

ARTH 401

ART HISTORY METHODOLOGY

Course outline



Art History
School of Art History, Classics and Religious Studies
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Victoria University of Wellington

Trimester 1 & 2, 2013
4 March to 17 November 2013

KEY DATES

Trimester Dates

Trimester dates: 4 March to 17 November 2013

Teaching dates: 4 March to 18 October 2013

Easter break: 28 March to 3 April 2013

Mid-trimester break 1/3: 22–28 April 2013

Mid-year break: 4–14 July 2013

Mid-trimester break 2/3: 26 August to 8 September 2013

Study week: 21–25 October 2013

Examination/Assessment Period: 25 October to 16 November 2013

Withdrawal dates

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

[www.victoria.ac.nz/ home/ admisenrol/ payments/ withdrawlsrefunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds)

ARTH 401 ART HISTORY METHODOLOGY

Course co-ordinator: Professor Geoffrey Batchen
OK 312, geoffrey.batchen@vuw.ac.nz
Where: Old Kirk 301
When: 10 – 12 am Thursday

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course prescription

ARTH 401 investigates the approaches art historians have developed from art history's beginnings to the present. It critically examines the work of significant art historians in relation to key topics: the construction of the artistic subject; the question of style, the interpretation of meaning; theories of perception and visual culture; the role of context and the social production of art.

Course Content

This course aims to introduce its participants to art historical study at an advanced level. The class will critically examine a variety of interpretive methods associated with the practice of art history, particularly those developed over the past forty years, such as formalism, marxism, social history, feminism, semiotics, deconstruction, visual culture, postcolonialism, and so on. In that sense it will provide students with a necessarily partial typology of recent art historical practices.

The class will ask participants to develop their skills in looking, researching, writing, and argumentation, four of the basic components of academic art history. However it will also take account of other common art historical practices, such as those encountered in the studio, in museums, and in galleries. In brief, the motivating principle of the class will be a single crucial question: "what is the purpose of art history today?"

Teaching/learning summary

The course is delivered by means of a series of seminar sessions. Each session is structured around the discussion of a group of readings. These include important texts by art historians and theorists, as well as critical commentaries on their writings and methods. As part of the formal assessment you are expected to actively contribute to every seminar as your input is crucial to the success of both the course and your own learning experience.

In line with Art History's learning objectives, ARTH 401:

1. encourages you to apply your skills of analysis to critically examine visual and textual material;
2. develops your capacity for independent work, including the formulation, analysis and refinement of topics;
3. ensures the consistent application of the conventions of academic writing and art historical research;
4. ensures the full use of library resources;
5. refines your skills in presenting and debating ideas in oral situations;
6. prepares you for post-graduate research in art history;
7. introduces you to the standards required of scholarly articles and papers.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Blackboard: <http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>

Art History office: OK306, 3rd (ground) floor, Old Kirk.
Notices regarding the course will be posted on the Art History noticeboard in Old Kirk outside the office.

Art History online: www.victoria.ac.nz/art-history

SEMINAR PROGRAMME

1. Introduction (March 7)

What is art history? What is art history's own history? What are art history's basic components? Where does one find art history in action? What are its effects? Why should we study or practice it?

2. Museums (March 14)

How (by what techniques, to what ends) is art history represented in art museums?

3. Exhibitions (March 21)

What contribution to the history of modern art is made by art exhibitions and their curators?

Easter break: 28 March to 3 April

4. Connoisseurship (April 4, Te Papa 10am)

What kind of art history can be deduced from a close examination of the art work itself?

5. Biography (April 11)

Should art history be told through the biography of artists? Does biography matter?

6. Style and Iconography (April 18)

Why do art styles change? What is the relationship of art to history? What does iconography tell us about the meaning of a work of art?

Mid trimester break 22 – 28 April

7. Formalism (May 2)

What is the essence of a work of art (and why does it matter)? What makes good art

'good'?

8. Marxism (May 16)

What influence has Marxist thinking had on recent art history? How is art related to economics (and art history to politics)?

9. Reproduction (May 23)

What does reproduction do to a work of art, or to its audience?

10. Social History (May 30)

How are social dynamics and political relations manifested in a work of art (and in a piece of art-historical writing)?

11. Feminism (June 6)

What is a feminist art history? What is 'queer' about queer theory? Is it enough to simply add women or homosexuals to the history of art?

Mid year break 10 June – 14 July

12. Difference (July 18)

How should art history deal with cultural difference?

13. Indigeneity (July 25)

Are there indigenous histories of art? How should indigenous understandings of art be incorporated into art history?

14. Psychoanalysis (August 1)

How useful is psychoanalysis in the interpretation of works of art? Can there be a psychoanalytic history of art?

15. Semiology (August 8)

What is the relationship of form and content in art? Is there a 'language' to art making? What kind of politics is reproduced through that language?

16. Postmodernism (August 15)

Is art history about truth or interpretation? Is knowledge of the artist's 'intention' necessary to the understanding of a work of art?

17. Deconstruction (August 22)

To what extent is art history caught in contradiction with itself, claiming truth but reproducing no more than the projected desires of its authors?

Mid trimester break 26 August – 8 September

18. Autobiography (September 12)

What are the benefits and dangers of using an autobiographical voice in art history?

19. Visual Culture (September 19)

What is the place of visual culture within art history? Is one a challenge to the other?

20. Globalism (September 26)

Is a global art history possible, or even desirable? Can a local art history tell a global story (and vice versa)?

21. Oceania (October 3)

How is New Zealand's art history being told today? What contributions can scholars in our own region make to the practice of art history in general?

End of course

ASSESSMENT

Assessment for this course is based on two essays (worth 40% & 60% respectively). All essays should be typed, double spaced, well illustrated, and should of course employ correct grammar and spelling. *Marks will be deducted for absent or poorly laid out bibliographies and endnotes.* Please come and see me if you are having any problems, or would like to discuss your ideas prior to writing your essay.

Mandatory course requirements

To gain a pass in this course each student must:

- Submit the written essays for this course, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work)
- Attend at least 75% of the seminar sessions
- Participate actively in seminar discussions.

Assessment will be based on essays. Two papers will be assessed, one of them a short exercise in criticism (worth 40% of your final grade) and the second a more substantial piece of art historical writing (worth 60%). Papers must be handed in on time. Any paper submitted after the deadline must be accompanied by documentary evidence (eg. medical certificate) of serious mitigating circumstances, or it will lose 2% of its final grade for each day it is overdue.

Regular attendance of class (at least 75% of sessions) is also a requirement for a passing grade. Texts (available on Blackboard) will be set for each session and must be read by all participants. Participation in discussions is an important aspect of the class.

Marking: The course coordinator is responsible for marking all assessment. You may request a second opinion of the assessment of any piece of written work, from another lecturer in Art History. Coursework and the exam will be reviewed by an external assessor in order to ensure that academic standards at honours level are met. Your final grade for the course may be adjusted both to reflect your overall contribution to and achievement in the course and in response to the feedback from the external assessor.

Workload: The University recommends that approximately 300 hours per course per week, inclusive of seminars, be given to a full year, 4-course graduate programme in order to maintain satisfactory progress.

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the Calendar webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the Academic Office website, at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism>

Class Representative

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students. You can find out more information about Class Representatives on the VUWSA website www.vuwsa.org.nz/representation/class-reps-2/

Taping of Lectures

All students in the School of Art History, Classics and Religious Studies are welcome to use their own audio-tapes to record lectures. If you want to do this, please see your lecturer, tutor or the relevant programme administrator and complete a disclaimer form, which advises of copyright and other relevant issues.

ENJOY THE COURSE!

WIN \$500

THE CHARTWELL TRUST STUDENT ART WRITING PRIZE 2012

The Adam Art Gallery is calling for entries for the Chartwell Trust Student Art Writing Prize—an annual writing initiative focusing on visual art and culture.

ELIGIBILITY

The prize is open to Victoria University of Wellington students from any of the following programmes:

Art History, Classics, Religious Studies, Museum and Heritage Studies, English, Film, Theatre, Media Studies and Music.

PRIZE

The winning entry will receive a cash prize of **\$500** and have their essay published on the Adam Art Gallery website www.adamartgallery.org.nz

GUIDELINES/CRITERIA

- Entries should be in the form of a review or essay addressing an exhibition at the Adam Art Gallery or a work from the Victoria University of Wellington Art Collection
- Submissions should be no more than 1,500 words
- Texts should be clearly labelled with author's name, contact details, course of study and student ID
- Texts must be submitted in both hard copy form and in Microsoft Word format (A4, single sided and 1.5 spaced)
- Check www.adamartgallery.org.nz/learning-opportunities/chartwell-trust-student-writing-prize for previous winning entries.

DEADLINE

Entries are **now open** and can be submitted anytime until the closing date. The closing date for submissions is **Monday 23 September**.

Entries should be sent to:

The Chartwell Trust Student Art Writing Prize
c/- Adam Art Gallery
Victoria University of Wellington
PO Box 600
Wellington 6140
or via email adamartgallery@vuw.ac.nz