50 pm)****Professor Susan Wegner****Course Description**

Venice is distinctive among Italian cities for its political structures, its geographical location, and its artistic production. Its resilience in the face of plague, flood and warfare shines forth in the brilliance of city's fabric and in the vibrantly colored art that ornaments it. This overview of Venetian art and architecture considers Venice's relationships to Byzantium and the Turkish east, Venetian colorism in dialogue with Tuscan-Roman disegno (drawing and composition), and the role of women as artists, as patrons, and as subjects of art. Includes art by the Bellini family, Giorgione, Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto, Tiepolo, Canaletto, and Rosalba Carriera, and the architecture of Palladio. No previous work in art history required.

ARTH 2560/GSWS 2258 Women, Gender, and Sexuality in Western European and American Art, 1500-present**Block 1 (Monday 10-11:20 am; Tuesday 5-6:20 pm; Thursday 11 am-12:20 pm)****Professor Pamela Fletcher****Course Description**

This course will provide an introduction to the history of women as creators, subjects, and audiences of art in Western Europe and the United States from the Renaissance to the present. How do we (can we?) tell the stories of the forgotten people and identities of the past? What archives and artifacts are available, and how do we account for the gaps? How do we think historically about the variable categories of gender and sexuality? As we grapple with these questions, we will explore a wide range of methods and approaches to visual art that focus on questions of gender and sexuality in an intersectional context, and identify key concepts such as "bodies," "ideologies," and "identities." No previous work in art history required.

ARTH 3240 Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo: Science and Art through Drawing**Block 4 (Monday 2:30-3:50 pm; Wednesday 11:30 am-12:50 pm; Friday 8:30-9:50 am)****Professor Susan Wegner****Course Description**

Both Leonardo and Michelangelo produced hundreds of drawings in the service of their imaginative processes in creating great architecture, sculpture and painting. In addition, both studied the human body through anatomical drawings, while Leonardo expanded his investigations to the bodies of animals, the movement of water, the flight of birds and countless other natural phenomena. Investigating the theory of disegno (drawing and composing) as a divinely granted power, this class will read biographies, letters and notebooks in translation as well as scholarly literature on the Sistine Chapel frescoes, the Last Supper and other monuments now known to us only through drawings. The course will make use of works from the collections of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art. Opportunities for hands-on learning of drawing techniques: chalk, pen and ink, wash, metal point will support our investigations of these artists' accomplishments.

ARTH 3600/AFRS 3600 Race and Representation in American Art**Block 8 (Tuesday 11 am-12:20 pm; Wednesday 7-8:20 am; Friday 1-2:20 pm)****Professor Dana Byrd****Course Description**

Explores the visual construction of race in American art and culture from the colonial period to the late

twentieth century. Focuses on two racial "categories"--blackness and whiteness--and how they have shaped American culture. Using college and local museum collections, examines paintings, sculptures, prints, photographs, film, and the spaces in which they have been displayed and viewed. Approach to this material is grounded in art history, but also draws from other disciplines. Artists under study include those who are well known such as Homer and Walker, as well as those who are unknown or have been forgotten. Students enrolled in the Fall 2020 iteration of the course will have the opportunity to produce online content in support of "There Is a Woman in Every Color: Black Women in American Art," a forthcoming exhibition at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art.