ART 602: ART HISTORY METHODS

Location:
Days and Time of class:
Semester and Year: Spring 2010

NOTE: syllabus and schedule are subject to change.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: Advanced seminar in art history research methods and writing. The course fulfills the junior level writing requirement for art majors with an art history emphasis. In addition, the culminating paper may be applied toward the senior project for majors with art history emphasis.

We will examine some of the primary methodologies, employed by art historians – including Formalism, Iconology, Feminism, and Postcolonialism. For each of the methods, one representative case study will concern Picasso’s Les Demoiselles d’Avignon (1907). The examination of a single major work from multiple perspectives will help us to understand how the choice of methodology directly and profoundly impacts the critical and scholarly interpretation of art works.

Each student will carry out a research project, involving the application of appropriate art history methodology to the analysis of a major artwork of their choice.

Writing skills will be emphasized throughout the semester. The development of the research project will benefit from feedback not only from the instructor, but from other participants as well. In several sessions modeled on art studio critiques, students will make constructive suggestions for the enhancement of research projects, being carried out by their colleagues. Individual conferences with the instructor also are intended to help students evolve their research projects.

PREREQUISITES: Classified junior or senior art major with art history emphasis or concentration. Completion of English 214 or equivalent with a grade of C- or better.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- identify the methods employed by art historians who have influenced the discipline and write about the principles underlying their methods;
- compare and contrast the advantages of the various art history methods;
- categorize art history methods and evaluate the suitability of each one for the analysis of various types of art works;
- Identify an art work to investigate and identify appropriate techniques and resources for a research project on it;
- Identify standards for professional art historical studies and write a paper that adheres to these standards;
- Write about scholarly findings developed by others while avoiding plagiarism; and
Interact with colleagues and collaborate with them in undertaking analyses of representative scholarly studies and in leading discussions.

**TEXTBOOKS**
All these books are available for use at SFSU Library Reserve Services, and they may be purchased at Franciscan Shops Bookstore.

*Supplementary Book available in hard copies on Reserve Room*

**ELECTRONIC RESERVES**
Required core readings for the course are available through the electronic reserves page established by the SFSU Library for this course. All electronic course reserves can be accessed by using links on the library home page or going to this address: [http://eres.sfsu.edu/eres/courseindex.aspx?error=&page=search](http://eres.sfsu.edu/eres/courseindex.aspx?error=&page=search)
Access to the Electronic Reserve materials for this course requires a password, which I will announce in class. Copyright regulations require that the password not be printed in any publicly accessible document such as this course syllabus.
Electronic Reserve readings are organized in various files, according to Methodologies. In addition to required readings, the files include representative case studies of various methods, which might be of assistance to you as you devise your research topic.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS** include the following
- Completion of the SFSU Basic Information Competence Requirement and the Protecting Human Research Participants course of the NIH Office of Extramural Research.
- Regular attendance and constructive participation in interactive discussion.
- Timely completion of writing and reading assignments.
- Collaborative work with a group of seminar members, who will introduce readings and prepare written summaries of points for discussion.
- Research project, which will be developed in a variety of components, as explained below in class schedule.
Details on these requirements are provided below.
BASIC INFORMATION COMPETENCE REQUIREMENT is normally fulfilled by completing the OASIS tutorial, available on the SFSU Library website: http://www.library.sfsu.edu/research/instruction/oasis.html. You must turn in to me by the FIFTH WEEK of class the certificate of completion of OASIS or the certificate of completion of equivalency, accepted by SFSU.

RESEARCH ETHICS COURSE. To fulfill the ethics component of GWAR, you are required to complete the Protecting Human Research Participants course, offered online by the NIH Office of Extramural Research. Registration for the course is free and is available at http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php?l=3. Turn in to me by the SEVENTH WEEK of class the certificate of completion of this course, which typically takes about three hours to complete. Your work will be saved as you progress through this course, so you can work on this as convenient.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

REGULAR ATTENDANCE AND CONSTRUCTIVE PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSION ARE EXPECTED AND REQUIRED.

INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION  The goal of discussion should be to explore possibilities, not to come up with rigorous categories. I ask that the following guidelines for discussion be respected in all sessions:

• It is very important that all comments should be presented in ways that respect other individuals, including those who differ from you in race, ethnic heritage, religious convictions, gender, sexual orientation, age, personality type, or other significant ways.
• Interaction must involve listening to others. Please allow time for others to speak and do not attempt to monopolize discussion.
• Treat differing opinions with respect.
• Individuals who do not feel comfortable speaking in formal groups are encouraged to make the effort to share their insights and ideas with others.
• Discussion needs to be focused on issues relevant to session topics.

Group Introductions of Discussion on Representative Examples Of Methodology
The seminar will be divided into two groups. During the course of three weeks (as indicated in class schedule), these two groups will be responsible for introducing and structuring our consideration of assigned readings. The primary goal of the group presentation should be stimulate discussion of the representative methodological studies under consideration.

To facilitate discussion of readings, each group will develop a one page written summary (300-500 words) of the chief points of the article, with special attention to the benefits of the specific method employed. The summary should be distributed to all other participants at the beginning of the discussion session.

Timing: We will be able to devote 60 to 65 minutes total to each group topic, including general discussion by other seminar participants. Be sure to save enough time for general discussion. You might want to interweave general discussion into your
consideration of the article, or you might prefer to make separate introductory comments (perhaps about 20 minutes). Assume your listeners have read the articles. Do not summarize all elements, but pick out issues that we need to talk about.

Format and content: In both the written and oral components of the presentation, you should highlight primary themes of the readings and suggest possible interpretations of difficult matters. In addition to issues specific to the article, consider the following general questions:

- What methodology is the author using? What are the primary distinguishing features of the methodology?
- What are the primary goals of the author? What types of issues is s/he concerned with?
- What evidence does the author cite? How does the author demonstrate the relevance of the evidence to her/his primary ideas and to the methodology employed?
- Does the author relate art to other types of cultural phenomena? Does the author articulate a distinctive political or cultural perspective?
- How might you utilize the author’s method in the study of your chosen focal work?
- How could this methodology be applied to art of different periods?

Team work is very important in group presentations. This team is a predecessor of the various types of collaborative projects that you will be expected to undertake as professional art historians, working in galleries and museums and other cultural institutions. In evaluating presentations, I will be looking for indications of effective interaction, involving all group members.

- Students collaborating on presentations should analyze and exchange ideas on all aspects of assigned reading. Do not break up readings into separate sections.
- Differing perspectives should be incorporated into the presentation, as appropriate. Coherence does not depend on uniformity.
- All members should be involved in the actual presentation, as well as in its preparation and organization.

INFORMAL WRITING: In most sessions, approximately 15 to 20 minutes will be devoted to informal writing on an issue relevant to the topic of the session. You are encouraged to refer to these writings in discussion of the themes under consideration. These short pieces of writing will be turned in by the end of the session, and they will contribute to your final grade in the course.

Research Project Students are asked to undertake an intensive study of a significant work of art -- involving the use of a single, relevant art history methodology. YOU MAY INVESTIGATE AN ART WORK FROM ANY PERIOD AND ANY CULTURE. It is important that you select an artwork for which you will have access to sufficient and appropriate resources.
An important first step will be to find out what sources are available on art works that are of interest to you. *In the session during the second week*, conducted by the instructor in collaboration with Librarian Darlene Tong, we will consider a variety of issues involved in defining a topic, as well as appropriate sources for art historical research.

*During the following week*, you will be required to meet individually with the instructor. In these conferences, we will talk about your interests in art history and develop a preliminary plan, to help you begin the research project. You are encouraged to meet with me throughout the semester as you undertake work on this project. As we analyze various methods, consider how these might be applied to your chosen work of art.

In your paper, you are expected to utilize one of the primary methods, discussed in class from the fourth through seventh weeks. As we consider representative case studies of each method, you are encouraged to think about how they might be applied to your final paper.

From the eighth week onwards, you will develop the various component parts of the paper (including introduction, substantive central arguments, conclusions, etc.) and submit these for review by instructor and your colleagues. You will be expected to incorporate constructive feedback into your final paper.

**INTERACTIVE CRITIQUE OF RESEARCH PROJECTS FOR THIS COURSE**

Several sessions will be devoted to discussion of writing undertaken by individuals for the research project in this course.

WHEN YOUR WRITING WILL BE DISCUSSED, YOU ARE EXPECTED TO EMAIL COPIES OF THE SAMPLE TO ALL PARTICIPANTS, NO LATER THAN THE THIRD DAY BEFORE THE SESSION WHEN THEY WILL BE CONSIDERED. Samples sent by email should be formatted in Adobe PDF. Please notify sender ASAP if you encounter a problem accessing any submission.

Prepare for critique sessions by reviewing submissions and make notes for your use during discussion. The goal of the critique should be offer feedback that helps writers to present their arguments in the most cohesive and eloquent manner possible. Elements to note might be

- Clarity and vividness of expression.
- Elements of reasoning and the effectiveness with which the various stages of the argument are articulated and supported.
- Adequate acknowledgment of alternatives and responses to these.
- Consideration of warrants.
- Thesis: Is it fully explained and developed?
- Documentation: adequate and appropriate (when applicable).

*Be sure to note the writer’s real strengths so that these can be emphasized in future work.*

Feedback should be supportive and constructive in all cases. Remember the goal is to help one another excel at research and writing. Hopefully, consideration of writings by colleagues will strengthen your own skills.
Remember to phrase your suggestions as tactfully and clearly as possible.

FINAL PAPER WILL BE DUE ON THE SESSION SCHEDULED DURING THE FINAL EXAM PERIOD.

Length and format basics of final paper
- Completed papers should be between 2700 and 3000 words in length.
- Papers must be computer printed with 12-point font, double-spaced.
- Images of works of art discussed in the paper should be included.
- Notes (whether footnotes or endnotes) and Bibliography must be used to acknowledge sources, according to standards of Turabian’s Manual for Writers.

COMPLETED PAPERS WILL BE GRADED ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING:
1. SUBSTANTIVE INDICATIONS OF RESEARCH
   - Clear and objective discussion of important studies on topic
   - Comprehensive range of relevant ideas and facts
   - Properly formatted notes and bibliography to indicate sources
2. SELECTION AND PRESENTATION OF RELEVANT EVIDENCE
   - Explanation of significance of evidence to main ideas
   - OMISSION of material irrelevant to your central ideas
3. COHERENT ANALYSIS OF METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES
   - Explanation of relevance, advantages, and limitations of utilized methodology to art work under consideration
   - Comparative analysis of methods employed by other scholars on this art work (or related art works and issues)
4. CLEAR, VIVID, AND GRAMATICALLY ACCURATE STYLE OF WRITING
   - Unifying ideas of paper made clear
   - Logical ordering of material
   - Effective use of introductory and concluding paragraphs
   - Vivid but coherent writing
   - Correct use of grammar

ATTENDANCE POLICY
Regular attendance and constructive engagement in class sessions are expected and required. Consequences of absenteeism: Absences will adversely impact your course grade to a significant extent. Anyone who misses three or more weekly sessions will have a full letter deducted from their course grade.

GRADING POLICY
Grades are based on the following criteria:
Group Oral Presentations on Assigned Readings: 10%
Individual Contributions to Discussion
   including constructive critiques of writing by other students: 20%
Group written summaries of assigned readings: 10%
Informal writing pieces (done in class): 10%
Preliminary versions of component elements of final paper: 25%
ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO COMPLETE REQUIREMENTS ON THE SCHEDULED DATES, INDICATED IN SCHEDULE. LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED except in cases of severe medical illness or other very compelling emergencies that are documented by full and reliable written evidence. Notification must be given prior to the due date by telephoning the professor’s office (338-6506) or the Art Department (338-2176). Adequate written documentation (such as letter on official stationary from licensed medical physician) must be provided, to document compelling emergency situation, which prevented submission of paper on time.

Letter grades are based in part on the following criteria:

A MEANS EXCELLENT WORK
For writing assignments, excellent work will be demonstrated by:
- Consistent improvement in written expression, as appropriate.
- Effective writing style, including use of correct grammar.
- Clear explanations of central ideas, substantiated through use of appropriate art history methodology and discussion of information from relevant art history sources.
- In course project, evidence of notable relevant research, demonstrated, for instance, in thoughtful review of sources.
- Systematic and accurate use of appropriate methodology. Effective analysis of the various features of this methodology.
- Acknowledgement of alternative ideas and discussion of your responses to these. Accurate use of Notes and Bibliography, formatted according to Turabian.

For contributions to seminar discussion:
- Effective collaboration with colleagues on group presentations – showing notable sensitivity to and interest in their contributions. Group presentations interweave differing personal perspectives.
- Concise but helpful introduction of issues of importance in readings by group, with special emphasis on implications for art history methods.
- In addition, students at this level contribute regularly to general discussion, without attempting to monopolize it.
- Thoughtful and careful critiques of writing samples
- Contributions to discussion serve to stimulate participation by others
- Respectful treatment of all others in seminar.
- Outstanding record of attendance; no more than one absence.

B MEANS VERY GOOD
For written assignments, very good work will be demonstrated by:
- Consistent effort to improve written expression, as appropriate.
- Central ideas, clearly stated and explained. However, in comparison with excellent writing, the implications of the idea may be less thoroughly developed and explored.
- Consideration of several relevant sources in research project.
- Clear development of arguments, but there may be less full consideration of alternative arguments by other scholars, in comparison with excellent papers.
- Effective writing style.
- Accurate use of Notes and Bibliography, formatted according to Turabian.

For contributions to seminar discussion:
- Group presentations involve collaboration of all team members, although some individual opinions occasionally may be given greater prominence than others.
- In groups, explanation of issues of importance in readings, with special emphasis on methodological issues. In some cases, this discussion may be less concise and/or less thorough than on excellent level.
- Individual contributions to discussion show consideration of some important and relevant issues in readings. No attempt to monopolize discussion.
- Some helpful suggestions for writing samples by other students.
- Respectful treatment of all others in seminar.
- No more than two absences.
- Participation in collection, return, and set-up of required equipment.

C MEANS AVERAGE WORK
For writing assignments, average work will be demonstrated by such qualities as
- Effort to improve written expression, as appropriate.
- For research project, use of varied types of accurate information, which are relevant to stated topic; however, in comparison with papers at higher level, this information may be less clearly focused on issues of stated topic.
- An appropriate methodology is indicated, but it may be less fully utilized than in papers at higher levels.
- Arguments are presented, but acknowledgment of alternate ideas may be less thorough than at higher levels.
- Indication of some relevant research.
- Documentation of sources, but this may not always adhere to Turabian’s directions.
- Writing is grammatically accurate in most respects.

For contributions to seminar discussion:
- Group presentations involve all members, but interaction may be less comprehensive than at higher levels.
- Primary ideas of readings may be noted, but these may be analyzed less thoroughly than at higher levels.
- Occasional contributions to discussion, including some comments on written work by others.
- Respectful treatment of others.
- Participation in collection, return, and set-up of required equipment.

D MEANS BELOW AVERAGE WORK
Below average, but passing written assignment will include some indication of research and will demonstrate mastery of fundamentals of standard American English grammar. However, there may be problems such as the following:
- Arguments may not be carefully developed.
- Value judgments and other biases may detract from positive elements.

Below average participation will be characterized by
- Minimal contributions to discussion.
- Minimal comments on written work by colleagues.

**F means Failing Works.** Performance falls below the criteria indicated for higher levels.

**CR (Credit)** means that all requirements have been fulfilled at least a C- (Average) Level.

**NC (No Credit)** performance has fallen below the Average level (that is equivalent to D or F).

**ACADEMIC PROBATION** If you are on academic probation, make an appointment as soon as possible to work out what you need to do to meet the terms of your probation.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) ACCOMMODATION**
The Disability Programs and Resource Center provides university academic support services and specialized assistance to students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor.
The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email (dprc@sfsu.edu). (http://www.sfsu.edu/~dprc/facultyfaq.html#1)

**CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT**
For the success of this class, it is essential that everyone be alert and prepared to participate in interactive discussion. To help create an appropriate learning environment, I ask that the following basic guidelines be followed.

- Put cell phones in silent mode and do not use them during class.
- Turn off and unplug MP3 devices, CD players, etc.
- Use laptops for class related purposes, if you wish, but *not* for personal matters.
- You are encouraged to participate in inclusive class discussion, but please do not chat casually with friends during class time.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**WEEK 1** Welcome and introduction to the course. Overview of topics and requirements.

**WEEK 2** Research Issues, Sources And Techniques
DARLENE TONG will join the instructor in this interactive session on research methods and techniques.

Reading *Craft of Research*, 75-105.
- On Research Sources: Turabian, *Manual for Writers*, chapters 3-4
WEEK 3  Individual appointments with instructor to establish goals for research project. Do not worry if you are not able to think of a specific topic before our meeting. We will discuss your background in and interests in art history and in other fields and attempt to come up with an appropriate area of focus. To facilitate discussion, I ask that you bring with you a one-page statement of your primary interests in art history.

Background reading Craft of Research 9-26, 37-71, on Uses of Research, Connecting with Readers, and Topics & Questions.

WEEK 4  Formalism and the Role of the Spectator

Required reading on Formalism
- Riegl, “Leading Characteristics of the Late Roman ‘Kunstwollen’,” in Art of Art History, 169-176
- Leo Steinberg, “The Philosophical Brothel,” on Electronic Reserves, in “Formalism” folder

If you are interested in further reading on issues of Psychology, raised by Steinberg’s article, and the impact of this article on later Psychoanalytical art history studies of Picasso’s paintings, see Bois, “Painting as Trauma,” in Green, Demoiselles, chap. 3.

WEEK 5  Iconology (Presentations by student groups begin with this session)

TOPIC A: Panofsky
- Presented by GROUP ONE
- Readings by Panofsky:

TOPIC B: Iconology Applied to Picasso
- Presented by GROUP TWO
- Reading: Rubin, “From Narrative to Iconic in Picasso,” on Electronic Reserves (Iconology folder).

If you are interested in further reading see Hatt and Klonk, Methods (reserve) pp. 96-118.

WEEK 6  Social Art History & Feminism

TOPIC A: Feminist Revision of Social Art History
- Presented by GROUP TWO
- Reading: Pollock "Mondernity and the Spaces of Femininity" on Electronic Reserves (Feminism folder)
- Electronic Reserves (Feminism folder)

TOPIC B: Gertrude Stein and Picasso
- Presented by GROUP ONE
- Reading: Garb, “‘To Kill the Nineteenth Century’: Sex and Spectatorship with Gertrude and Pablo,” in Green, Picasso’s Les Demoiselles, chap. 4.
If you are interested in further reading on Feminism, see Hatt and Klonk, *Methods*, pp. 145-157, 169-172. On Social Art History, see Hatt and Klonk, *Methods*, 120-141 and articles on Electronic Reserves (Social Art History Folder)

WEEK 7  Postcolonial perspectives

**TOPIC A: Postcolonial Theory**
- Presented by GROUP ONE
- Readings from *Art of Art History*
  - Coombes, “Inventing the Postcolonial,” 486-497

**TOPIC B: Postcolonial Interpretation of Demoiselles**
- Presented by GROUP TWO

If you are interested in further reading on Postcolonial perspectives, see Hatt and Klonk, *Methods*, 223-260 and Lomas, “In Another Frame,” Green, chap. 6.

WEEK 8 Preliminary Critiques: Overviews of All Projects

Background reading *Craft of Research*, 177-190

All participants are expected to provide a short selection (400-500 words) that reveals and exemplifies the goals of their project. Among other matters, you should use this to introduce the art work that you will be investigating and to indicate the methodology that you will employ.

- A “Working Introduction” (as described on 179-182 of *Craft of Research*) might be an effective way to present the scope of your project to your colleagues.

Your selection should be submitted by email to your colleagues (as explained above under Interactive Critique) at least three days prior to session.

In addition, you should submit to the instructor a preliminary bibliography (formatted according to the instructions of Turabian).

As you review your colleagues’ undertakings, consider such elements as
- Topic: significance, manageability and scope
- Explanation of significance of topic
- Indications of arguments that will be used to support
- Steps that might lead to solution of problem under consideration.

WEEK 9 Avoiding Plagiarism

Reading: *Craft of Research*, 191-198

A “Research Summary” (350-500 words) of the findings of one of the sources in your preliminary bibliography should be prepared in accord with the approach outlined in *Craft of Research* pointers on avoiding plagiarism. This should be submitted to all participants by email three days prior to this session (as explained above under Interactive Critique) at least three days prior to session. In class, we will consider the various strategies employed to convey information without plagiarizing work of others.
WEEKS TEN THROUGH FOURTEEN **Specialized Critiques:**

**Articulating and Revising Arguments**

**Background reading** *Craft of Research*, 109-170, 203-221, 249-267

These sessions will be devoted to review of selections that reveal the development and defense of primary arguments.

- Length of selections and number to be presented each session will be determined by discussion and agreement of seminar participants.
- Selections should include documentation to indicate support of arguments.
- Participants will have freedom in choosing what part of paper to present, though all are expected to adhere to length and other general guidelines agreed upon.

Through this process, all participants will have the chance to present and revise their primary arguments with feedback from other participants.

Selections to be discussed will be distributed by email to all participants as explained above under Critiques. *Critiques should be focused on presentation and development of arguments, writing style and other matters that seem of significance in individual cases.*

WEEK 10; Critiques of selection from main body of paper. Schedule to be determined.
WEEK 11 Critiques of selection from main body of paper. Schedule to be determined.
WEEK 12: Critiques of selection from main body of paper. Schedule to be determined.
WEEK 13 Critiques of selection from main body of paper. Schedule to be determined.
WEEK 14 Critiques of selection from main body of paper. Schedule to be determined.

WEEK FIFTEEN **Final Introduction and Conclusion**

**Background reading** *Craft of Research*, 232-247

Final Introduction and Conclusion selections to be distributed by email to all participants three days before session.

FINAL EXAM WEEK SESSION: Completed paper due.

Informal discussion of what has been learned through research process.