Art History Courses (Art, Art History, and Design) (ARTH)

ARTH Courses

This is a list of courses with the subject code ARTH. For more information, see Art, Art History, and Design (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences) in the catalog.

ARTH:1000 First-Year Seminar 1 s.h.
Small discussion class taught by a faculty member; topics chosen by instructor; may include outside activities (e.g., films, lectures, performances, readings, visits to research facilities). Requirements: first- or second-semester standing.

ARTH:1010 Art and Visual Culture 3 s.h.
Visual analysis, media and techniques, artistic subject matter and aesthetic issues; historical periods and movements from ancient times to present; provides strong orientation to visual aspects of humanities, background for other art history courses, and introduction to visual arts for personal enrichment; for students new to art history. GE: Historical Perspectives; Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts.

ARTH:1020 Masterpieces: Art in Historical and Cultural Perspectives 3 s.h.
Masterpieces of Western art—how to look at, think about, and understand some of the worlds' most exciting works of architecture, painting, and sculpture; their construction, hidden meanings, historical content, and their meanings today. GE: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts.

ARTH:1030 Themes in Global Art 3 s.h.
Exploration of how different cultures throughout history and across the globe have expressed their social, political, and religious values in visual form; key themes include social functions of art, the ideal body, art of the divine, funerary art, propaganda and power. GE: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts; Values and Society.

ARTH:1040 Arts of Africa 3 s.h.
Arts, artists, and cultures of Africa; sculpture, paintings, pottery, textiles, architecture, human adornment. GE: International and Global Issues; Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts.

ARTH:1045 Race and Art in America 3 s.h.
Introductory survey of United States modern and contemporary art spanning the mid-19th century to the present; exploration of how communities across American history have used art to tell stories, assert identities, and participate in defining American culture; tracing artistic responses to the events and tensions of modern American life through sculpture, painting, photography, performance, and conceptual practices; topics include abolition of slavery and its legacies, Native American art and culture, the Harlem Renaissance, Japanese American Internment, the Civil Rights and Chicano Movements, and post-9/11 society. GE: Values and Society.

ARTH:1050 From Cave Paintings to Cathedrals: Survey of Western Art I 3 s.h.
Survey to foster development of critical skills in thinking and writing about visual culture, and to familiarize students with broad outlines of artistic development in the Western tradition, from prehistory through later Middle Ages; aesthetic qualities of artworks, relationship between style, function, and meaning. GE: Historical Perspectives; Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts.

ARTH:1060 From Mona Lisa to Modernism: Survey of Western Art II 3 s.h.
Survey of the Western world's visual arts from Renaissance (ca. 1400) to present; major movements and principal masters of Western Europe and the United States in their social and historical contexts; focus on stimulation of visual literacy and familiarity with outstanding cultural monuments. GE: Historical Perspectives; Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts.

ARTH:1070 Asian Art and Culture 3 s.h.
Art from India, China, and Japan in many media and forms, in their cultural and historical contexts; cultural distinctions of these Asian civilizations as seen through the visual arts; chronology used to highlight historical processes and provide perspectives on continuity and change. Taught in English. GE: Historical Perspectives; Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts.

ARTH:1075 Contemporary Art: A Global Perspective 3 s.h.
Introduction to contemporary art across globe; exploration of how artists work today and their approaches to pressing issues and questions of current times.

ARTH:1080 How to Write About Art 3 s.h.
Opportunity to develop understanding of and skill in using visual-arts writing conventions and linguistic competencies that are necessary for academic and professional success; formats such as exhibition reviews, art criticism, research writing, artist's statements; experience through exercises, formal essays, revision, workshops. Requirements: fulfillment of GE CLAS Core Rhetoric.

ARTH:1095 Native American Art 3 s.h.
Survey of the visual arts of Indigenous peoples in North America with emphasis on regions that have become the United States; exploration of painting, sculpture, ceramics, fiber arts, performance, and architecture as expressions of identity, creativity, resistance, and resilience from ancestral traditions through transformations prompted by non-Native contact to today's vibrant art scene. GE: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts; Values and Society. Same as NAIS:1095.

ARTH:2020 Western Architecture From Prehistory to the Present 3 s.h.
Overview of monuments, Neolithic period to present; aesthetic and structural principles, major styles, architects.

ARTH:2120 Art and Architecture of the Islamic World 3 s.h.
Introduction to the artistic production of the Islamic world from the 7th century to present day; broad geographical coverage; examination of contributions of Arabia and the Middle East as well as those of Spain, North Africa, India, and Asia; students consider a wide variety of media including ceramics, metalwork, textiles, and calligraphy; emphasis on great buildings (e.g., Dome of the Rock, Alhambra, Taj Mahal); students are challenged to understand these works in their original cultural contexts and in relation to currently ongoing debates about intercultural exchange and religious identity in a globalizing world.

ARTH:2150 Art and Life in Africa 3 s.h.
Historical overview of themes and issues in African art (i.e., aesthetics, form and function, art in religion and the spiritual realm, art and politics, art and the individual); techniques used to create art (i.e., weaving, carving, brass casting, iron smelting and forging, architecture); art in daily life.

ARTH:2220 Introduction to the Art of China 3 s.h.
Visual arts of China and their history; emphasis on understanding in context of Chinese civilization, history. Same as ASIA:2231.

ARTH:2250 Introduction to the Art of Japan 3 s.h.
Chronological survey of Japan's visual arts in their historical and cultural contexts from Neolithic age to present; extensive use of slides, films, other visual materials. Taught in English. Same as JPNS:2250.

ARTH:2320 Ancient Art From the Great Pyramids of Egypt to the Colosseum in Rome 3 s.h.
Art and architecture of the Mediterranean world (ca. 3500 B.C.E.) to death of Constantine (337 C.E.); Egyptian, Cycladic, Minoan, Mycenaean, Greek, Etruscan, and Roman cultures; artistic responses to life and death; impact of breakthroughs in technology and engineering on visual culture; role of art in empire building; interrelationships of art, politics, religion. GE: Historical Perspectives. Same as CLSA:2226.

ARTH:2330 Ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Persian Art 3 s.h.
Art and architecture of Egypt and the Near East (ca. 3500 B.C.E.) to advent of Islam; Egyptian, Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian cultures; artistic responses to life and death; impact of breakthroughs in technology and engineering on visual culture; role of art in empire building; interrelationships of art, politics, and religion. Same as CLSA:2330.

ARTH:2340 The Power of Art in Greece and Rome 3 s.h.
Art and architecture of Greece and Rome (ca. 3000 B.C.E.) to death of Constantine (337 C.E.); Cycladic, Minoan, Mycenaean, Greek, Etruscan, and Roman cultures; artistic responses to life and death; impact of breakthroughs in technology and engineering on visual culture; role of art in empire building; interrelationships of art, politics, and religion. Same as CLSA:2340.

ARTH:2420 Medieval Art From Constantine to Columbus 3 s.h.
Comprehensive survey of artistic traditions of Western Europe and Mediterranean Basin from roughly 300 to 1500; reign of Roman Emperor Constantine to lifetime of Christopher Columbus; complexity and diversity of cultural and artistic traditions that flourished in these so-called Middle Ages, where blending of Roman and northern legacies created European cultures.

ARTH:2520 Italian Renaissance Art 3 s.h.
Consequential works of art by Italian artists of the 14th and 15th centuries; diverse roles played by images in early Renaissance society; analysis of primary sources and seminal research in the field; (re)birth of art theory and advancing social status of the artist in cultural centers of Florence, papal Rome, republican Venice, and the courts of Northern Italy.

ARTH:2530 Italian Baroque Art 3 s.h.
Most consequential works of High Renaissance and Mannerist art by late 15th-century and 16th-century Italian artists; developments in painting, architecture, sculpture, printmaking, and portable arts; Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Giorgione, Titian, Correggio, Lotto, Bronzino, Sonfonisba Anguissola, Palladio, Cellini, Veronese, Carracci, and Caravaggio receive close consideration; particular attention given to materials and techniques employed, creative approach of the artist, and multiple functions of the image in government and statecraft, churches, public spaces, and private homes; constructing social and civic identity.

ARTH:2730 Transformations in Nineteenth-Century European Art 3 s.h.
Major European artists, works, movements, aesthetic theories from late 18th century to 1900; works in their aesthetic, cultural, intellectual, political contexts; boundaries, definitions of movements (i.e., Neo-Classicism, Romanticism, Realism, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Symbolism).

ARTH:2740 Art of the Northern Renaissance: Jan van Eyck, Hieronymus Bosch, Albrecht Durer, and Beyond 3 s.h.
Northern European art between 1350 and 1600; the transition between the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance; artistic output of this period; development of critical thinking skills by exploring ways in which the Northern Renaissance has been defined with respect to Italian Renaissance and northern medieval traditions.

ARTH:2820 Introduction to Twentieth-Century Art 3 s.h.
Modern European and American painting, sculpture, and architecture from 1880 to present; major art movements of modern art history.

ARTH:3000 Digital Approaches to the Study of Art 3 s.h.
Digital approaches to study of art history; emphasis on cultural identity.

ARTH:3010 Fakes, Frauds, and Forgeries: The Dark Side of Art History 3 s.h.
How fraudulent artworks have been accepted as genuine and incorporated into the art historical canon, from the famous gold and ivory Minoan snake goddess to paintings purportedly by Rembrandt; the danger frauds pose to our understanding of cultural heritage and historical past, how fakes have impacted the art market, and value of forgeries as indices of contemporary taste and preconceptions about art. Same as MUSM:3010.

ARTH:3020 Paris and the Art of Urban Life 3 s.h.
City of Paris examined in varied historical, artistic, and cultural contexts; interdisciplinary.

ARTH:3090 Contemporary Architecture 3 s.h.
Quality of contemporary-built environments in America, Western Europe, Asia, and Middle East from 1970 to present; stylistic evolution of postmodern design, new urbanism, sustainable architecture; impact of literary and cultural theory on contemporary practitioners such as Daniel Libeskind, Steven Holl.

ARTH:3160 Themes in African Art 3 s.h.
Themes and topics in African art.

ARTH:3225 Modern and Contemporary Art in China 3 s.h.
Introduction to art and culture of 20th- and 21st-century China, covering the period from 1911 to present day; focus on contextualizing art objects, performances, propagandas, and exhibitions produced by government, business sector, curators, avant-garde artists and groups in China; topics include biennales, museums, art districts, luxury brands, and censorship; use of discussions and readings to investigate artworks and events that speak to China's society and economy, as well as its place in globalization and international art market. Same as ASIA:3225.

ARTH:3245 Mountains and Waters: Landscape Art of East Asia 3 s.h.
Shanshui (mountains and waters), commonly translated as landscape, has been one of the most esteemed genres in East Asian visual cultures for over a millennium. Nonetheless, the relationship between landscape, nature, and its visual representation remains in flux. Examine the development of this genre, its transmission and translation across East Asia (China, Korea, and Japan), and its continuous transformation. Same as ASIA:3245.

ARTH:3250 Brushwork in Chinese Art 3 s.h.
In-depth study of history, aesthetics, and techniques of brushwork on multiple forms of material culture; hands-on practical experience in Chinese brushwork; analysis of visual elements of brushwork in Chinese paintings, calligraphy, ceramics, and other artistic forms; synthesis of studio art experience and art historical analysis to provide a deeper practical and aesthetic understanding of Chinese fine art techniques. Same as ASIA:3250.

ARTH:3255 Copy and Paste: Methods of Reproduction in Asian Art 3 s.h.
Introduction to methods of reproduction in Asian art that predates photography, encompassing technologies of graphic reproduction (manual, mechanical, and somewhere in between); exploration of themes including piece-mold bronze casting, stamping and seals, rubbing, molding and mass production, woodblock printing, trace-copying calligraphy, and free-hand copying of paintings; overarching concepts across different subjects (e.g., authorship and authenticity, value of copies and impact on canon formation, relationship between technology and style, question of aura in—and before—the age of mechanical reproduction). Same as ASIA:3255.

ARTH:3310 Celtic and Viking Art 3 s.h.
Art and architecture of Celts and Vikings from prehistory to Middle Ages.

ARTH:3320 Egyptian Art 3 s.h.
Survey of ancient Egypt over 3,500 years with emphasis on art and architecture in context; workshops, patrons, and audiences of Egyptian art; major principles, themes, and meanings of Egyptian art; relationship between writing and artistic representation; connections between art, kingship, and Egyptian view of the world; art and architecture of central elite and other social groups. Same as CLSA:3220, RELS:3704.

ARTH:3325 Kings, Gods, and Heroes: Art of Ancient Mesopotamia and Persia 3 s.h.
Arts, kings, and cultures of Mesopotamia, Syria, and Iran; sculpture, seals, pottery, metalworking, architecture. Same as CLSA:3225.

ARTH:3330 Greek Art in the Age of the Parthenon 3 s.h.
Art and architecture of classical Greece (ca. 480-323 B.C.); monuments of this period—from Parthenon in Athens to Aphrodite of Knidos—often viewed as embodiments of the highest achievements in Western art and culture; classical Greek art within social, political, religious, and historical contexts; role in ancient Greek society and its impact in the 21st century. Same as CLSA:3227.

ARTH:3335 Early Greek Art 3 s.h.
Art and architecture of Early Greece (circa 3000-480 BCE); development of sculpture, architecture, and ceramics. Coverage includes the Greek Bronze Age (Cycladic, Minoan, Mycenaean), and the Iron Age from the Geometric through the Archaic periods. Art and architecture will be assessed in their social, religious, and historical contexts. Same as CLSA:3230.

ARTH:3350 Art of Early Rome: Patrons and Politics 3 s.h.
Examination of architecture, sculpture, and painting in central Italy from c. 800 B.C. to the end of the Roman Republic in 27 B.C.; art in the service of social ideology and political propaganda; funerary art and its relationship to the living; artistic interactions between Etruria, Greece, and Rome. Same as CLSA:3232.

ARTH:3360 Art of the Ancient Roman Empire 3 s.h.
Major developments in architecture, sculpture, and painting from the ascension of Augustus to sole ruler in 31 B.C. to the death of Constantine in A.D. 337; influence of individual emperors on the development of artistic forms; relationship between public and private art; interdependency of Rome and the provinces. Same as CLSA:3233.

ARTH:3370 Life and Death in Ancient Pompeii 3 s.h.
Art and architecture as documents of ancient life in Pompeii, a town that was destroyed during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 C.E.; topics include artistic choices and achievements of the city's inhabitants, roles played by men and women inside and outside the family, slavery, political organization and expression, and attitudes towards death. Same as CLSA:3234.

ARTH:3375 The Great Collision 3 s.h.
Major developments in architecture, sculpture, ceramics, and mosaics in Israel, Palestine, Syria, and Arabia from death of Alexander the Great to rise of Islam (4 B.C.E. to 8 C.E.); Greek and Roman influences versus local traditions; Roman Empire; growth of churches, synagogues, and mosques; identity and religion. Same as CLSA:3275, RELS:3375.

ARTH:3390 Early Medieval Art 3 s.h.
Complex artistic traditions that developed roughly between 300 and 1000 in territories once governed by the Roman Empire and in areas of northern Europe directly influenced by Western Christian tradition; period as not simply a "Dark Age," but a pivotal chapter in history of Western art and culture; group discussion, individual research topics.

ARTH:3400 Romanesque and Gothic Art 3 s.h.
Art and architecture produced in Western Europe from the year 1000 to the Renaissance, a period when works of boldly original character that continue to define the landscape of Europe were created; histories of Romanesque and Gothic styles; shift from monastic to episcopal, civic, and courtly patronage; intersection between art and devotional practice; flowering of medieval urbanism and building technology; intersection between artistic traditions of later Gothic and emerging Renaissance.

ARTH:3420 Gothic Architecture 3 s.h.
Gothic architecture and its history, from varied perspectives (e.g., formal structural, symbolic, geometric, socioeconomic).

ARTH:3440 Geometry in Art: From Prehistory to the Present 3 s.h.
Overviews the process of geometrical form generation in art from prehistory to the present; emphasizes the “Iowa Idea” of synergy between art history and studio practice, arguing that consideration of compositional strategy deserves a more prominent place in the literature on art history than it has usually received.

ARTH:3550 Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo: Rivalry and the Rise of the Artist in the Italian Renaissance 3 s.h.
The arts in Italy 1485-1550.

ARTH:3560 Art in Renaissance Venice 3 s.h.
As a center of trade between East and West, Renaissance Venice became the wealthiest city in Europe and home to many of the greatest artists in the Western tradition; students focus on Venice's revolution in art, as it transformed from depictions of medieval religious imagery to Renaissance subjects and concepts associated with modernity such as image of the reclining nude, psychological portrait, poetic allegory, and the very idea that a visual medium might express an artist's internal feelings or state of mind; exploration and evaluation of workshops including the Bellini, Carpaccio, Giorgione, Titian, Veronese, and Tintoretto from multiple perspectives.

ARTH:3600 History of Printmaking 3 s.h.
History of printmaking from its origins to the present day, following a broadly chronological framework. Students examine the development of major printmaking techniques, including relief, intaglio, lithography, and screen printing, and consider how prints served as powerful vehicles for the transmission of artistic styles and iconography across geographical regions. Highlights the contributions of significant printmakers, situating their work within broader cultural and historical contexts.

ARTH:3700 Rococo to Realism: Making Art Modern in an Age of Revolution 3 s.h.
Developments in French art and culture in a period of artistic, cultural, and political upheavals from the rise of Rococo as a new art style to the innovations of Romanticism and Realism. Topics include the intersections of art with culture and politics, the impact of women artists and patrons, the role of psychology, biology, and the natural sciences in the making of art, the uses of myth, and the rise of modernism. Changes in patronage, the new role of museums and galleries, and innovations in printmaking and book illustration will also be explored. Artists include Watteau, Chardin, Fragonard, Vigee-Lebrun, David, Ingres, Gericault, and Delacroix, among others.

ARTH:3720 The Romantic Revolution 3 s.h.
Transformations in European art and culture 1750-1850, an age of artistic, political, cultural, intellectual crisis and revolutions; major artists, including David, Ingres, Gericault, Delacroix, Goya, Freidrich, Constable, Turner.

ARTH:3730 Impressionism and the Visual Revolution 3 s.h.
Naturalism, Realism, the Impressionist landscape, painting of modern life, new trends in subjectivity and exoticism mid- to late-19th-century European art and culture; Courbet, Manet, Degas, Monet, Renoir, Seurat, Cezanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Ensor, Munch.

ARTH:3740 Manet to Matisse 3 s.h.
Development of modernism and the avant-garde in late 19th- and early 20th-century Paris; intersection of innovation and tradition, literature and art; role of theory and criticism in works of Manet, Degas, Seurat, Cezanne, Gauguin, Rodin, Matisse, and Picasso.

ARTH:3750 Muses, Models, Artists, and Patrons: Women in the Visual Arts 3 s.h.
Women in the visual arts from various perspectives: women as subject and inspiration, as patrons and as artists; role of women in the arts from the late 18th through the early 20th centuries, primarily in Europe, a period that witnessed significant female patronage of the arts, the first modern feminist movements that gave impetus to newly independent women artists, and the transformation of ways in which women were represented in art across genres, including history, myth, portraiture, orientalism, and images of contemporary life; impact of the role of women in art and culture will be critically examined.

ARTH:3820 Modern Art 3 s.h.
Development of modern art from early years of 20th century through 1940s; focus on painting, sculpture, architecture, and photography; progress of Modernism; exploration of major movements including Fauvism, Cubism, and Surrealism.

ARTH:3840 Contemporary Art 3 s.h.
Painting, sculpture, architecture, and photography; developments during late 1960s to present; conceptual art, performance art, neo-abstraction, and picture/theory art with each approached from a global perspective.

ARTH:3850 Pop Art 3 s.h.
Survey of pop art in America, Britain, Europe; focus on developments in painting and sculpture 1950s to early 1960s; continuing influence of Pop Art.

ARTH:3860 Minimalism 3 s.h.
Survey of Minimalism; focus on developments in painting and sculpture during 1960s; continuing influence.

ARTH:3870 History of Photography 3 s.h.
Survey of photography 1839 to present.

ARTH:3980 American Print Culture 3 s.h.
Exploration of a wide range of imagery printed and published in the United States during 19th century (1776-1900); fine art original prints, popular imagery in periodicals and illustrated books, scholarly literature, history of evolving technologies, variety of printed work; shifting reputation of printed art and its makers. Same as UICB:3980.

ARTH:3985 Honors Research in Art History arr.
Research and preparation of thesis. Requirements: honors standing.

ARTH:3990 Topics in Art History 1,3 s.h.
Varied topics.

ARTH:3994 Art History Practicum 1-3 s.h.
Experiential learning in the art world; development of practical skills in art historical research and practice through hands-on experiences.

ARTH:3995 Independent Study in Art History arr.
Advanced work in art history.

ARTH:4070 The Art of Curation: Designing a Museum Exhibition 3 s.h.
Principles and practices of curating art exhibitions within museum settings. Students engage with key issues in exhibition curation through readings and discussions and by critically reviewing museum exhibitions and catalogues. Same as MUSM:4070.

ARTH:4081 The Art Museum: Theory and Practice 3 s.h.
Introduction to different aspects of art museums; emphasis on roles of art historians, especially curatorial practice; current and historical theories and practices of art exhibitions; varying debates of the politics of display; art museum professions; the many facets of art exhibition preparation; the University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art collections. Prerequisites: (MUSM:2001 or ARTH:1040) and (RHET:1030 or RHET:1040 or RHET:1060). Same as MUSM:4081.

ARTH:4999 Capstone Seminar in Art History 3 s.h.
Critical thinking and research; readings in historical development of the discipline, from Renaissance to present; methodological issues. Offered fall semesters.

ARTH:5000 History and Methods 3 s.h.
Essential foundation of critical thinking and research in the history of art; students survey the historical development of the discipline of art history from Renaissance to present; various methodological paradigms that have been deployed in the field; for beginning graduate students.

ARTH:6020 Art History Colloquium 1 s.h.
Current topics and research in art history. Requirements: art history graduate standing.

ARTH:6040 Directed Studies arr.

ARTH:6100 Graduate Practicum in Art History 3 s.h.
Exploration of current methodologies and practices central to the discipline of art history. Students engage with a variety of practical frameworks and research methods, critically analyzing how these approaches shape the study and interpretation of art in different periods and cultures.

ARTH:6210 Graduate Seminar in Asian Art 3 s.h.
Key themes and issues in Asian art.

ARTH:6300 Graduate Seminar in Ancient Art 3 s.h.
Key themes and issues in ancient art. Same as CLSA:6200.

ARTH:6440 Seminar: Problems in Medieval Art 3 s.h.
Major issues, methodologies.

ARTH:6545 Graduate Seminar in Renaissance Art 3 s.h.
Key themes and issues in Renaissance art.

ARTH:6740 Graduate Seminar: Nineteenth-Century Art 3 s.h.

ARTH:6840 Seminar: Modern/Contemporary Art 3 s.h.
Major issues, methodologies.

ARTH:7010 PhD Readings arr.

ARTH:7020 PhD Thesis arr.