

Masaryk University
Faculty of Arts

Department of Art History
Spring Semester 2023

Image, Object, Text: Theories and Methods in Art History and Visual Studies

Code: DU1905 **Credits:** 8

COURSE OUTLINE

SYNOPSIS

This course looks at the methods and theoretical underpinning of contemporary practices of art historical and visual cultural analysis. Based on examination of ideas and the close reading of key scholarly texts, the course will engage both with traditional art historical methods as well as more recent approaches to the study of art and visual culture.

The course will consider how conceptual frameworks inform the analysis of specific works of art and architecture. It also considers how they determine the kinds of questions that are asked of them. You will be asked to consider the relevance and application of these methods to a range of examples, including the potential topics your final thesis.

Practical Information

The course co-ordinator is Prof. Matthew Rampley.

All queries concerning the organization of the course are to be directed to me. I can be contacted either by email: rampley@muni.cz or directly at my office in L62 the Faculty of Arts Building (on Veveří 28).

The course will be taught in **English**.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of this module, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate a critical knowledge and understanding of historiographic methods relevant to the study of art history and visual culture
- Demonstrate a critical knowledge and understanding of the ideas of key historians and theorists of art, architecture and visual culture
- Identify, analysis and evaluate methods used in selected texts on the history of art and visual culture
- Apply a variety of relevant analytical methods to the interpretation of works of art and visual culture
- Exhibit advanced writing and oral skills

HOW THE COURSE WILL BE TAUGHT

In keeping with the University policy, the course will be taught **in-person**.

MODULE SCHEDULE

The course will be taught from **12.00 – 14.30** on the following **Thursdays**:

23 February	Observing art: facts, meaning, theory
2 March	Canon wars: the objects and values of art history
23 March	Style, form and the social history of art
6 April	Concepts of iconology
20 April	Horizontal art history and the politics of the periphery
4 May	The Gaze, Sexuality and the Nude
18 May	Postcolonial critique: decolonizing the discipline

The sessions will take place in room **L21** in the **Faculty of Arts Building** on **Veveř 28**.

Each session will consist of an informal **lecture / discussion**. In addition, all students will be required to give a short (15-minute) oral presentation on a topic. I shall also schedule a **1-to-1 tutorial** with each of you to discuss your ideas for the essay.

You will receive informal written feedback on your presentation. This will **not** contribute towards the overall mark for this course. It is merely meant to help you to identify strengths and weaknesses you may need to address in preparation for the formal assessment.

ASSESSMENT AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The course will be assessed on the basis of a **20-minute oral presentation**, followed by a 10-minute discussion, on **either** a single artwork on display in the collections of the Moravian Gallery and the Moravian Regional Museum **or** a significant public work of architecture / art in Brno.

Your presentation should look at your chosen example in the light of one or more of the ideas, methods and theories you have studied during the course. You should be able to explain the reasons for your decision to use that particular method and explain how it shapes our understanding of the object in question. You will be expected to make relevant comparisons with other works of art and also to refer to relevant works of scholarship and critical commentary.

You will give your presentation *in front of the work* on display. At the end of your presentation, you will be asked to submit any notes you have been using. Your notes should include a bibliography of the research sources you have used for your presentation. The presentations will be scheduled to take place in the beginning of June.

The presentation will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Research: is the presentation well researched and are its claims based on appropriate use of sources?
2. Understanding: does the presentation display a good level of understanding of the materials / ideas it discusses?
3. Analysis: does the presentation undertake an appropriate critical analysis of source material?
4. Argument: does the presentation present a clearly constructed argument, with a conclusion?
5. Relevance: are the material and the arguments used relevant to the work in question?
6. Language: is the presentation in clear and correct English?

GENERAL READING

The following reading list includes books and articles that will be discussed in the individual sessions as well as general, background, reading. The reading for each session includes **key reading** that you will be expected to have prepared *before* the session. You are *not* expected to have read all the items listed for each session. Equally, it is expected that for your assessed essay, you will undertake your own research and reading beyond what is listed in this bibliography.

Please note: as far as is practical, all items will be available on the Learning Materials folder of the Faculty intranet.

You can find the link [here](#).

GENERAL READING

You should find the following general books useful as an introduction to the topic. There are copies in the library.

- Michael Hatt and Charlotte Klonk, *Art history: a critical introduction to its methods* (Manchester, 2006)
- Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff, eds., *Critical terms for art history* (Chicago, 2003).
- Matthew Rampley, ed., *Art History and Visual Studies in Europe: Transnational Discourses and National Frameworks* (Leiden, 2012)

READING FOR INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS

OBSERVING ART: FACTS, MEANING, THEORY

Key Reading

- Paul Barolsky, 'Art History as Fiction,' *Artibus et Historiae* 17.34 (1996) pp. 9-17.
- Moriz Thausing, 'The Status of Art History as an Academic Discipline' in *Journal of Art Historiography* 1 (2009). You should also read the introduction by Karl Johns.

Recommended Reading

- Robert Bagley, 'Style,' in *Max Loehr and the Study of Chinese Bronzes* (Ithaca, 2008) pp. 121-29.
- Paul Barolsky, 'Art History and Positivism,' *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 18.1 (1998) pp. 27-30.
- James Elkins, 'On Monstrously Ambiguous Paintings,' *History and Theory* 32.3 (1993) pp. 227-47.
- David Freedberg et al, 'The Object of Art History,' *Art Bulletin* 76.3 (1994) pp. 394-410
- Clifford Geertz, 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture' in Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973) pp. 3-32.
- Leo Steinberg, 'The Sexuality of Christ in the Renaissance and in Modern Oblivion,' *October* 25 (1983) pp. 1-222.

CANON WARS: THE OBJECTS AND VALUES OF ART HISTORY

Key Reading

- Whitney Chadwick, 'Art History and the Woman Artist,' in Chadwick, *Women, Art and Society* (London, 2020) no pages, e-version.
- Hubert Locher, 'The Idea of the Canon and Canon Formation in Art History' in M. Rampley, eds, *Art History and Visual Studies in Europe* (Leiden, 2012) pp. 29-40

Recommended Reading

- Karen Edis Barzman, 'Beyond the Canon: Feminists, Postmodernism and the History of Art,' in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52.3 (1994) pp. 327-39.
- Victor Ginsburgh and Sheila Weyers, 'On the Formation of Canons: The Dynamics of Narratives in Art History,' *Empirical Studies of the Arts* 28.1 (2010) pp. 37-72.
- Joseph Leo Koerner and Lisbet Rausing, 'Value,' in Robert Nelson and Richard Schiff, eds, *Critical Terms for Art History* (Chicago 2003) pp. 419-34.
- Linda Nochlin, 'Why have there been no great women artists?' in *Art News* May 30 2015. Available online at:
- Griselda Pollock, 'Crafty Women and the Hierarchy of the Arts,' in *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (London, 2013) pp. 50-81.

STYLE, FORM AND THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF ART

Key Reading

- Craig Clunas, 'The Social History of Art,' in Robert Nelson and Richard Schiff, eds, *Critical Terms for Art History* (Chicago 2003) pp. 465-78.

Recommended Reading

- Frederick Antal, 'Economic, Social and Political History' in Antal, *Florentine Painting and its Social Background* (London, 1947) pp. 11-37.
- Michael Baxandall, 'The Period Eye,' in Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-century Italy: a Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford, 1988) pp. 29-57
- T. J. Clark, 'On the Social History of Art,' in *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (London, 1973) pp. 9-20.
- Thomas Crow, 'Modernism and Mass Culture in the Visual Arts' in Crow, *Modern Art in the Common Culture* (London, 1996) pp. 3-38.
- Andrea Pinotti, 'Formalism and the History of Style' in Rampley et al, eds., *Art History and Visual Studies in Europe*, pp. 75-90
- Meyer Schapiro, 'Style' in Alfred Kroeber, ed., *Anthropology Today* (Chicago, 1953) pp. 287-311.
- Joshua Shannon, 'The Role of Form in the Social History of Art,' in Anthony E. Grudin and Robert Slifkin, eds, *The Present Prospects of Social History of Art* (London, 2021) pp. 159-74.

CONCEPTS OF ICONOLOGY

Key Reading

- Peter Burke, 'Iconography,' in Burke, *The Italian Renaissance* (Oxford 2014) pp. 171-85.
- Erwin Panofsky, 'Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art,' in Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Harmondsworth, 1955) pp. 51-81.

Recommended Reading

- Svetlana Alpers, 'Interpretation without Representation, or The Viewing of *Las Meñinas*' in *Representations* 1 (1983) pp. 30-42.
- Georges Didi-Huberman, 'The art of not describing: Vermeer - the detail and the patch,' *History of the Human Sciences* 2.2 (1989) pp. 135-69.
- Clifford Geertz, 'Art as a Cultural System' in Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York, 1983) pp. 94-120.
- Creighton Gilbert, 'On Subject and Not-Subject in Italian Renaissance Pictures,' *Art Bulletin* 34.3 (1952) pp.
- Keith Moxey, 'Panofsky's Concept of Iconology and the Problem of Interpretation in the History of Art,' *New Literary History* 17.2 (1986) pp. 265-74.
- Erwin Panofsky, 'Reality and Symbol in Early Flemish Painting,' in Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting, its Origins and Character* (New York, 1966) pp. 131-48

HORIZONTAL ART HISTORY AND THE POLITICS OF THE PERIPHERY

Key Reading

- Piotr Piotrowski, 'Towards a Horizontal Art History of the European Avant-Garde' in Sascha Bru et al, eds, *Europa Europa: The Avant-Garde, Modernism and the Fate of a Continent* (Berlin, 2009) pp. 49-58.

Further Reading

- Enrico Castelnuovo, Carlo Ginzburg, 'Symbolic Domination and Artistic Geography in Italian Art History,' in *Art in Translation* 1.1 (2015) pp. 5-48.
- James Elkins, 'Review of Stephen Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe*,' *Art Bulletin* 82.4 (2000) pp. 781-85.
- Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, 'Peripheral Circulations, Transient Centralities: The International Geography of the Avant-Gardes in the Interwar Period (1918-1940)' *Visual Resources* 35 (2019) pp. 295-322.
- Thomas Dacosta Kaufmann, 'The Challenge of Central Europe to the Historiography of Art' in *Maske u. Kothurn* 48.1-4 (2002) pp. 19-28.
- Claudia Mattos, 'Whither Art History: Geography, Art Theory and New Perspectives for an Inclusive Art History,' *Art Bulletin* 96.3 (2014) pp. 259-64.
- Robert Nelson, 'The Map of Art History,' *Art Bulletin* 79.1 (1997) pp. 28-40
- Matthew Rampley, 'Networks, Horizons, Centres and Hierarchies: On the Challenges of Writing on Modernism in Central Europe,' *Umění* 69.2 (2021) pp. 145-62.
- Photeini Vlachou, 'Why Spatial? Time and the Periphery,' *Visual Resources* 32 (2016) pp. 9-24

THE GAZE, SEXUALITY AND THE NUDE

Key Reading

- Margaret Olin, 'Gaze,' in Robert Nelson and Richard Schiff, eds, *Critical Terms for Art History* (Chicago, 2003) pp. 318-29

Further Reading

- Sir Kenneth Clarke, 'The Naked and the Nude,' in *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form* (Princeton, 1990) pp. 3-29.
- Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Matthews, 'The Feminist Critique of Art History,' *The Art Bulletin* 69.3 (1987) pp. 326-57
- Helen MacDonald, 'Feminism, Ambiguity and the Ideal,' *Erotic Ambiguities: the Female Nude in Art* (London, 2000) pp. 7-30.
- Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality* (London, 1992).
- Griselda Pollock, 'Feminist Interventions in the Histories of Art,' in Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Feminism, Femininity and Histories of Art* (London, 2003) pp. 37-60.
- Tereza Balducci, 'Gazing Women,' in *Gender, Space and the Gaze in Post-Haussmann Visual Culture* (London, 2017) pp. 63-110.
- Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,' *Screen* 16.3 (1975) pp. 6-18.

POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE: DECOLONIZING THE DISCIPLINE

Key Reading

- Catherine Grant and Dorothy Price, 'Decolonizing Art History,' *Art History* 43.1 (2020) pp. 8-66
- Partha Mitter, 'Decentering Modernism: Art History and Avant-Garde Art from the Periphery,' *Art Bulletin* 90.4 (2008) pp. 531-48

Further Reading

- Annie Coombes, 'Ethnography, Popular Culture, and Institutional Power: Narratives of Benin Culture in the British Museum, 1897–1992,' *Studies in the History of Art* 47 (1996) pp. 142-57.
- Filip Herza, 'Black Don Juan and the Ashanti from Ash: Representations of Africans in Prague and Vienna, 1892-99' in Adéla Jůnová Macková, Lucie Storchová, Libor Jůn, eds, *Visualizing The Orient: Central Europe And The Near East In The 19th And 20th Centuries* (Prague, 2016) pp. 95-106.
- James Elkins, 'Non-European Stories,' in Elkins, *Stories of Art* (London, 2002) pp. 89-115.
- Éva Kovács, 'Black Bodies, White Bodies – 'Gypsy' Images in Central Europe at the Turn of the Twentieth Century (1880–1920),' *Critical Romani Studies*, 3.2 (2020) pp. 72-94.
- James Elkins, 'Canon and Globalization in Art History,' in Anna Brzyski, ed., *Partisan Canons* (Durham, NC, 2007) pp. 55-78.
- Matthew Rampley, 'Decolonizing Central Europe: Czech Art and the Question of Colonial Innocence,' *Visual Resources* 37.1 (2022) pp. 1-30.