COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Provides a forum for the examination of the historiography of art history and the various methodologies and ideologies that inform current academic practice in the field of art history, visual culture and studies in representation.

This seminar provides a forum for the examination of the historiography of art history and the various methodologies and ideologies that inform current academic practice in the field of art history, visual culture and studies in representation. The course raises the question of how art historians can interrogate practice, both theirs and that of their object of inquiry. In an attempt to answer this question, students will learn to interpret complex theoretical strategies employed by art historians and will evaluate their own practice in light of various methodologies.

INSTRUCTOR(S)

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Section / Format / Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>El-Sheikh, Tammer</td>
<td>Sec. A / SEMR / F</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tammer75@yorku.ca">tammer75@yorku.ca</a></td>
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SPECIAL FEATURES

Meeting time:  Wednesdays, 2:30 - 5:30
Classroom: GCFA 257
Instructor: Tammer El-Sheikh
Office: GCFA 264
Office hours: Wednesdays, 10:00 - 12:00, or by appointment.
Email: tammer75@yorku.ca

SPECIAL FEATURES: In this seminar, we will explore the historical and contemporary methods art historians use to understand and derive meaning from artworks. A methodology is a strategy for applying a theory to (and testing it against) an artwork. This process is likely to reveal something about both the theory and the object being studied. The goal of the course is primarily to provide you with a methodological toolbox from which to draw on throughout your career as you research and write about visual culture. It also seeks to provide a concise (and yet partial) history of the discipline to help you identify and contextualize the theories and methods that you encounter when reading art historical texts. Being able to identify the assumptions and techniques of other authors will help a great deal in critically evaluating their texts and digging out what you find valuable in them. Although I have, as you probably do, strong opinions on many of the subjects we discuss, the point of the course is certainly not to arrive collectively at a “correct” method or collection of methods, but to allow each author we read the opportunity to state their case using their strongest arguments, while also submitting these ideas to rigorous scrutiny. In the end you will be the judge of which methods work best for you.
FORMAT: Three-hour weekly seminar with assigned readings to serve as the basis for presentation and discussion. Participation is mandatory and since participation requires your presence in the classroom, attendance is mandatory as well.

GRADED ASSESSMENT:
Participation: 20%
Presentations on Readings: 10%
Methodology Exercise (Due in class on October 23): 15%
End of Term Presentation: 15%
Historiography Assignment (Due in class on November 27). No late papers will be accepted.): 40%
The last day to drop this course without receiving a grade is November 8.

PRESENTATIONS ON READINGS:
Students will present on the weekly readings, beginning with the 2nd week of class. The presentations will be between 10 and 20 minutes, depending on the length and complexity of the text. The presentations should do two main things:
1. Briefly introduce the author and explain how you think the essay relates to the other assigned readings for that day.
2. Outline the key arguments and the conceptual difficulties that the reading presents. (And you should be prepared to discuss how the ideas in each reading may be further applied as a method.)

MANDATORY MEETING WITH ME:
You are required to make an appointment with me within the first four weeks of class to discuss your progress on the Methodology Exercise and Historiography Assignment.

METHODOLOGY EXERCISE (Due in class on October 23):
This assignment is designed to help you work through the stages of designing a methodology without the requirement of a finished research paper. Choose an historical art object or building that intrigues or challenges you in some way and has been around for at least 30 years—that is, long enough for it to have been already studied by previous generations of researchers. Consult a database or a published catalogue for information about it. This work may also be the subject of your final bibliographic assignment.
1. Write a one-paragraph description of what you think will be your research subject, including aspects of archive-related materials, experiences, or interpretive theories. This is your starting point. Work online (using York Library catalogue, other libraries, e-journals, etc. – reading the abstracts, etc.) in order to identify potential research and interpretive approaches for the object. Spend some time finding and reading the most pertinent materials.
2. Revise into a 3-4 page research proposal. The proposal should answer the following questions:
3. a) What will you study? (What is the subject and the object of study?) Why are you doing this research? What materials and methods will you draw on? Why? Consider more theoretical as well as relatively traditional methods and archival sources. What will your project contribute to the knowledge of the discipline? Remember to clearly articulate your subject and why this project would be worth doing.
4. b) Include an annotated bibliography for at least 10 source documents. Add a note for each source that you provide, stating succinctly why it is relevant to your project.
5. c) Include a 2-page reflection on the research exercise. Critically assess your process. What worked and why? What have you learned from this exercise? In what ways might this project inform your MRP research? (How might this affect how you think about your research? Try to speculate about connections).
NOTE: This will NOT be a completed research paper. Rather, it serves as an exercise in methods and research practices. It helps to make more transparent the often unarticulated process of selection in which researchers engage.

Consult various websites for tips on writing good proposals, such as:
HISTORIOGRAPHY ASSIGNMENT (Due in class on November 27):
In this final course assignment, you will work with the object you chose for the Methodology Exercise OR you may choose a different well-documented object or building. You will then produce a 12-15 page historiography of the work. That is, you will research the object widely, looking for not only the most current texts but also historical sources. The objective is to identify and critically analyze the various approaches to this particular work of art. You should be able to derive a thesis from your findings and this will guide you in the organization and writing of your paper. For some artworks, you will find an embarrassment of riches and will have to select two or three writers to compare and contrast. In analyzing the interpretations and judgments you encounter, you should draw on the readings and discussions from class. Your paper should have a substantial, well-researched, and properly formatted bibliography. Some of the texts not discussed at length in the paper should be annotated in the bibliography.

Late papers will not be accepted. Length: 12-15 pages (including bibliography and images), typewritten and double-spaced in 12 point font. I do not accept papers via email. Please keep a copy of your paper and hand in the original to me in class (on or before November 27). A note on internet sources: Only legitimate academic internet journals are allowed as possible sources. Wikipedia, to name but one example, is not a legitimate research tool or academic source and should not form part of your research or bibliographical material. In addition to JStor, I strongly suggest that you use art-related research databases: these include the Art Index, International Bibliography of Art (IBA), and the Bibliography of the History of Art (BHA), all accessible at the York Library, to locate scholarly articles relevant to your topic (Note: “Jstor” is not the name of a journal). Secondary source material must be properly cited with quotation marks and footnotes (please follow either MLA or Chicago Manual of Style). Failure to credit any source in your paper is plagiarism, which is a serious offence. Please remember to proofread your paper, checking grammar, syntax, spelling, and punctuation.

PARTICIPATION:
In order to receive a good participation grade, one must regularly and actively contribute to classroom discussion. Of course, in order to participate effectively and well, one needs to attend class regularly and avoid distracting fellow students (e.g., texting, being online, arriving late, leaving the classroom during lectures, etc.).

A NOTE ON COURTESY IN MY CLASSES:
Please be considerate of others. It is not ok to use smart phones during class time. It not ok to text or to be online during class time (please wait until the break). It is not ok to leave the classroom during a lecture, to arrive late, or to leave class early; if you need to do so, please let me know the reason ahead of time. Failure to comply with these rules will result in a very low Participation grade.

ACCESSIBILITY: York University is committed to making reasonable accommodations and adaptations in order to make equitable the educational experience of students with special needs (physical, learning, and psychiatric disabilities) and to promote their full integration into the campus community. Please let your professor know immediately if you have any concerns or require assistance with regard to class participation or the completion of your course assignments.

REQUIRED TEXT: Donald Preziosi, The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology, new (2nd) edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). Additional material is available on moodle, through JSTOR or other online sources, as assigned in the schedule below.

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change):
Week 1 (September 4): Introduction
Required reading: Preziosi, Introduction to The Art of Art History

Week 2 (September 11): Formalism and Style
2. Alois Riegl, "Leading Characteristics of the Late Roman Kunstwollen."
3. Ernst Gombrich, "Style."

Additional: Preziosi's Introduction to "Style" chapter

Week 3 (September 18): Marxism and the Social History of Art

Week 4 (September 25): Iconography, Structuralism, and Semiotics
1. Erwin Panofsky, "Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art."
2. Hubert Damisch, "Semiotics and Iconography."

Additional: Preziosi's Introduction to "Mechanisms of Meaning" chapter

Week 5 (October 2): Psychoanalysis and Feminism

Week 6 (October 9): Feminism and Gender Studies

Additional: Preziosi's Introduction to "Identity" chapter

Week 7 (October 16): Reading Week (No Class)

Week 8 (October 23): Poststructuralism and Deconstruction
1. Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?”

Additional: Preziosi's Introduction to "Deconstruction" chapter
Week 9 (October 30): Poststructuralism and Deconstruction II

Week 10 (November 6): Postcolonialism, Museology, and Visual Studies
2. Carol Duncan, “The Museum as Ritual.”

Additional: Preziosi's Introduction to “Globalization” chapter

Week 11 (November 13): More Gender, Memory, and Identity Issues
2. Mary Kelly, "Re-Viewing Modernist Criticism."

Week 12 (November 20): Student Presentations
Week 13 (November 27): Student Presentations

Selected Additional Sources (Articles available on Jstor):


Newall, Diana and Grant Pooke, eds. *Fifty Key Texts in Art History.* London: Routledge, 2012 [1 day]


Other relevant series of publications: Art and its Histories (published by The Open University) and Clark Studies in the Visual Arts (published by the Clark Art Institute).

Many courses utilize Moodle, York University's course website system. If your course is using Moodle, click here to access it.

Moodle @ York University