

ART HISTORY

Overview & Learning Goals

Overview

The major in art history is devoted primarily to the historical and critical study of the visual arts as an embodiment of some of humanity's cultural values and a record of the historical interplay of sensibility, thought, and society. The major in visual arts is intended to encourage a sensitive development of perceptual, creative, and critical abilities in visual expression.

Art History Learning Goals

Art history learning goals are introduced in 1000-level courses, utilized further in 2000-level courses, and refined in 3000- and 4000-level courses with an emphasis on independent practice.

Student majors in the discipline of art history will:

- Learn the structured method of visual analysis in order to deepen their understanding of visual and material form, spatial effects, and medium and technique of works of art, artifacts, and architecture and then convey that understanding clearly.
- Engage with actual objects through deliberate and extended examination, using the architecture of the campus, holdings of the Museum of Art, Arctic Museum, and other campus collections.
- Acquire an understanding of the history of art across time and geography as being rooted both in the specific histories of particular periods and places and as involving broader systems of cultural connection, conflict, migration, resistance, exchange, appropriation, and assimilation.
- Learn to locate, identify, and assess critically the relevant historical sources in order to build an interpretation.
- Employ these skills to interpret any unfamiliar object, bringing to bear visual evidence, knowledge of the history of visual forms, and historical information about subject, meaning, and context.
- Challenge the initial subjective response to a work of art by exerting effort to inform themselves about cultures and art traditions that are unfamiliar to them.
- Question their own cultural assumptions about what art is and what artists are.
- Question the received wisdom of the discipline of art history, assessing anew the inherited categories, methods of analysis, and currently accepted interpretations of objects.
- Develop original research projects that can produce new knowledge and understandings.
- Develop strong writing and speaking skills in order to construct a solid thesis and supporting argument, and then communicate them effectively.

Art History Department Website (<https://www.bowdoin.edu/art-history/>)

Options for Majoring or Minor in the Department

Students may elect to major in art history, the art history and archaeology interdisciplinary major, the art history and visual arts

interdisciplinary major, or to coordinate a major in art history with digital and computational studies, education, or environmental studies. Students pursuing coordinate or interdisciplinary majors may not normally elect a second major. Non-majors may elect to minor in art history.

Faculty

Peggy Wang, *Department Chair*

Tammis L. Donovan, *Department Coordinator*

Professors: Pamela M. Fletcher, Stephen G. Perkinson

Associate Professors: Dana E. Byrd, Peggy Wang (Asian Studies)

Visiting faculty: Caitlin DiMartino

Art History Faculty and Staff Website (<https://www.bowdoin.edu/art-history/faculty-and-staff/>)

Requirements

Art History

Art History Major

The art history major consists of ten courses.

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
Select one introductory ARTH course (numbered 1100–1999).		1
Select one of the following:		1
One ARTH course numbered 1100-1999		
One ARTH first year writing seminar (1000-1049)		
One Visual Arts (VART) course		
Select one course in African, Asian, or Ancient American Art History numbered 2000-2969.		1
ARTH 2650	Culture and Crisis in Modern and Contemporary Japanese Art	
ARTH 2655	From Empire to Nation-State: Modern Chinese Art	
ARTH 2660	From Mao to Now: Contemporary Chinese Art	
ARTH 2710	Cosmographies and Ecologies in Chinese Art	
Select one course from Ancient and Medieval European Art History numbered 2000-2969:		1
ARTH 2090/ ARCH 1101	Greek Archaeology	
ARTH 2100/ ARCH 1102	Roman Archaeology	
ARTH 2130 Art of Three Faiths: Christian, Jewish, and Islamic Art and Architecture, Third to Twelfth Centuries		
ARTH 2310	The Gothic World	
ARTH 2315	Illuminated Manuscripts and Early Printed Books	
ARTH 2325	Northern European Art of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries	
Select one course from Renaissance and Baroque European Art History numbered 2000-2969:		1
ARTH 2230	The Arts of Venice	
ARTH 2400	The Medici's Italy: Art, Politics, and Religion, 1300-1600	
ARTH 2405	Monstrosity and Elegance: Mannerism in European Court Art, 1500-1600.	

ARTH 2415	Art in the Age of Velazquez, Rembrandt, and Caravaggio	
Select one course from Modern and Contemporary European and American Art History numbered 2000-2969:		1
ARTH 2410	Sugar, Tobacco, Rice, and Rum: Art and Identity in Atlantic World, 1620–1812	
ARTH 2420	Realism and Its Discontents: European Art, 1839-1900	
ARTH 2755	American Art from the Civil War to 1945	
ARTH 2765	Shoot, Snap, Instagram: A History of Photography in America	
ARTH 2770	The Art of Making and Meaning	
ARTH 2865	Modern Art	
ARTH 2870	Contemporary Art	
Select two additional ARTH courses numbered 2000 or higher.		2
Select two advanced ARTH seminars (numbered 3000–3999).		2

Art History Minor

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
Select one introductory ARTH course (numbered 1100-1999).		1
Select two intermediate ARTH courses (numbered 2000–2999).		2
Select one advanced ARTH course (numbered 3000–3999).		1
Select one additional ARTH course at any level. ^a		1

a A first year writing seminar in ARTH or an independent study may be used to satisfy this requirement.

Courses that count toward the major and minor must be taken for regular letter grades (not Credit/D/Fail), and students must earn grades of C- or better in these courses.

Seminars in Art History

The seminars are intended to utilize the scholarly interests of members of the department and provide an opportunity for advanced work for selected students who have successfully completed enough of the regular courses to possess a sufficient background. The department does not expect to give all, or in some cases any, seminars each semester. As the seminars are varied, a given topic may be offered only once, or its form changed considerably from time to time.

Interdisciplinary Majors

Art history participates in interdisciplinary programs in art history and archaeology, and in art history and visual arts. Art history majors may pursue a coordinate major with digital and computational studies, environmental studies, or education. See the Interdisciplinary Majors (<https://bowdoin-public.courseleaf.com/departments-programs/interdisciplinary-majors/>).

Additional Information

Additional Information and Department Policies

Art History

- Students who received a minimum score of four on the Art History Advanced Placement exam may replace one introductory art history

course (numbered 1100–1999) with any upper-level course for the art history major and art history minor. In order to receive credit for Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate work, students must have their scores officially reported to the Office of the Registrar by the end of their sophomore year at Bowdoin.

- Majors and minors in art history may double-count one course with another major or minor as long as the course is cross-listed with art history.
- Art history majors are also encouraged to take courses in foreign languages and literature, history, philosophy, religion, and the other arts.
- A maximum of two courses for one semester of study from another college or university may count toward the major in art history with departmental approval of that transfer credit. If a student studies away for a full academic year, three courses from another college or university may count toward their art history major with departmental approval.
- Only one course for one semester of study from another college or university may count toward a student's art history minor with departmental approval.

Information for Incoming Students: Art History (<https://catalogue.bowdoin.edu/departments-programs/art/#arth-new-students>)

Art history offers ways to understand our world and our histories through the visual arts. We look at the ways people have expressed their ideas, responded to their experiences, and created the world they lived in through paintings, sculptures, buildings, furniture, jewelry, stained glass, and much more. By teaching you how to look closely, art history provides you with new ways to think about the images and objects around you.

Art history is offering two first-year writing seminars this fall: ARTH 1028 Art and Race from the Crusades to Colonization and ARTH 1038 Living in a Material World: Thinking and Writing with Art and Architecture. First-year students are also welcome to join all our 1000- and 2000- level courses. The 1000-level courses for this fall are ARTH 1305 Making Medieval Art and ARTH 1605 Introduction to Art History: The Body in East Asian Art. The 2000-level courses allow students to dive more deeply into specific topics and periods, but there is no expectation that students have any previous experience with art history: ARTH 2315 Illuminated Manuscripts and Early Printed Books, ARTH 2650 Culture and Crisis in Modern and Contemporary Japanese Art, ARTH 2755 American Art from the Civil War to 1945, and ARTH 2860 Women, Gender, And Sexuality in Western European and American Art, 1500 to Present.

Courses

ARTH 1002 Saints, Monsters, and Marvels: Visualizing the Invisible in Medieval Art

Enrollment limit: 16. 1 Credit.

During the European Middle Ages (between approximately five hundred and fifteen hundred years ago), artists developed ingenious methods that allowed them to transform raw materials into pictures of things that were absent but that people longed to see: saintly figures described in holy texts, astonishing creatures that supposedly roamed the far reaches of the earth, and marvels that gave evidence of divine interventions in everyday life. Drawing on objects at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, we will examine and analyze some truly remarkable medieval artworks. We will investigate how they were made, who made them, and how they were used. Along the way, we will master the skills of visual analysis, allowing us to translate our vision into words; we will learn about several of the materials and techniques involved in creating artworks in the Middle Ages; and we will explore written accounts that help us understand the creation and function of these astonishing objects.

(c) Humanities, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule, (FYWS) First-Year Writing Seminar

Prerequisite(s): Latest Class Standing in the selection list First Year, First Semester, First Year, Second Semester

ARTH 1004 Ghastly Beauty: Images of Mortality and Their Lessons for Living

Enrollment limit: 16. 1 Credit.

Drawing from The Ivory Mirror exhibition on view at Bowdoin College Museum of Art, examines how artworks help people confront profound questions about mortality: What happens to the “self” at death? What is the relationship between the body and the soul? What responsibilities do the living have to the dead? Primary focus is pre-modern Europe, but also considers examples from other times and places, from the ancient world to today. Frequent visits to the exhibition allow investigation of the spectacular objects on display. Readings include poems, literary texts, and argumentative essays dealing with the history of the theme and its present-day resonance.

(c) Humanities, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule, (FYWS) First-Year Writing Seminar

Prerequisite(s): Latest Class Standing in the selection list First Year, First Semester, First Year, Second Semester

ARTH 1006 Envisioning Japan: Landscapes, Cityscapes, and Seascapes

Enrollment limit: 16. 1 Credit.

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. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Asian Studies. (Same as: ASNS 1008)

(c) Humanities, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule, (FYWS) First-Year Writing Seminar

Prerequisite(s): Latest Class Standing in the selection list First Year, First Semester, First Year, Second Semester

ARTH 1008 Faked, Forged, Stolen, and Repatriated: Crimes Against Art

Enrollment limit: 16. 1 Credit.

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.

(c) Humanities, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule, (FYWS) First-Year Writing Seminar

Prerequisite(s): Latest Class Standing in the selection list First Year, First Semester, First Year, Second Semester

ARTH 1024 Becoming a Modern Artist

Enrollment limit: 16. 1 Credit.

Explores the early careers and art of Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, and Suzanne Valadon, artists who came of age at the dawn of the twentieth century. Matisse’s family wanted him to be a lawyer; Picasso was a child prodigy; Valadon began her career modeling for the Impressionists. Educated within a traditional model, all three would go on to create radically new art forms, against the backdrop of the artistic, political, and philosophical upheavals of early twentieth century Europe. How did one become an artist at a moment when the very definition of art’s appearance and function was in flux? Topics covered include: the role of personal identity in art making, relationships between artists and models, European encounters with art from Africa, the emergence of abstraction, the art market, and the cultural meanings of art and the artist in the modern world. Makes regular use of the rich holdings of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art.

(c) Humanities, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule, (FYWS) First-Year Writing Seminar

Prerequisite(s): Latest Class Standing in the selection list First Year, First Semester, First Year, Second Semester

ARTH 1028 Art and Race from the Crusades to Colonization

Enrollment limit: 16. 1 Credit.

How do ideas of race born in the past shape our present? This course investigates the construction of race from a historical perspective between roughly 1300 and 1700 in Western Europe. Considers how communities in Spain, France, England, and Italy used works of art to express religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity at critical moments in Europe's early modern history. Topics range from interactions between Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Spain and the so-called Crusader states during the late Middle Ages; the impact of trade and political interaction between Europe and Africa; the ramifications of the slave trade; and European colonization in the Americas. Major goals include understanding the long and impactful history of race and racism through works of art while honing skills in observation, descriptive and analytical writing, and critical thinking. When relevant, we will draw on the collections of Bowdoin College Museum of Art and regional museum collections.

(c) Humanities, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule, (FYWS) First-Year Writing Seminar

Prerequisite(s): Latest Class Standing in the selection list First Year, First Semester, First Year, Second Semester

Terms offered: 2024 Fall Semester; 2025 Fall Semester

ARTH 1030 Of Bowdoin Logs and Textbook Funerals: Writing Bowdoin College Histories

Enrollment limit: 16. 1 Credit.

From presidential portraits to the carefully manicured quad, Bowdoin's historic campus shapes our individual behaviors and experience of community. Examines campus art and architecture as evidence for shifting ideas about what constitutes higher education and who is suited for it. Develops skills in reading, analyzing, and writing about art and artifacts. Pays particular attention to the connection between traditions, such as signing the matriculation book, singing the alma mater, and eating the Bowdoin log, as a means of making place and sustaining community. Includes hands-on exploration of campus archives and collections.

(c) Humanities, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule, (FYWS) First-Year Writing Seminar

Prerequisite(s): Latest Class Standing in the selection list First Year, First Semester, First Year, Second Semester

ARTH 1032 That's Not Art! Understanding Contemporary Art

Enrollment limit: 16. 1 Credit.

Contemporary art can be challenging. Black squares, white cubes, appropriated advertising images, activist posters, street art, and performances all pose to 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.

(c) Humanities, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule, (FYWS) First-Year Writing Seminar

Prerequisite(s): Latest Class Standing in the selection list First Year, First Semester, First Year, Second Semester

ARTH 1036 Ideas on the Move: Travel, Trade, and the Visual Arts

Enrollment limit: 16. 1 Credit.

In our increasingly global world, it's easy to forget that people have been traveling and exchanging ideas throughout history. The visual arts have been one of the most effective ways to share ideas, and 'material culture' – the 'stuff' of our everyday lives – is a profound marker of the ongoing exchange of ideas between cultures. Students in this course use works of visual art and written texts to explore the ways in which people and ideas have moved and developed across cultures. Subject matter focuses on the pre-modern world (before c. 1800), with some consideration of more recent material.

(c) Humanities, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule, (FYWS) First-Year Writing Seminar

Prerequisite(s): Latest Class Standing in the selection list First Year, First Semester, First Year, Second Semester

ARTH 1038 Living in a Material World: Thinking and Writing with Art and Architecture

Enrollment limit: 16. 1 Credit.

We are surrounded by objects and images, and our digitized world offers an endless stream of visual content, from ads and games to photos of friends and influencers. How do these material and visual elements shape our experiences and identities? Each of us will answer this differently, but analyzing the material and visual stuff of our lives offers all of us a powerful tool for understanding and shaping ourselves and our experiences. Examining and analyzing the material and visual world around us, we will develop a starter kit of skills in critical thinking, observation, research, and writing. Working with objects from a range of times and places in campus collections—Ethiopian paintings, medieval prayerbooks, Inuk embroideries—we will encounter new ways to think about works of art and architecture and material and visual culture. We will analyze the arguments of researchers and artists and practice developing and presenting our own arguments through a series of short papers.

(c) Humanities, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule, (FYWS) First-Year Writing Seminar

Prerequisite(s): Latest Class Standing in the selection list First Year, First Semester, First Year, Second Semester

Terms offered: 2025 Fall Semester

ARTH 1305 Making Medieval Art

Enrollment limit: 50. 1 Credit.

Explores the roles of the individuals responsible for creation of medieval artworks. Considers how artists, patrons, and audiences each helped to determine the ultimate form an artwork took. To do so, examines case studies from a wide geographic and chronological range, from the fourth to the sixteenth centuries and from the British Isles to East Africa, with many stops in between. In doing so, interrogates the ways that “the medieval period” has been defined by later interpreters, exploring emerging arguments in favor of a reconsideration of what constitutes “medieval art.” Topics covered include the development of a Christian imperial art in the later years of the Roman Empire; the role of monastic artisans in fashioning works for the use of monks and nuns; the development of urban markets for art in the later Middle Ages; and the exchange of techniques, materials, and motifs across the wider medieval globe.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Terms offered: 2025 Fall Semester

ARTH 1405 Introduction to the Arts of Ancient Mexico and Peru

Enrollment limit: 50. 1 Credit.

A chronological survey of the arts created by major cultures of ancient Mexico and Peru. Mesoamerican cultures studied include the Olmec, Teotihuacan, the Maya, and the Aztec up through the arrival of the Europeans. South American cultures such as Chavín, Nasca, and Inca are examined. Painting, sculpture, and architecture are considered in the context of religion and society. Readings in translation include Mayan myth and chronicles of the conquest. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Ltn Am, Caribbean & Latinx St. (Same as: LACL 1305)

(c) Humanities, (IP) International Perspectives, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 1605 Introduction to Art History: The Body in East Asian Art

Enrollment limit: 50. 1 Credit.

Explores theories, pictures, and practices of the human body in art. Studies depictions of the human form as well as arts that activate the body, including calligraphy, spatial design, performance, and ritual. Focuses primarily on East Asia, ranging from early traditions to modern examples. Deliberately sets out to challenge a Western-centric understanding of art and art history by developing ideas about the body that don't make a recourse back to the idealized nude. Examines how art implicates the body in topics such as individuality, divinity, social order, interconnectedness, and pleasure. Examples of art to be studied include: shrines, handscrolls, landscapes, tea objects, and woodblock prints. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Asian Studies. (Same as: ASNS 1866)

(c) Humanities, (IP) International Perspectives, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Terms offered: 2025 Fall Semester

ARTH 1610 Art and National Identity

Enrollment limit: 50. 1 Credit.

Studies the intersection of art, politics, and nationalism. Focuses on the formation of modern art in China during the first half of the twentieth century and its role in imagining new futures for the country. Explores the political stakes of cultural production and introduces students to different ways of looking at and writing about art. Not open to students who have taken ARTH/ASNS 2200. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Asian Studies. (Same as: ASNS 1201)

(c) Humanities, (IP) International Perspectives, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 1705 African Americans and Art

Enrollment limit: 50. 1 Credit.

Investigates the intersection of African American life and art. Topics include the changing definitions of “African American Art,” the embrace of African cultural production, race and representation in slavery and freedom, art as source of inspiration for social movements, and the politics of exhibition. Our mission is to develop art-historical knowledge about this critical aspect of American art history, while facilitating ways of seeing and writing about art. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Africana Studies. (Same as: AFRS 2661)

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 1805 Introduction to Art History: The Art of Urban Life in Europe, 1500–1950

Enrollment limit: 50. 1 Credit.

Explores the city as the paradigmatic experience and symbol of modern life in Western Europe from the early modern period to the mid-twentieth century through the lens of art. The increasing concentration of people in urban centers produced new forms of political and financial power and created new forms of sociability, bringing people from different places, races, classes, backgrounds, and beliefs together into productive and jarring encounters. Artists both helped shape these new urban geographies and responded to them in their art. Topics covered include the changing infrastructure and visual culture of the urban landscape; public art and the formation of civic identities; new forms of display and sale of art; and artists' engagement with the physical, social and emotional experience of the city in their artwork. Serves as an introduction to the methods of art history, with an emphasis on close looking and visual analysis. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Urban Studies. (Same as: URBS 1805)

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 2090 Greek Archaeology

Enrollment limit: 50. 1 Credit.

Introduces the techniques and methods of classical archaeology as revealed through an examination of Greek material culture. Emphasis upon the major monuments and artifacts of the Greek world from prehistory to the Hellenistic age. Architecture, sculpture, fresco painting, and other "minor arts" are examined at such sites as Knossos, Mycenae, Athens, Delphi, and Olympia. 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 Greek world. This course originates in Classics and is crosslisted with: Art History. (Same as: ARCH 1101)

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Prerequisite(s): Student is a First Year or Sophomore OR a Classics majors/minor OR Art History major.

Terms offered: 2022 Fall Semester; 2025 Fall Semester

ARTH 2100 Roman Archaeology

Enrollment limit: 50. 1 Credit.

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. This course originates in Classics and is crosslisted with: Art History. (Same as: ARCH 1102)

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Prerequisite(s): Student is a First Year or Sophomore OR a Classics major/minor.

Terms offered: 2023 Fall Semester

ARTH 2105 Critical Museum Studies

Enrollment limit: 16. 1 Credit.

Investigates the history of museums, exploring recent debates regarding the ethics and responsibilities of museum practices. Examines the origins of museums, considering ways museums have supported particular accounts of cultural history, often in the service of specific forms of political power. Students engage with current debates, ranging from the legacies of colonialism to questions about whose interests museums serve. Students also consider possible ways to acknowledge those complex histories and modify those practices to ensure that museums remain vital in the future. Readings include texts drawn from the history of museums and from the growing field of "critical museum studies." Class meetings will be held in museum spaces (primarily the Zuckert Seminar Room of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art), allowing students to practice the analysis of their immediate surroundings and to engage in dialogue with museum professionals and other experts.

(c) Humanities, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 2230 The Arts of Venice

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

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.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Terms offered: 2022 Fall Semester

ARTH 2305 Art of Three Faiths: Christian, Jewish, and Islamic Art and Architecture, Third to Twelfth Century

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

Examines ways images, objects, and buildings shaped the experiences and expressed the beliefs of members of three major religious traditions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) in Europe and the Mediterranean region. Deals with artworks spanning the third century through the twelfth century from Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and the Byzantine Empire. Includes thematic sessions, dealing with issues that cut across geographic and chronological boundaries. Topics include the embrace or rejection of a classical artistic heritage; the sponsorship of religious art by powerful figures; the use of images and architecture to define community and to reject those defined as outsiders; forms of iconoclasm and criticism of the use of images among the three religions; theological justifications for the use of images; and the role of images in efforts to convert or conquer members of another faith.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Prerequisite(s): ARTH 1000 - 2969 or ARTH 3000 or higher or Placement in above ARTH 1100

ARTH 2310 The Gothic World

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

Introduces students to art produced in Europe and the Mediterranean from the twelfth through the early fifteenth century. Following a general chronological sequence, investigates the key artistic monuments of this period in a variety of media, including architecture, painting, manuscript illumination, stained glass, sculpture, and the decorative arts. Explores a particular theme in each class meeting through the close analysis of a single monument or closely related set of monuments, as well as those that students may encounter in future studies.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 2315 Illuminated Manuscripts and Early Printed Books

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

Surveys the history of the decorated book from late antiquity through the Renaissance, beginning with an exploration of the earliest surviving illuminated manuscripts in light of the late antique culture that produced them. Examines uses of books in the early Middle Ages to convert viewers to Christianity or to establish political power. Traces the rise of book professionals (scribes, illuminators, binders, etc.) as manuscript production moved from monastic to urban centers, and concludes with an investigation of the impact of the invention of printing on art and society in the fifteenth century, and on the "afterlife" of manuscript culture into the sixteenth century. Themes to be discussed include the effect of the gender of a book's anticipated audience on its decoration; the respective roles of author, scribes, and illuminators in designing a manuscript's decorative program; and the ways that images can shape a reader's understanding of a text. Makes use of the Bowdoin Library's collection of manuscripts and early printed books.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Terms offered: 2025 Fall Semester

ARTH 2325 Northern European Art of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

Surveys the painting of the Netherlands, Germany, and France. Topics include the spread of the influential naturalistic style of Campin, van Eyck, and van der Weyden; the confrontation with the classical art of Italy in the work of Dürer and others; the continuance of a native tradition in the work of Bosch and Bruegel the Elder; the changing role of patronage; and the rise of specialties such as landscape and portrait painting.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 2330 Materializing the Self and Other in Early Modern Art

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

Focuses on art produced through Europe's engagement with the Americas, Africa, and Asia between 1500 and 1750. Studies the impact of trade, colonization, and enslavement on how artists, audiences, and patrons defined and reimagined intersecting forms of identity. Asks questions such as: how do materials—both natural and man-made—register ways of thinking about gender, religion, and race? How does the transformation of raw materials into aesthetic works of art reveal and conceal their origins? Class sessions are organized around materials and techniques such as ivory, metalworking, tropical woods, textiles, pigments, and cosmetics. Further examines how and why paintings, sculpture, and prints display such materials. Topics to be explored include the implications of materiality in cross-cultural exchange, visual and symbolic representations of human diversity, and art as products of pillage, exploitation, cultural syncretism, and forms of resistance. Includes visits to the Bowdoin College Museum of Art.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Terms offered: 2024 Fall Semester

ARTH 2390 Sacred Icons and Museum Pieces: The Powers of Central African Art

Enrollment limit: 16. 1 Credit.

Seminar. The art of Central Africa inspired European avant-garde artists from Pablo Picasso to Paul Klee. This course explores art as a historical source. What does the production, use, commerce, and display of art reveal about politics, ideology, religion, and aesthetics? Prior to European colonialism, what was the relationship between art and politics in Central Africa? How did art represent power? What does it reveal about gender relations, social divisions, and cultural ideals? The course then turns to the Euro-American scramble for Central African art at the onset of European colonialism. How did the collection of art, its celebration by European artists, and display in European and American museums transform patterns of production, cultural functions and aesthetic styles of Central African art? The course ends with current debates over the repatriation of African art. Note: This course is part of the following field(s) of study: Africa. This course meets the non-European/ US History requirements. This course originates in History and is crosslisted with: Africana Studies; Art History. (Same as: HIST 2823, AFRS 2823)

(c) Humanities, (IP) International Perspectives

Prerequisite(s): Latest Class Standing in the selection list First Year, Second Semester, Junior, First Semester, Junior, Second Semester, Senior, First Semester, Senior, Second Semester, Sophomore, First Semester, Sophomore, Second Semester

ARTH 2400 The Medici's Italy: Art, Politics, and Religion, 1300-1600

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

An exploration of the painting, sculpture, and architecture from Giotto's revolutionary paintings in 1300 through the fifteenth century with masters such as Donatello and up to High Renaissance giants, Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, Raphael, and Michelangelo. Examines art-making and function within the society that used it, including the role of women as patrons, artists and subjects of art. Readings in translation of sixteenth-century artists' biographies, art criticism, and popular literature. Class will make use of collections in the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 2405 Monstrosity and Elegance: Mannerism in European Court Art, 1500-1600.

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

Wealthy rulers vied with one another to collect the rarities being discovered across the world. They collected wonders such as "dragons" and exotic beasts such as giraffes, recording these precious beings in art. They even brought to their courts representatives from the peoples of the Americas, whom they deemed as marvels. At the same time, European culture stressed refinement, cool elegance, and graceful body types in both living humans and art. The resulting artworks show strange, disturbing and intriguing images, all gathered under the term "Mannerism." Using paintings, drawings, prints and medals from the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, this class studies artists such as Michelangelo, Pontormo, and El Greco in the courts in Austria, France, Spain and Italy. Readings in translation of scientific writings, formulas for ideal beauty and the grotesque, and handbooks for court life and manners. No previous work in art history required.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 2415 Art in the Age of Velazquez, Rembrandt, and Caravaggio

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

The art of seventeenth-century Europe. Topics include the revolution in painting carried out by Caravaggio, Annibale Carracci, and their followers in Rome; the development of these trends in the works of Rubens, Bernini, Georges de la Tour, Poussin, and others; and the rise of an independent school of painting in Holland. Connections between art, religious ideas, and political conditions are stressed.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 2425 Making and Breaking Sacred Images in Early Modern Art

Enrollment limit: 16. 1 Credit.

From the destruction of images during the Protestant Reformation to transcultural encounters with art, devotion, and aesthetics through colonization, the criteria for identifying a "sacred" work of art were in constant flux during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This course traces the debates, tensions, and reinventions surrounding religious art of the early modern period in Europe and the Americas. Looks at paintings, prints, and sculptures made during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation and the impact of these developments on the symbolic function and emotional realism of artwork in Spain and Italy. Explores the rhetorical function of idolatry and the act of iconoclasm (the destruction of images) in Europe and South America, interrogating the cultural and political implications behind what counted as "art" and what was classified as an "idol." Readings will include primary sources in translation on the "proper" use of images, and the class will incorporate material from the Bowdoin College Museum of Art and George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Terms offered: 2025 Spring Semester

ARTH 2430 Modern Architecture: 1750 to 2000

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

Examines major buildings, architects, architectural theories, and debates during the modern period, with a strong emphasis on Europe through 1900, and both the United States and Europe in the twentieth century. Central issues of concern include architecture as an important carrier of historical, social, and political meaning; changing ideas of history and progress in built form; and the varied architectural responses to industrialization. Attempts to develop students' visual acuity and ability to interpret architectural form while exploring these and other issues. This course originates in Environmental Studies and is crosslisted with: Art History. (Same as: ENVS 2431, URBS 2431)

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Terms offered: 2021 Fall Semester; 2023 Fall Semester

ARTH 2435 Imagining Space in a Transatlantic World, 1500-1700

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

Whether a city street or a bird's-eye view, artistic interpretations of our environment shape how we understand and navigate the world. This course investigates the diverse methods for making and remaking space in an early modern transatlantic world. Topics range from the emergent technologies of printmaking and the dissemination of atlases and cartographic information, paintings of cityscapes and the diverse societies within, and personifications and symbolic representations of land and sea, to maps as a platform for intercultural exchange. Focuses especially on representations of space produced during the reign of the Spanish Habsburgs (1516–1700) across three continents in such places as Lima, Mexico City, Manila, and Madrid. Explores how artists, patrons, and audiences used modes of space making—landscapes, cityscapes, personifications of nature, and more—to navigate, resist, or lay claim to their place in the world. Readings include primary sources in translation on travel, exchange, and conquest.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Terms offered: 2025 Spring Semester

ARTH 2470 The Bauhaus and its Legacy: Designing the Modern World

Enrollment limit: 20. 1 Credit.

The centennial of the Bauhaus—the school of modern design opened in 1919 in Weimar, Germany, and closed by the Nazis in 1933—is being celebrated around the world. More than just a school, the Bauhaus gave modernity a distinct physical form by connecting art to nature and industry in new ways. The Bauhaus also advanced the radical notion that modern design had a key social role to play: to improve the lives of all people. The course investigates the social mission, arts, vibrant way of life, and prominent figures at the Bauhaus, many leaders in fields of modern architecture, urbanism, and the arts of design. The course also explores the Bauhaus legacy that flourished throughout the twentieth century, focusing on US and Europe. The Bauhaus changed the world and even today we feel its impact, in the smallest of objects, our built environments, and the cities in which we live. Students will work closely with the Bauhaus exhibition that opens March 1, 2019, at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art and will carry out their own research projects. This course originates in Environmental Studies and is crosslisted with: Art History. (Same as: ENVS 2470, URBS 2470)

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 2600 Cosmographies and Ecologies in Chinese Art

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

From China's earliest dynasties, art has been used to activate ways of seeing and being in the world. From tombs that reach into the afterlife to images of Buddhist Pure Lands, Chinese art offers multiple ways of understanding connections between different orders of existence within realms of the universe. Covers formats such as architectural designs, tomb art, pilgrimage murals, landscape painting, and scholars' gardens. Emphasis is placed on distinct conceptions of nature and natural elements under varying belief systems, shifts in imperial patronage, and literati ideals. Readings include primary sources such as ritual texts, Buddhist doctrines, and Chinese painting treatises. Primarily focused on pre-modern Chinese art with some contemporary examples to demonstrate continued relevance today. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Asian Studies. (Same as: ASNS 2021)

(c) Humanities, (IP) International Perspectives, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

ARTH 2650 Culture and Crisis in Modern and Contemporary Japanese Art

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

In the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century, as Japan transitioned from a feudal society to a modern nation-state, Japanese art was mobilized by the avant-gardes and government alike. Examines the wide variety of formats and mediums encompassed in competing claims for modernization, including ink painting, oil painting, photography, ceramics, woodblock prints, and performance art. Interrogates art's complicit role in ultra-nationalism, Pan-Asianism, Oriental Orientalism, colonial ambitions, US military occupation, and post-war reconstruction. Themes covered include: reinventions of tradition, East-West relations, colonialism, trauma, and renewal. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Asian Studies. (Same as: ASNS 2331)

(c) Humanities, (IP) International Perspectives, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Terms offered: 2025 Fall Semester

ARTH 2655 From Empire to Nation-State: Modern Chinese Art

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

Examines the multitude of visual expressions adopted, re-fashioned, and rejected from China's last dynasty (1644-1911) through the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Major themes include the tension between identity and modernity, Westernization, the establishment of new institutions for art, and the relationship between cultural production and politics. Formats under study include ink painting, oil painting, woodcuts, advertisements, and propaganda. Comparisons with other cultures conducted to interrogate questions such as how art mobilizes revolution. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Asian Studies. (Same as: ASNS 2202)

(c) Humanities, (IP) International Perspectives, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 2660 From Mao to Now: Contemporary Chinese Art

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

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. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Asian Studies. (Same as: ASNS 2203)

(c) Humanities, (IP) International Perspectives, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 2750 American Art I: Colonial Period to the Civil War

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

An investigation of American architecture, sculpture, painting, and decorative arts from their contact-era origins until the Civil War. Emphasis is placed on American art as a distinct tradition shaped by the movement of people and things across the Pacific and Atlantic oceans to a continent populated by indigenous people. Explores how artists engaged and interpreted the world around them in material form, as well as the ways that this production served a host of ideological and aesthetic needs. Methods of art historical interpretation are analyzed and discussed using primary and secondary source readings. Studies original art and artifacts in the Bowdoin College Museum of Art and buildings on the Bowdoin campus and beyond.

(c) Humanities, (DPI) Difference, Power, and Inequity, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 2755 American Art from the Civil War to 1945

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

A survey of American architecture, sculpture, painting, and photography from the Civil War and World War II. Emphasis on understanding art in its historical and cultural context. Issues to be addressed include the expatriation of American painters, the conflicted response to European modernism, the pioneering achievements of American architects and photographers, the increasing participation of women and minorities in the art world, and the ongoing tension between native and cosmopolitan forms of cultural expression. Works with original objects in the Bowdoin College Museum of Art.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Terms offered: 2025 Fall Semester

ARTH 2760 Sugar, Tobacco, Rice, and Rum: Art and Identity in the Atlantic World, 1620-1812

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

Intercontinental trade, the exchange of ideas and technology, and the mass emigration of peoples reshaped life, art, and culture in the Americas, Europe, and Africa in the eighteenth century. Uses the production of commodities – sugar, tobacco, rice, and rum – to trace the circulation of art and artifacts in the Atlantic World. Situates art and other forms of cultural production alongside the larger exchange of people and ideas, and focuses on the fluctuating nature of national, racial, and sexual identities in the circum-Atlantic world. Explores how British, French, and Spanish citizens in the colonies and Caribbean attempted and often failed to sustain national identity in the face of separation, revolution, or insurrection. Of special interest are people such as pirates and activists, art like paintings and prints, and artifacts such as ceramics and silver, which moved seamlessly across the Atlantic divide. Examines the cultural impact, adaptations, and changes in native, African, and European cultures resulting from this interaction. Includes intensive hands-on object study at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Africana Studies. (Same as: AFRS 2760)

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 2765 Shoot, Snap, Instagram: A History of Photography in America

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

A survey of photography made and experienced in the United States from the age of daguerreotypes until the era of digital image processing. Addresses the key photographic movements, works, practitioners, and technological and aesthetic developments while also considering the social, political, cultural, and economic contexts for individual photographs. Photographers studied include Watkins, Bourke-White, Weegee, and Weems. Readings of primary sources by photographers and critics such as Stieglitz, Sontag, Abbott, and Benjamin bolster close readings of photographs. Builds skills of discussing, writing, and seeing American photography. Incorporates study of photography collections across the Bowdoin College campus.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Prerequisite(s): ARTH 1000 - 2969 or ARTH 3000 or higher

ARTH 2770 The Art of Making and Meaning

Enrollment limit: 0. 1 Credit.

A scholarly inquiry into materials and making with an emphasis on historic artifacts made for everyday use. Students will explore fabrication techniques, test the limits of materials, and refine haptic skills through the manipulation of materials, including clay, textiles, wood, and plastic. Through hands-on examination of artifacts in local collections, students develop the language, methodology, and interpretive skills for artifact and material analysis.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 2850 Industry and Imperialism: Nineteenth-Century British Art

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

Examines art produced during Queen Victoria's reign (1837–1901). The Industrial Revolution gave rise to mass culture and consumer society as well as unprecedented amounts of pollution and environmental damage; the twin engines of capitalism and imperialism spawned Britain's vast Empire and activism by the working classes, women, and the colonized peoples of the British Empire transformed the political and social landscape. Victorian artists took seriously the question of how art might engage their changing modern world, and their diverse responses illuminate both nineteenth-century modernity and its continuing legacies. Topics may include: the representation of modern urban life and its moral challenges; depictions of the environment in landscape and animal painting; the invention of photography and mass visual culture; the rise of the modern art market; and episodes in the imperialist history of artistic contact, conflict and extraction between Britain and other nations.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

ARTH 2855 Realism and Its Discontents: European Art, 1839-1900

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

A survey of European art from the advent of photography to the turn of the century. The nineteenth century witnessed an explosion of urban growth, increasing political and economic power for the middle and working classes, and revolutionary scientific and technological discoveries. How did the visual arts respond to and help shape the social forces that came to define Western modernity? Questions to be addressed include: What was the impact of photography and other technologies of vision on painting's relation to mimesis? How did new audiences and exhibition cultures change viewers' experiences and expectations of art? How did artists respond to the new daily realities of modern urban life, including the crowd, the commodity, railways, and electric light? Artists discussed include Courbet, Frith, Manet, Ford Madox Brown, Julia Margaret Cameron, Whistler, Ensor, Gauguin, and Cézanne.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

ARTH 2860 Women, Gender, And Sexuality in Western European and American Art, 1500 to Present

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

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. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Gender Sexuality and Women St. (Same as: GSWS 2360)

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Terms offered: 2025 Fall Semester

ARTH 2865 Modern Art

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

A study of the modernist movement in visual art in Europe and the Americas beginning with post-impressionism and examining in succession: expressionism fauvis, cubism, futurism, constructivism, Dada, surrealism, the American affinities of these movements, and the Mexican muralists. Modernism is analyzed in terms of the problems presented by its social situation; its relation to other elements of culture; its place in the historical tradition of Western art; and its invocation of archaic, primitive, and Asian cultures.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Prerequisite(s): ARTH 1000 - 2969 or ARTH 3000 or higher

ARTH 2870 Contemporary Art

Enrollment limit: 35. 1 Credit.

Art of Europe and the Americas since World War II, with emphasis on the New York school. Introductory overview of modernism. Detailed examination of abstract expressionism and minimalist developments; pop, conceptual, and environmental art; and European abstraction. Concludes with an examination of the international consequences of modernist and contemporary developments, the impact of new electronic and technological media, and the critical debate surrounding the subject of postmodernism.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts, (FYCS) First-Year Course Schedule

Prerequisite(s): ARTH 1000 - 2969 or ARTH 3000 or higher

ARTH 3300 Bosch

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

Seminar. Examines the works of the famously idiosyncratic Netherlandish painter, Jheronimus Bosch (c. 1450-1516), investigating their artistic methods and cultural context. Also considers their reception by contemporary and subsequent generations of artists, scholars, and viewers.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

ARTH 3305 Memory, Mourning, and the Macabre: Visualizing Death in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

In pre-modern Europe, people lived in the shadow of death. This was true in literal terms – mortality rates were high – but also in terms of art; the imagery of the period was saturated with images of death, dying, and the afterlife. Examines how images helped people confront profound questions about death. What happens to the self at death? What is the relationship between the body and the soul? What responsibilities do the living have to the dead? Addresses these issues through study of tomb sculptures, monumental paintings of the Last Judgment, manuscripts containing accounts of journeys to the afterlife, prayer beads featuring macabre imagery, and other related items.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Latest Class Standing in the selection list First Year, Second Semester, Junior, First Semester, Junior, Second Semester, Senior, First Semester, Sophomore, First Semester, Sophomore, Second Semester

ARTH 3405 Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo: Science and Art through Drawing

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

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. Exploring the theory of disegno (drawing and composing) as a divinely granted power, considers 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. Makes 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—support investigations of these artists’ accomplishments.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100, AFRS 1000-2969, AFRS 3000-3999.

ARTH 3410 Painting and Society in Spain: El Greco to Goya

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

Focuses on painting in Spain from the fifteenth century to the early nineteenth century, with special emphasis on the works of El Greco, Velázquez, and Goya. Examines art in the light of Spanish society, particularly the institutions of the church and Spanish court. Considers Spanish mysticism, popular custom, and Enlightenment ideals as expressed in or critiqued by art. Readings in the Bible, Spanish folklore, artistic theory, and artists’ biographies.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

ARTH 3415 Studies in Seventeenth-Century Art: Caravaggio and Artemisia Gentileschi

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

Contrasts two artists – one male, one female – whose powerful, naturalistic styles transformed European painting in the seventeenth century. Starting with a close examination of the artists’ biographies (in translation), focuses on questions of their educations, artistic theories, styles as a reflection of character, and myths and legends of their lives. Also examines the meanings of seventeenth-century images of heroic women, such as Esther, Judith, and Lucretia, in light of social and cultural attitudes of the times.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100, AFRS 1000-2969, AFRS 3000-3999.

ARTH 3420 Liquid Visions: Art and the Early Modern Ocean

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

The ocean: an amorphous entity ripe with mythological associations, a conduit for trade, migration, discovery, and dispossession, a space of transcultural encounter, a source of material goods. The early modern period (ca. 1500 through 1800) witnessed increased human engagement with the maritime world in ways both productive (exploration, trade, and connection) and destructive (through colonization, the slave trade and Middle Passage, and environmental degradation). This course explores how such maritime themes shaped artistic expression in the early modern period across cultures and artistic media. Uses the encompassing backdrop of the ocean to critically explore the framework of a so-called “global” early modern and challenges Eurocentric definitions of what counts as ‘Renaissance and Baroque’ art. Readings include primary sources in translation, and the class makes ample use of campus Special Collections and the Bowdoin College Museum of Art. Culminates in a final research paper, developed incrementally over the course of the semester through frequent writing assignments.

(c) Humanities

Prerequisite(s): ARTH 1000 - 2969 or ARTH 3000 or higher or Placement in above ARTH 1100

Terms offered: 2025 Fall Semester

ARTH 3605 How to Imagine East Asian Modernisms

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

From China's defeat in the Opium Wars to the opening up of Japan in 1868, the nineteenth century launched critical debates in East Asia over how to become modern. Rising up against dominant Western powers, some proposed a pan-Asian entity under the slogan "Asia is One." Within a few decades, however, this devolved into disparate political realities for colonizers (Japan), the colonized (Korea and Taiwan), and the semi-colonized (China). Analyzes how art was mobilized during this chaotic 150-year period to assert radically different political agendas. Topics include: the spread of abstraction across East Asia and artists' use of canvases, bodies, and photographs to register the trauma of war and the promises of utopia. Movements and styles such as the Japanese Gutai Group and Superflat are studied. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Asian Studies. (Same as: ASNS 3813)

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100, AFRS 1000-2969, AFRS 3000-3999.

ARTH 3610 Historicizing the Contemporary: Topics in Recent Chinese Art

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

Identifies and explores key topics in recent publications of contemporary Chinese art. Alongside of subject matter, students analyze usages of socio-political context and methodologies for framing different narratives of contemporary Chinese art. Through studies of individual artists and larger contemporary art trends, students unpack current art histories while also proposing alternative approaches. Readings include monographs, exhibition catalogs, interviews, and systematic reviews of journals. Questions include: What are the challenges of historicizing the present? How does the global art world reconcile the existence of multiple art worlds? How have artists intervened in narratives of contemporary Chinese art? This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Asian Studies. (Same as: ASNS 3071)

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, ASNS 1000-2969, ASNS 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

ARTH 3615 Art for the People: Between Propaganda and Protest in East Asia

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

Examines manifestations and mobilizations of "art for the people" from the early twentieth century to today. Focuses on ideological imperatives in modern and contemporary Chinese art and invites cross-cultural examples from East Asian democracy movements and global pop spectacle. Asks "Who are the people?" and how art has been used to define and serve them. Discussions call attention to the implication of art in politics as well as the use of art in protest. Considers artists' tactics for intervening in institutional and ideological claims on "the people" and limitations of national and class boundaries. Topics include publicness, mass media, art school pedagogy, and social art practice. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Asian Studies. (Same as: ASNS 3814)

(c) Humanities, (IP) International Perspectives, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, ASNS 1000-2969, ASNS 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

ARTH 3625 Re-mapping Global Contemporary Art

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

Studies competing claims over what it means for contemporary art to be called global. In particular, traces how the controversial category of "global contemporary art" has been used to both perpetuate and resist Western-centered views of the world. Focuses on artworks, exhibitions, and texts that specifically counter Western-centrism in gatekeeping tactics, exclusionary systems of evaluation, and hegemonic art historical narratives. Examples include the 1989 Havana Biennial, 1999 Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, post-colonial critiques, and recent artworks and exhibits that have sought to re-map global cartographies of contemporary art. Students taking this as an ASNS course will concentrate on examples relevant to their focus of study. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Asian Studies. (Same as: ASNS 3803)

(c) Humanities, (IP) International Perspectives, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, ASNS 1000-2969, ASNS 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

ARTH 3630 Global Asian Art

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

This seminar explores the changing implications of "Asian art" within global art histories. How has this category been empowering, how has it been limiting, and how does it make us rethink what constitutes both "Asian art" and "global art"? Students will investigate existing art historical models as well as alternative possibilities. Topics to be examined include the impact of theories of cultural representation, transnationalism, deterritorialization, decolonialism, and diaspora on methods for interpreting art, writing histories, and classifying artists. Through a wide range of examples of "Asian art", students will analyze how artists have addressed processes of globalization in their work, how they have sought to position themselves in the world, and how they have been historically positioned in art histories and exhibitions. Comparisons with other geo-cultural and thematic categories will also be used to complicate invocations of difference, belonging, and tradition. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Asian Studies. (Same as: ASNS 3815)

(c) Humanities, (IP) International Perspectives, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, ASNS 1000-2969, ASNS 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

ARTH 3700 Race and Visual Representation in American Art

Enrollment limit: 16. 1 Credit.

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. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Africana Studies. (Same as: AFRS 3700)

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

ARTH 3705 Winslow Homer and American Art

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

During his extensive career, Winslow Homer (1836-1910) worked in multiple modes, including woodcut prints for the popular press, watercolors, and paintings. In his depictions of freedmen, maimed Civil War veterans, and untamed nature, he provided a penetrating and often disturbing view of post-Civil War America. Over the past fifty years, interpretations of Homer's work have changed dramatically and broadened to include such themes and lenses as race, social class, and intertextuality. Exploration of Homer's oeuvre doubles as an inquiry into the historiography of American Art. Homer topics under consideration are: Civil War paintings, illustrations of leisure, depictions of women and children in the Gilded Age, and landscape and seascape paintings of the Caribbean and Maine. Close study opportunities include sessions at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Bowdoin College Special Collections, the Portland Museum of Art, and the Winslow Homer Studio in Prouts Neck, Maine.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

ARTH 3710 Art and Catastrophe: Visual Responses to Trauma

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

Explores visual responses to loss, trauma, and cultural catastrophe. Considers how artistic traces of suffering offer insight into ruptures so painful that they linger beyond the limitations of linear narrative and along the fringes of cognition. Structured to bring together disparate works of art—including film, photography, video, sculpture, performance, the graphic arts, and curatorial practice—as a means of exploring the possibilities and limits of representation. Engages works of art that frame questions about the collisions between cultural catastrophe and more ordinary forms of suffering.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

ARTH 3715 The Thing

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

The study of things, or material culture, has emerged as a multidisciplinary umbrella for the understanding of everyday life. Material culture encompasses everything made or done – clothes worn, houses occupied, art hung on walls, even the way bodies are modified. Exploration of object-based approaches to American culture proceeds through hands-on study of things such as grave markers, great chairs, and girandoles in the Bowdoin College Museum of Art and the historic house museums of Brunswick. Readings include primary sources and scholarly analyses of objects. Assignments enable students to hone descriptive, analytical, and interpretive writing skills.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

ARTH 3805 Painted Fictions: Narrative and British Art

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

Is a picture worth a thousand words? If so, why? Questions whether pictures appeal more directly to our emotions or imaginations, or if they need words to be comprehensible. Examines the complex and sometimes competitive relationship between visual images and the texts that surround and support them – including literary sources, invented narratives, titles, captions, art criticism, and catalogue entries – in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British art. Artists considered include: William Hogarth, Joshua Reynolds, the Pre-Raphaelites, James McNeil Whistler, and Walter Sickert; texts may include writings by Charles Dickens, Henry James, Oscar Wilde, and Virginia Woolf.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

ARTH 3810 Modernism and the Nude

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

An examination of the central role that images of the female nude played in the development of modernist art between 1860 and the 1920s. Topics include the tradition of the female nude in art; the gendered dynamics of modernism; and the social, cultural, and artistic meaning of nudity. Artists considered include Manet, Degas, Cézanne, Picasso, and Valadon. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Gender Sexuality and Women St. (Same as: GSWS 3110)

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, GSWS 1000-2969, GSWS 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

ARTH 3815 Transatlantic Modernisms: New York/London

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

At the turn of the twentieth century, artists in New York and London grappled with the changes of modernity experienced in two of the largest industrialized cities in the Western world. Exploring new artistic styles and subjects, the artists of the Ashcan School and the Camden Town Group engaged new technologies and communication networks; new relationships between the rural, the urban, and the emerging suburban; the changing population of cities; and fights for social justice around questions of class, ethnicity, race, and gender. This course puts these two national stories into conversation, bringing together works produced on both sides of the Atlantic at a moment of artistic and social revolution. The seminar is part of ongoing planning for an exhibition at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art. Students will help generate an intellectual framework for such an exhibition, including exploring the collection and potential themes and comparisons, and learn some of the skills involved in mounting a loan exhibition.

(c) Humanities

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

ARTH 3820 Manet's Modernism

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

Examines the work of Manet and its critical reception from the nineteenth century to the present. Manet has been considered the paradigmatic modern artist, and the reception and interpretation of his work elucidates both a contested history of modernism's meaning, and the critical historiography of the discipline of art history itself. Authors may include Baudelaire, Zola, T.J. Clark, Michael Fried, Pierre Bourdieu, and Griselda Pollock.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

ARTH 3825 Bad Art: An Alternative History of Modern Art

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

What is the difference between good art and bad? Why do categories of value change over time? Since the last decades of the nineteenth century, a modernist aesthetic valuing formal innovation and absorptive autonomy has been a powerful force in making these distinctions. Examines the modernist evaluation of good art by attending to its opposite: those visual qualities, forms, and media that modernist criticism labeled bad art and cast out of the canon. Topics covered may include narrative and sentimental art, early popular cinema, comic strips and graphic novels, outsider art, regional art, relational aesthetics, and the self-conscious creation of bad art.

(c) Humanities, (VPA) Visual and Performing Arts

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

ARTH 3830 The Commercial Art Gallery

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

Explores the commercial art gallery as a distinct institutional form, emphasizing its historical and functional differences from other exhibition venues. The class will draw upon theoretical and historical scholarship on museums and exhibition theory, but the primary focus will be uncovering the history of the commercial gallery in Europe and the United States from the late 18th century to the present, and developing a theoretical paradigm within which to locate the form.

(c) Humanities

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100.

Terms offered: 2025 Fall Semester

ARTH 3835 Visual Literacy in a Digital World

Enrollment limit: 12. 1 Credit.

Seminar. We live in an image-saturated world: social media platforms, the news, smart phones, remote learning, video games, streaming services, emoticons. We communicate, learn, and express ourselves in a highly mediated world of visual tools and images. Yet all too often we treat images as transparent vehicles of communication, immediately comprehended and obvious to all. This class brings the art historical tools of close looking and visual analysis to the materials of the digital world, from its roots in the nineteenth-century technologies of reproduction to its current screen-based forms, with an emphasis on media and materiality. Topics will vary, but may include early mass media, including wood engraving and photography; family albums and scrapbooks; the news media; the visual architecture of the internet; social media platforms; video games, advertising; digital art; and NFTs. This course originates in Art History and is crosslisted with: Digital and Computational St. (Same as: DCS 3635)

(c) Humanities

Prerequisite(s): Student has at least Sophomore standing AND one of: ARTH 1000-2969, ARTH 3000-3999, Placement in above ARTH 1100, DCS 1000-2969, DCS 3000-3999.