

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Cooper Union is committed to the principle that an education in the liberal arts provides the ethical, social and humanistic framework crucial to personal development and professional excellence. Through their work in the humanities and social sciences, students gain a deeper awareness of the world in which they must live and act. They learn to think, write and speak clearly and effectively. Most significantly, an education in the liberal arts offers students the opportunity to become attentive to the social and humanistic implications of their professional work and to acquire the basis for a satisfying cultural and intellectual life.

Curriculum All students take a four-semester core curriculum of required courses in the humanities and social sciences. In addition, students in the School of Art take a required sequence in art history. The core curriculum is a prerequisite to all elective offerings in Humanities and Social Sciences. During the third and fourth years, students have considerable latitude to explore the humanities and social sciences through elective courses. All students are expected to take core curriculum courses at The Cooper Union.

Transfer Credit Transfer credits may be granted for courses with a grade of **B** or better upon review by the office of the dean of Humanities and Social Sciences to determine that the work accomplished meets the Faculty's requirements. Students may be required to provide evidence of work completed in the course: syllabi, papers, etc. In rare circumstances, the freshman and sophomore requirements may be waived if an equivalent course of study has been satisfactorily completed elsewhere. Eligible credits should be transferred during a student's first semester at The Cooper Union. Interested students should make an appointment with the dean or the academic adviser of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences during the first week of classes in the fall semester.

Advanced Placement Credit The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences rarely grants AP credit. However, a student who has attained a grade of 5 in an AP course may petition the dean for permission to waive a core requirement and to substitute an appropriate elective course.

Independent Study Only juniors and seniors in good academic standing are eligible for independent study. Independent study may be taken for a maximum of three credits per semester. The student must obtain permission of both the instructor and the dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The major consideration in approving proposals for independent study is the educational value of the study project within the structure of the degree requirements. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences insists on very high standards as a condition for approving any independent study project.

Minor Students who complete a minimum of 15 upper-division credits in a specific field of liberal arts may qualify for a minor in that field of Humanities and Social Sciences. Minors are offered and may be designated on student transcripts in the following four fields: American Studies, Art History, Literature, and History and Society. Additional information is available from the office of the dean of Humanities and Social Sciences.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

Credits Unless otherwise noted, **HSS** courses with the prefixes **HUM** and **SS** carry three credits and courses with the prefix **HTA** carry two credits.

Prerequisites The prerequisites for all courses with the prefixes **HUM** and **SS** are **HSS1**, 2, 3 and 4. **HTA 1**, 2 and 3 or **HTA 101** and 102 are prerequisites for **HTA** electives. Exceptions may be granted by special permission of the dean.

Grades At the end of every semester, each student receives a grade for his or her semester's work in each subject. Grades, with their official significance, are as follows:

- A** Outstanding performance
- B** Very good performance
- C** Average performance
- D** Passing but unsatisfactory
- F** Failure to meet minimum requirements
- I** Work of the course not completed and assignment of grade and credit postponed. This designation will be given only in cases of illness (confirmed by authorized physician's letter) or of other documented extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control, and only with the approval of the dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The deadline for removal of an **I** designation will be determined by the instructor, but will not be later than six weeks after the start of the spring semester for students who receive such a grade in the fall semester and not later than two weeks after the start of the fall semester for students who receive such a grade in the spring semester. If the **I** is not removed within the set time limit, either by completing the work in the subject or by passing a reexamination, the **I** will automatically become an **F** unless the dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences extends the time or the student withdraws from school.

W Withdrawal (see below)

WU Unauthorized withdrawal (see below)

Indicators of plus (+) and minus (-) are used with the grades **A**, **B**, **C** and **D**. (The grade of **A+** is, however, not given.) These indicators are included in computing grade point averages.

Change of Program

Adding a Course A student is permitted to add a course only during the first week of a semester, during the drop/add period, and only with the adviser's approval.

Adding a course after the drop/add period is not permitted even if the student has been attending the class.

Dropping a Course A student may drop a course during the first week of the semester, during the drop/add period, with the adviser's approval.

A course dropped during the first week of the semester will be deleted from the transcript.

Withdrawing from a Course A student anticipating inability to continue an assigned program should immediately see his or her adviser. After the drop/add period a student may withdraw from a course through the eighth week of the semester. It is the student's responsibility to obtain the necessary permission from the adviser and to notify the instructor in order to withdraw from a course. A grade of **W** will appear on the transcript. A student who stops attending a course without permission of the adviser will receive a grade of **WU**. However, if the student is failing the course at the time of the unauthorized withdrawal, the instructor is free to record a grade of **F**.

A student is not permitted to drop or withdraw from a course if doing so would impede satisfactory progress towards the degree.

Assignments Students are required to complete all assignments and examinations on time. In the case of schedule conflict or an unavoidable delay in completing an assignment, the student should discuss the problem with his or her instructor. Failure to complete assignments on time may result in an **F** grade for the course.

Attendance Students are expected to attend all classes. No more than the equivalent of one week of unexcused absences will be permitted. In the event of absence a student should contact the instructor in advance. Students who miss more than the equivalent of one week of classes in any one course may receive a reduction of the final grade or, at the discretion of the instructor, may be required to withdraw from the course.

Lateness Students are expected to be punctual. Late students may be refused entry to a class. Chronic, unexcused lateness may result in a reduction of the final grade or in failure.

Academic Integrity The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences expects all students to demonstrate the highest levels of academic integrity. Violations of academic integrity have consequences, including, but not limited to, failure for the course. Further information concerning the policy on academic integrity is available from the dean's office.

Student Behavior Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the guidelines in the "Code of Conduct" (see page 30).

ACADEMIC ADVISING AND SUPPORT

Academic Advising In addition to the dean, an academic adviser is available in the office of Humanities and Social Sciences for consultation by students in all three schools. Students are also encouraged to seek the advice of individual faculty members about general curricular and scholarly matters. A course instructor may not sign add/drop forms, determine transfer or AP credits, or pre-approve courses to be taken elsewhere. Such questions must be referred to the dean's office.

The Center for Writing The communication of ideas in written and oral form is central to an education in the liberal arts. All humanities, social sciences and art history courses include a substantial writing requirement and additional requirements for presentations. The Center for Writing offers feedback, support, and instruction in all areas of written and spoken communication. The Center is staffed by experienced teachers, writers and editors, most with advanced graduate degrees. The Center offers one-on-one and small group sessions; students may sign up for single appointments as needed or may enroll for regularly scheduled ongoing sessions. Center associates provide feedback, work with students on issues of structure and argument and help all writers—regardless of level—to engage with their work more effectively. The Center also offers special support for non-native English speakers, students with learning difficulties, and students without a strong background in writing, as well as intensive support for students working on Fulbright and other grants.

COURSES

Courses in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Art History and Foreign Languages

Prior to registration each semester, students should consult the latest announcement of scheduled courses in the humanities, social sciences, and art history. (Inquiries concerning courses in foreign languages should be directed to Professor Sohnya Sayres, Academic Adviser for HSS, during the first week of the fall semester.) Some courses listed below may not be offered every year and new courses may be added each semester.

Core Curriculum

HSS I Freshman Seminar

A literature course concentrating on poetry and drama. Selected texts from antiquity and the Renaissance are common to all sections, with works from other genres, periods and cultures chosen by individual instructors. The course develops aesthetic appreciation of literary texts and encourages a range of critical responses. Through close reading and extended discussion students learn to articulate their responses in written and spoken form. *3 credits*

HSS 2 Texts and Contexts: Old Worlds and New

A study of texts and topics from 1500 to 1800, with emphasis on literary expression and cultural context. Topics include the formation of states, exploration, the encounter with the New World, the crises in religious orthodoxy, the origins of modern science and the beginnings of political and economic individualism. This semester develops both cultural and political understanding through close reading, class discussion and careful writing. *3 credits*

HSS 3 The Making of Modern Society

A study of the key political, social and intellectual developments of modern Europe in global context. This course is organized chronologically, beginning with the Industrial and French Revolutions. Students develop an understanding of the political grammar and material bases of the present day by exploring the social origins of conservatism, liberalism, feminism, imperialism and totalitarianism. In discussions and in lectures students learn to study and to respond critically in written and spoken form to a variety of historical documents and secondary texts. *3 credits*

HSS 4 The Modern Context: Figures and Topics

A study of an important figure or topic from the modern period whose influence extends into contemporary culture. The figures and subjects are chosen from a broad range of disciplines (including literature, history, politics, technology and art history, among others). Through concentration on a single figure or focused topic students are encouraged to develop a deep awareness of works of great significance and to understand them in the context of modernity. Guided independent writing projects and oral presentations give students an appreciation for what constitutes research in the humanities and social sciences. Recent topics have included Beckett, humanitarianism, the tourist, and Borges. *3 credits*

May be repeated for Free Elective credit in the Schools of Art and Engineering. May be repeated for Elective credit in the School of Architecture, provided the minimum requirement of six elective credits in Humanities and Social Sciences is fulfilled by elective-level courses. In both cases, permission of the dean of humanities and social sciences is required.

Note: The Center for Writing provides targeted support for HSS Core courses. Associates are available to work on all aspects of essay writing, including close reading, analysis, development of ideas, planning and structure, writing in stages, arguments and conclusions, and revision. Associates are also available to help students prepare for presentations and public speaking in the HSS Core. Center associates can help you to organize your thinking, to challenge yourself and to create better, more engaged, more interesting work through focused discussion and targeted writing work. Students from all writing backgrounds are encouraged to make use of the Center. Students may make one-time appointments or may choose to enroll in ongoing sessions for a particular semester. Sessions tend to fill up quickly, and students are encouraged to make appointments in advance. Students working on specific written or spoken communication issues (ESL, learning differences, writing skills difficulties) are strongly encouraged to enroll in ongoing sessions early in the semester.

Elective Courses

HUMANITIES

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences offers a varied and flexible elective program that provides rigorous study while responding to the changing needs of students.

HUM 105 Fundamentals of Music

A study of the elements and forms of music and consideration of how they define the stylistic characteristics of the literature of music from the late Renaissance to the present. There will be extensive use of recordings, as well as attendance at concerts and recitals. *3 credits*

HUM 107 Creative Writing

Starting with exercises and word games, then moving to, e.g., the objective poem, collage and concrete poetry, metrics, translations. As well as writing, students are expected to read widely in poetry and fiction. Attendance at a poetry or prose reading is obligatory. Grade based on class performance and portfolio of work. *3 credits*

HUM 129 Environmental Literature

In this class, we will look at ways of imagining and approaching the natural environment through writing, ranging from travelogue to activism. Readings will include essays, poetry and fiction by Wordsworth, Thoreau, Carson, Abbey and others. Topics for reading and writing will center on such issues as encounters with nature, sustainability, species extinction and global warming. *3 credits*

HUM 207 Music Cultures of the World

Examines music from a variety of musical cultures around the world, from Native American to Indonesian Gamelan music, including ethnic musical events in New York City. *3 credits*

HUM 208 Aristophanes

Athenian Old Comedy is one of the timelessly funniest and widest-ranging forms of comedy ever produced. In this course we will read, perform (selections), and examine four plays by Aristophanes, the greatest of ancient comic playwrights: *Frogs*, *Clouds*, *Birds*, and *Wasps*, each named for the characters assumed by its masked chorus. Aristophanes' irreverent portrait of the philosopher Socrates in *Clouds* will be weighed against Plato's more flattering, and ultimately more influential version in the *Apology*, which we will also read. Slides will be shown to recreate the stunning visual environment of Periclean Athens which literally and figuratively formed the backdrop to the original performances of the plays. This broadly based course will encompass a little military and political history, a little art history, a little social history, a little literary criticism, and a lot of fun.

3 credits

HUM 230 Postmodernism and Technology

This course will explore postmodern theory and practice and its relationship to the problems and solutions posed by technology in contemporary society.

3 credits

HUM 242 Greek Mythology

The course will concentrate not just on the endlessly fascinating stories of the gods drawn from the classic sources, but on a critical analysis of the question: How do the gods fare throughout the course of western history? Periods to be focused on include the time of Homer, Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns; the Archaic period (the time of the Lyric poets); the high Classical period (the golden age of Greek tragedy); the late Classical and Hellenistic periods (the age of the great philosophers and their schools); the Augustan era of the Roman Empire (the time of Virgil and Ovid); and the Renaissance.

3 credits

HUM 243 The Fairy Tale

This course introduces students to the main features of folk and fairy tales as well as with the developments of such tales through history and across cultures and geographies. As historical constructs, folk and fairy tales reveal significant aspects of the cultures in which they are created and recreated. Thus, while our course focuses on folk and fairy tales in their original contexts, it will end by considering the work they perform in such diverse modern appropriations as Disney cartoons,

gaming, and the men's movement. We will read several folk and fairy tales from each of the major collections of Western Europe, West Africa, the Middle East, South and East Asia. Our investigation will be interdisciplinary, with our critical approach drawing from literary, sociological-historical, psychoanalytic, folklorist, feminist, and film studies.

3 credits

HUM 249 Homer and the Tragic Vision

An in-depth introduction to Homer's *Iliad* and to the major literary genre it spawned, Greek tragedy. The methodology throughout will be close reading, using comparative translations of select passages checked alongside the original Greek text, with the instructor's guidance. This course is meant to "model" a particular approach to the study of literature in translation. It presents an opportunity for interested but "Greekless" students to experience some of the most important and influential works of classical literature in a manner that approximates as closely as possible the experience of those who do have knowledge of ancient Greek.

3 credits

HUM 250 Shakespeare

A course devoted to understanding how the plays work, what characters say and do, the imagery and thematics of Shakespeare's dramas and the performance practices of the Elizabethan and Jacobean era. Also to be addressed is the cultural milieu of the plays—the historical, political and religious world they inhabit—in order to deepen our access to Shakespeare's language and to hear it with both his ears and our own.

3 credits

HUM 306 Native America

An examination of Native American world views against a background of history. The stress will be on written literary texts drawn from oral cultures, including collections of traditional songs and stories, as well as contemporary writers. In addition, we will watch videos and listen to music.

3 credits

HUM 307 Playwriting and Theater Practicum

This course will introduce students to two disciplines essential to creating theater: acting and playwriting. To help guide the beginning of their practice in these disciplines, students will read and critique contemporary and master works, write plays of their

own, perform monologues and scenes written by master playwrights and bring the work of their peers alive through in-class readings and a final staged reading performance open to the Cooper Union community.

3 credits

HUM 311 New Media

This course considers what makes media "new" and why those characteristics are relevant in contemporary society. We will consider how older media have been adapted to incorporate new media technologies and strategies, how video games and the Internet have changed our expectations of media experiences, the impact of new media on artistic practice, the important of new media in contemporary cultural economy, and related topics.

3 credits

HUM 312 Islamic Aesthetics

This course is an introduction to Islamic aesthetics with emphasis on the nature and development of the arabesque and calligraphy as ornament in art and architecture. Lectures will ask and attempt to answer the question of why a pragmatic and down-to-earth philosophy chose to express itself in a most abstract visual language, how much of the vocabulary of that language was originally Arabic, and how much was inspired and/or acquired from the various lands conquered by Islam. Digital image lectures will be accompanied by some poetry, music, Qur'anic recitations and film viewings.

3 credits

HUM 316 United States Cultural History

This course traces the development over time of "America" as place, idea, nation and culture. It is concerned with tracing the emergence and contours of a widely-shared, if indeterminate and contested, sense of American identity and culture by studying several enduring forces and themes in its formation. These include the encounters of Europeans and Indians, the institution of slavery, the West in myth and reality, modernization and metropolitan life and the United States in global culture.

3 credits

HUM 319 Russian Art, Architecture and Literature

Survey of Russian arts from 1703, the founding of St. Petersburg, to 1924, the death of Lenin. This course is a study of the history and ideology underlying the remarkable literary and artistic

achievement of Russia and, in its early phase, the Soviet Union.

3 credits

HUM 321 The Novel

This course concerns itself with particular trends, moments, issues or movements in the history of the novel as a literary form. Because of the nature and length of the material, any version of this course must be focused on a particular set of issues, literary-historical phenomena or cultural concerns. The course will typically take as its subject four to six works that illuminate or ask interesting questions about the topic at hand. Recent topics: Joyce's *Ulysses*; New York City literature.

3 credits

HUM 323 Presence of Poetry

This will be a class in which the center of attention is the poem itself. We will concentrate on modern English and American poetry. The common text will be *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry*, 2nd edition, edited by Richard Ellman and Robert O'Clair (Norton, 1998), but students are encouraged to look into other anthologies and into such studies as those of William Empson in *Seven Types of Ambiguity* and Martin Heidegger in *Poetry, Language, Thought*.

3 credits

HUM 325 Puppet, Automaton, Robot

Puppets, automata, and robots are toys or machines that look like us (or parts of us). This course will draw upon an interdisciplinary range of materials—from philosophy, the history of science, psychoanalysis, drama, popular culture, and art—to explore ways in which we can think about what we want from our "artificial life," and how the boundaries between living/non-living require constant rethinking.

3 credits

HUM 327 The History of the Cinema

A history of the motion picture from its origins until now, emphasizing the evolution of the language of cinematic representation—in feature, documentary, animated and experimental filmmaking. Canonical works and the major figures of the silent and sound cinema are treated, including Griffith, Chaplin, Eisenstein, Vertov, Renoir, Welles, Deren, Hitchcock and Godard.

3 credits

HUM 328 History of the Cinema: 1895–1945

This course surveys the history of the motion picture, along with some of the discourses it inspired, from the nickelodeon period through World War II, considering avant-garde, documentary and commercial films, with particular emphasis on the movie as urban entertainment, expression of modernity and cult enthusiasm. Important figures include D.W. Griffith, Fritz Lang, Dziga Vertov, Carl Th. Dreyer, Leni Riefenstahl, Orson Welles, and Maya Deren. The transition from silent to sound cinema and the surrealist theory of film spectatorship will be given particular attention.

3 credits

HUM 329 The History of the Cinema: 1945 to the Present

A history of the cinema from World War II through the present day, with particular attention to the development of neo-realist, new wave and third-world movements. Topics include the impact of television, the influence of Pop Art and the development of digital technology. Alfred Hitchcock, Jean-Luc Godard, and Andrei Tarkovsky are among the major figures treated.

3 credits

HUM 331 Eros in Antiquity

This course will study the theory and practice of love in the ancient world and its legacy in the modern. Working with primary textual sources, the course will consider Plato's erotic dialogues and writings from the Neo-Platonic tradition extending up to Shelley's poetry as well as Ovid's *Amores* and the *Art of Love*. These major texts will be supplemented with examples of erotic poetry from ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Archaic and Classical Greece, and Rome, as well as works of visual art.

3 credits

HUM 333 The Age of Augustus

Augustan Rome presents the only serious ancient contender for comparison with the "Golden Age" of Periclean Athens. In all categories of art, architecture, and literature, the age of the first Roman emperor, Augustus (27 BCE–14 CE), rivals that of high Classical Greece. The course thus combines the disciplines of history, the visual arts, and literature, with the heaviest emphasis on literature, to arrive at a comprehensive picture of a relatively short, but disproportionately consequential moment in the history of civilization.

3 credits

HUM 343 Decadence and Modernity

This course is concerned with major issues in the transition from 19th to 20th century European culture, focusing on the interaction of politics and aesthetics.

3 credits

HUM 345 Readings in Aesthetics

Key aesthetic concepts in relation to artistic practice and audience reception. This course includes a number of historical debates that remain ongoing and unresolved, and it concludes with contemporary attempts to reestablish beauty and pleasure as aesthetic categories.

3 credits

HUM 346 Western Theories of Art

This course examines the variety and development of Western theories of art from antiquity to the present, with special attention to theoretical constructs of the past century. Topics include connoisseurship and formalism; modernist criticism; iconology, Marxism and the social history of art; feminism; psychoanalytic theory; structuralism and post-structuralism; postmodern challenges to modernist theory; and museology and institutional critique.

3 credits

HUM 352 The Personal Essay

In this course we will study and discuss essays in Philip Lopate, ed., *The Art of the Personal Essay*, and we will also write our own, on any topics we choose, on all manner of subjects—the daily round, pleasures and pains, taking a walk, solitude, friendship, in short, our personal responses to any number of objects and situations, multiplying ourselves in the process.

3 credits

HUM 356 Issues in Contemporary Fiction

Study of literary topics including particular genres, themes, sensibilities and critical approaches. The focus of this course will change in individual semesters.

3 credits

HUM 357 Philosophy of Science

What, exactly, is science? What is scientific inquiry and explanation, and how might it differ from other forms of inquiry and explanation? In the course, we will investigate the nature and status of scientific knowledge. Along the way, we shall ask such questions as: What are scientific theories? What relations obtain between scientific theories and observed facts? How are scientific theories confirmed or

disconfirmed? Do scientific theories represent the true nature of the world, or are they merely convenient tools for making predictions and developing technology? Is scientific inquiry a purely rational process? Is it influenced by social and cultural factors? What makes science successful?

3 credits

HUM 369 History of the Book

An introduction to the creation, use and meaning of "the book" over its long history from the clay tablet to the digital download. Readings and discussions will bring together literary and cultural history, as well as aspects of politics, art history and the history of technology. Topics will include the moves from oral to written cultures, from the scroll to the codex, and from public reading to reading as a private experience; the emergence of printers and publishers; the invention of the library; censorship and the spread of reading publics; the rise of the novel and "popular reading"; the comic book; the paperback; and the movement through digital technologies to non-print books.

3 credits

HUM 373 Seminar in Humanities

Seminar giving close attention to special topics in the humanities. The seminar may be repeated for credit with the permission of the dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Recent topic: *Plato's Republic*.

3 credits

HUM 374 Contemporary Culture and Criticism

A survey of the cultural climate since the 1950s, including the influence of works by such writers as Benjamin and Bakhtin and the concern with contemporary life in terms of fundamental shifts in community, representation, identity and power.

3 credits

HUM 375 Critical Theory

This course begins with the post World War II generation of social thinkers and critics, such as Barthes, de Beauvoir, Foucault, Adorno, Horkheimer, Lacan, in the development of what later became known of as the critical theory of culture. We then proceed to more recent critics, each time taking our clues from real life examples. This course emphasizing learning how to "see" and think in "cultural practices." It offers a chance to have our understanding extended into everyday life and its ways of making us cultural beings.

3 credits

HUM 377 General Linguistics

Survey of two major types of linguistic study: diachronic or historical linguistics and synchronic or structural linguistics. The course concludes with presentation of recent linguistic theory, with emphasis on cognitive grammar and biolinguistics.

3 credits

HUM 379 Visual Culture

An historical account of the developing wealth and intensity of visual experience in the United States in the last century and study of the circulation of images as a cultural sign system shaping class, gender, race and sexual subjectivities.

3 credits

HUM 381 Post-Colonial Studies

This course engages with the legacy of colonialism in literature and theory. Topics include the relationship between colonizer and colonized, independence, apartheid and immigration in novels from South Asia, the Caribbean and Africa. Works by Rudyard Kipling, E.M. Forster, Aime Cesaire, Salman Rushdie, Nadine Gordimer, Jhumpa Lahiri and Zadie Smith will be addressed.

3 credits

HUM 382 African-American Literature

Under this rubric, courses may address a range of issues, periods, themes or questions in African-American literature. Specific topics and descriptions will be detailed in the relevant course bulletin each time the course is offered.

3 credits

HUM 383 Opera

This course will examine the history, materials and structures of opera, a rich and complicated art that is both musical and theatrical. We will address such topics as the origins of opera in 17th-century Italy, the Baroque style, the art of *bel canto*, opera and politics, Wagner's revolutionary ideas, realism and impressionism in music, experiments in tonality, and opera in English. Several works will be considered in detail. Classes will combine lecture-discussion and screenings of performance on DVDs. An interest in music is essential, but no ability to read scores or play an instrument is required.

3 credits

HUM 386 The Romantic Movement

Beginning with an examination of Romantic aesthetic theory and its application to some of the major poems of the period, the course will explore writing by Goethe, Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats. Philosophical and critical readings will be drawn from Kant, Lessing, Burke, DeQuincey, Wollstonecraft and others.
3 credits

HUM 387 The Life and Death of Socrates

Socrates, the son of a humble stonemason, Sophroniskos, was one of the most remarkable, controversial and influential human beings who ever lived. Though he left behind no written testimonial of his peculiar, singular genius, we know quite a bit about him through the accounts and recollections of his contemporaries, critics and followers, primary among them, Plato, Xenophon and Aristophanes. Based almost exclusively on readings of the major ancient texts, the course focuses less on the philosophy of Socrates, as filtered through the great and not unbiased lens of his most famous student, Plato, than on the man, his physical demeanor, his way of life, his loves, his friendships and especially his trial and death in 399 B.C.E.
3 credits

HUM 389 Love in Western Art and Literature

This course address the representation of love in Western art, with specific attention to the body, gender, and identity. The course will be grounded across two crucial poles: the so-called Greek revolution as a founding moment in the West, with its idea of Eros and the ideally beautiful body, and the rise of the individual in the Renaissance/Baroque period, with its concepts of subjectivity, self and vision (including Shakespeare's provocative formulation of "a perjured eye." Readings will include Plato's Symposium, poetry in the troubadour and Petrarchan traditions, Ficino and the Neoplatonists, Shakespeare, Keats, Shelley, Austen, Foucault, Derrida, Anne Carson and others.
3 credits

HUM 392 Ethics

The course considers real-world ethical dilemmas in a philosophical context. Throughout the course, students will examine and critically evaluate a variety of ethical theories with the aim of gaining a fuller appreciation of the complexities of difficult or controversial ethical situations. Particular emphasis will be placed on questions concerning the nature and importance of value, virtue, relationships, commitment, duty, moral disagreement, moral skepticism, and relativism. Student interest will determine the ethical situations that we explicitly discuss in key weeks of the course.
3 credits

HUM 394 World Religions

An introduction to the five major world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The course considers ancient and contemporary religious practices as it examines faith and belief, ritual, scripture and scriptural interpretation, religious art, orthodoxy and heresy, mysticism, and pilgrimage through a comparative lens. Focus is on origins, textual traditions and central doctrines with further attention to religion "on the ground" as a living and evolving phenomenon.
3 credits

HUM 395 Hip Hop and Culture

In this class, we will trace the roots of rap music to West Africa rhythms, Jamaican sound systems, and oral expressive cultures in the American South; analyze some of the most influential and iconic rap recordings across the decades; study the techniques and technologies that are used to create DJ-based music; consider other pillars of hip hop culture (e.g. graffiti and break dancing); and examine the controversies that swirl around hip hop culture and rap music.
3 credits

HUM 99 Independent Study (Humanities)

3 credits

SOCIAL SCIENCES**SS 220 Environmentalism in the Urban Context**

The recent work of environmental activists and scholars has produced a new urbanism in which the city form and function is intimately connected with natural processes. This rethinking of the city has opened several new possibilities for looking at human-environment interactions. In particular, the everyday environment of the city may be examined as a site for identifying the hidden geographies of raw materials, energy and waste flows. This course looks at three central issues: (1) identification of the material and ecological processes that make possible city form and function possible; (2) interpretation of the city as a constellation of economic institutions and social practices that transform nature over different temporal and spatial scales; and (3) the examination of the environmental and health impacts stemming from a city's role in production and consumption. Students will work on projects using the principles of ecological design in the redevelopment of urban sites.
3 credits

SS 221 History of the Modern Middle East

This course considers topics in Middle Eastern history from the First World War to the present. We examine a century of political unrest that included two world wars, colonialism, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the rise of authoritarian state structures, the Iranian Islamic revolution, and the American war on terror.
3 credits

SS 305 Leonardo, Scientist and Engineer

This course uses the life and work of Leonardo da Vinci (1453–1519) to explore science, medicine, and engineering in Renaissance Europe. We will look at the social and economic life of the era and examine the institutions and influences that served Leonardo's imagination, his inventiveness, and his arts.
3 credits

SS 308 Public Policy in Contemporary America

Issues such as conservation, environmental law and policy, mass transportation, transfer of development rights, incentive zoning and historic preservation, beginning with an introduction to and general analysis of the policy process.
3 credits

SS 318 Seminar in Social Science

Seminar giving close attention to special topics in the social sciences. Recent topics have included sustainability and the economy. The seminar may be repeated for credit with the permission of the dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Recent topics: sustainability; total war; human rights, law, and society; Cooper Union world forum.
3 credits

SS 320 Comparative Politics

Comparing political systems is at least as old as Aristotle, whose library contained more than 135 studies of constitutions of the ancient world. This course will compare contemporary political systems and consider some of the main challenges they face: forging a common identity and sense of community; meeting social and economic needs; and securing civil and political liberties and human rights. Recognizing that political societies of today's worlds can differ dramatically, the course will begin by introducing concepts and approaches that make it possible to compare systems as different as those of China and Great Britain. In addition to the broader paradigms of system, structure and function, we will also consider forms of political culture and socialization, interest articulation and aggregation, party systems and policy-making. Several distinct systems will be studied; these will be chosen not only for their geographical, but also for their political diversity, representing first-world nations such as the United States, Britain and France, as well as post-communist and post-colonial states such as Russia, China and Nigeria.
3 credits

SS 321 The American Presidency

The nature and sources of the power of the American presidency, the ways in which it is wielded and the Constitutional restraints upon its exercise.
3 credits

SS 323 Politics and Collective Memory

The political uses of collective memory can range from defining national and social identities to shaping public opinion. In exploring the interactions between memory and politics, this course will focus on the nature and forms of collective memory, its development and reconstruction and its relationship to structures of authority. Emphasis will be placed on examples from recent political history.
3 credits

SS 333 Politics of Ethnonational Conflict

An examination of the movements for national liberation and independence that have become an increasingly important phenomenon in the second half of the 20th century. Among the movements considered are those of Algeria, Nigeria, Cyprus, Bangladesh, Northern Ireland, Quebec, Lebanon and the PLO.

3 credits

SS 334 Microeconomics

The relationship between economic theory and public policy, focusing on the central axioms of modern economics in the light of recent problems in energy employment and inflation.

3 credits

SS 335 Science and Technology in the Long 18th Century (1687–1839)

This course will examine the changing roles of science and technology in the West during the 18th and early 19th centuries. We will use a case-study approach to consider such topics as color in theories (light and optics) and color in practice (painting, dyeing and glassmaking); geology mineralogy and the development of ceramic industries in Europe; the invention, use (and misuse) of the natural classifications; and automation and automatons: Vaucanson's duck, Jacquard's loom, Babbage's Difference Engine.

3 credits

SS 337 American Foreign Policy

In the 20th century, challenges to Western liberalism came from fascism and communism, while more recent challenges have come from terrorist movements on the one hand and the European Union on the other. This course examines American foreign policy since the collapse of communism in the context of these changing challenges.

3 credits

SS 342 Anthropology of Ritual

The study of ritual takes us to the heart of anthropological approaches to experience, performance, symbolism and association. Once thought to be "vestigial" organs of archaic societies, rituals are now seen as arenas through which social change may emerge and are recognized to be present in all societies. Throughout the course we will explore varying definitions of ritual and its universal and particular aspects, while surveying ethnographic case studies from around the world.

3 credits

SS 345 The Raymond G. Brown Seminar

A seminar in the social sciences on a topic central to the interests of the late Professor Raymond G. Brown. Recent topics: the credit crisis.

3 credits

SS 346 Urban Sociology: Reading the City

Focuses on the relationship between the built environment and human behavior, the design of public, urban spaces as a reflection of and impetus for certain types of human interactions and reactions. Another interest of the course will be to consider the notion of community as it plays out in the disciplines of sociology and architecture—how they intersect, and how they are changing in our postmodern, post-industrial terrain. Some of the broad areas of interest of urban sociologists will also be considered.

3 credits

SS 347 Macroeconomics

The development of modern macroeconomic theory as it evolves in response to a succession of economic problems and crises. Emphasis on the recent Keynesian/monetarist debates and the role of the Federal Reserve Bank.

3 credits

SS 348 Global Cities

Considers specific and general factors that contribute to the rise of global cities—New York, London, Tokyo—and how such cities impact other city-types, existing and emerging. This course examines the forces underpinning globalization, including the shift from industrial to informational economies, the development of new technologies and the emergence of new patterns of immigration, in order to understand the complexities of global processes in urban terrains.

3 credits

SS 349 American Cities

Examination of the crisis of urban America seen through the lens of New York City. Individual topics will include urban poverty, relocation of manufacturing and foreign competition, but students will be encouraged to examine closely a particular aspect of New York City's problems.

3 credits

SS 351 History of 20th-Century Europe

A study of the dramatic ruptures of Europe's 20th century, haunted by imperialism, war and genocide. Topics include the First World War; modernity and modernism in interwar culture; fascism, National Socialism and the Holocaust; postwar displacements and migrations; decolonization, the cold war and the postwar economic miracle; 1968 and 1989 in both East and West; and the ongoing challenges of integration and multiculturalism.

3 credits

SS 353 American Social History

This course offers an introduction to the major themes in American Social History from the Late Colonial Period to World War Two. Over the last few decades, social historians have introduced a broader cast of characters into the making of American society; workers, immigrants, minorities and native Americans are now seen more as active participants in the story of the United States rather than as passive victims or marginal figures. This course examines the changing role of such significant groups and considers how they may have changed the shape of the dominant political culture.

3 credits

SS 354 New York, 1820–1920: An Urban and Cultural History

A presentation of two "maps" to the city. The first is a history of the built environment, focusing on the changing systems of transportation, the development of building forms and the way the city's population and functions have been distributed in that space. The second historical map is made up from people's imaginative responses to those changes, especially as seen in literature and visual iconography. Among the areas singled out for special examination are the Bowery and the Lower East Side, Central Park and the "downtown" of amusement and vice, wherever it happened to be at the time.

3 credits

SS 358 Social History of Food

A study of the transformations in food production and consumption, 1492 to the present. The course examines the passage of "new world" foods into Europe and Asia, the rise of commercial agriculture in the colonies, especially sugar, the rise of national cuisines, the advent of restaurant culture and the perils of fast and industrial food.

3 credits

SS 360 American Intellectual History

A study of major works in intellectual and literary history written from 1780 to the present, focusing on changing notions of the self, character and community and the ways these concepts have gained intellectual and literary expression in the United States.

3 credits

SS 361 Urban Archaeology

An introduction to the new field of urban archaeology. Topics include how archaeologists work in cities; the special problems and rewards of urban archaeology; and what can be learned about the development of particular cities through this field of study, including changes in subsistence patterns, the use of urban space and the definition of ethnicity and gender.

3 credits

SS 362 Popular Culture

This course studies popular culture in a primarily 20th-century context. Using both creative and theoretical texts, it considers developments in contemporary popular culture including the rise of mass media and consumerism, the elaboration of pop-cultural theory and the trend toward multiculturalism. We will sharpen our critical perspective on our cultural surroundings by questioning boundaries between the popular and other cultural categories, notions of creativity in the high and popular arts and the bases of our own preferences.

3 credits

SS 367 Acting Globally

This course introduces students to the developments sometimes called the post-postmodern era of globalization, with a particular focus on the study of cultural impact. Our approach will entail both the macro level discussion of conditions and possibilities for effecting a decent global future and the micro level of actual sites of responses to (1) technology transfer; (2) cultural preservation, resistance, odernization and integration; and (3) the new dialogues around ecological sustainability. We study analytical texts, autobiographies, films and proposals on how to humanize the New World Order.

3 credits

SS 368 History of Modern Asia

This course explores the history of Asia from the later imperial eras of China, Japan, Korea and Southeast Asia into the modern era. A wide range of political, social, economic and cultural issues are explored. While emphasizing the distinctive nature of the region, the course will stress the wide diversity and inter-connectedness of ideas, technologies and religions through the region.

3 credits

SS 369 Psychoanalytic Theory

An introduction to forms of psychoanalytic thinking and theory making, with special attention paid to the ways in which different theorists conceptualize and invoke psychoanalysis as a theory of mind, research tool, therapeutic process and utopian vision. Readings include foundational texts by Freud, Ferenczi and Klein, as well as responses to classical theory by Horney, Winnicott, Lacan and others.

3 credits

SS 371 Women and Men: Power and Politics

An introduction to women's and gender studies, and to feminist theory. Students will examine the ways and the historical basis for construction of gender and the interlocking of gender with other forms of hierarchy, including race, ethnicity, class and sexuality. Readings include classic texts and current scholarship in literature, film, history and social science.

3 credits

SS 372 Global Issues

This course will examine current issues of global significance and their implications for policy and decision-making. Among the trends we will consider are the tensions between resource competition and authority; the emergence of a global economy; the environment and sustainable development; demographic change; and the emergence of new security issues, including societal and environmental stress.

3 credits

SS 373 Modernity and Modernism: Culture and Society in the Weimar Republic

This course explores the turbulent and innovative interwar years 1918-1933 in Weimar Germany, paying particular attention to cultural and social politics. We will study the difficult establishment of the "republic that nobody wanted" in the wake of

a lost war, a collapsed empire and a failed revolution; the chaotic period of rebellion and inflation until 1923; the brief "Golden Twenties" of relative stabilization and *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Sobriety) with its burst of social welfare initiatives, architectural and engineering innovations and efflorescence of art, music, theater and literature; and finally the crises of economic depression and political polarization that culminated with Adolf Hitler's appointment as chancellor of Germany in January 1933.

3 credits

SS 374 Contemporary Social Psychology

Utilizing a variety of social psychological perspectives, general issues such as human nature, socialization, attitude formation and change, verbal and non-verbal language, interpersonal behavior and the art of persuasion will be explored with interest in cross-cultural comparisons. The core questions we will explore include: What does it mean to be human? How is the self defined and determined? What impact do social groups, culture and the (built) environment have on the development of the self and on our everyday behavior?

3 credits

SS 378 Time, Travel and Communication in Early Modern Europe

This course is a history of early modern European technology with a strong focus on design technologies and material culture. It will cover the time period extending approximately from the Age of Exploration through the French Revolution (about 1500-1800). We will examine early modern ideas about three critical aspects of modern life: time, communication and travel. (Interpretation of these themes will be broad and may include not only carriages and bridges but also carriage upholstery and passports; not only letters, newspapers and books but also songs and emblems; not only the shift from public to personal time but also calendar reform.) In addition to readings (both primary and secondary) and discussions (in-class and online), students will choose to study three artifacts that are relevant to the themes of time, communication and travel, research them and present their findings to the class.

3 credits

SS 381 Developmental Psychology

The course will follow the unfolding of human development from conception through adolescence by means of an array of analytic perspectives. We will examine and critique cognitive, psychoanalytic, information processing, and psychosocial models of brain/body/mind growth. Reading assignments will be from a textbook on child development as well as primary sources, which will include academic writing, memoir, and fiction. We will also view educational and fictional films, and may also include family video chronicles.

3 credits

SS 382 Game Theory

Since its introduction in 1943 by John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern, the general theory of games has been instrumental to our understanding of various social behaviors. With key contributions of such renowned scholars as John Nash, Robert Arrow, Thomas Schelling and John Harsanyi, among other Nobel Laureates, game theory has quickly gained a large following among students of economics, evolutionary biology and even political science. Though at times seemingly abstract, game theory has shown us that it has practical value with applications in firm-level management and strategic decisions making in military campaigns. The course has two dimensions: the first is to explore the theoretical basis of games; the second is to consider the application of these concepts in economics and political science.

3 credits

SS 384 Anthropology and the Other

This course provides an introduction to concepts in social-cultural anthropology. Students will rethink such concepts as culture, race, ethnicity, nationalism, transnationalism, gentrification, power and memory. We will use these concepts to address the questions of human universals and the origins of cultural differences. At the bases of these inquiries will be the question of the "Other." Who are the "Others" in culture or society?

3 credits

SS 385 Science and Technology in the Modern World (1815 to the Present)

This course will explore the social intellectual and economic relationships of science and technology in the modern West (i.e., after 1815). Using modified case studies to provide "snapshots," students will learn to recognize changes to such factors as who participates, where work is conducted and the supports (social, financial, emotional) necessary to individual and collective pursuits.

3 credits

SS 386 The Early Modern Atlantic World

This course examines the history of the Atlantic world from the mid-fifteenth century through the end of the eighteenth century. Incorporating the histories of Europe, North America, South America, and Africa, the course will explore social, cultural, economic, and political developments of the early modern era as men and women came together to form the societies in the Americas. Topics will include European-Amerindian relations, European-African relations, the slave trade, gender structures, the development of an Atlantic economy, and the maturation of colonial societies.

3 credits

SS 387 The History of the Family in America

This course explores the changing construction and function of the family across American history. We will examine how women and men, sons and daughters, experienced revolution, war, economic transformation, politics, sexuality, and religion. We will consider how the purposes and experience of family life have changed over time, as well as how the ideologies or ideals about family pressed against the grinding wheel of history to shape events. Our historical actors will include Native Americans, European colonists, rebels and republicans, masters and slaves, freedmen and immigrants, free-love communities, patriarchal polygamists, Victorian lovers, Cold War housewives, Baby Boomers, and our own contemporaries.

3 credits

**SS 388 Comparative Cities:
New York/Berlin, 1848-1948**

A comparative, team-taught urban history seminar on Berlin and New York from 1848 to 1948. The course examines the differing causes of urban growth and the way it was accommodated in novel forms of urban space, highlighting the differences between a city that became a capital of empire and one given over to commercial and residential development, as well as the very different ways that both cities experienced periods of rebellion and war.

3 credits

**SS 390 The Rise of the Modern City
in the European Middle Ages**

Explores how early medieval landscapes with castles and small villages became wider communities—the first modern cities. Focuses on the major debates of the Middle Ages: the tensions between country and city life; the role of the church; Scholasticism; the debate between reason and faith; the role of the French cathedral in medieval life; the lay reaction to ecclesiastical control and the rise of communal Italian cities such as Florence, Venice and Siena centered around the civic palace; and the early requirements for city beautification. We will “visit” (virtually) the first hospital, universities and prototypical housing. Everyday life will be illustrated from the material remains of art and architecture through a cross section of different social environments.

3 credits

**SS 391 Introduction to
Mind and Brain**

The goal of this is to introduce the student to the basic principles of psychology, to guide the student through the brain and to provide a basic understanding of the relationship between the brain and mind addressing issues of consciousness. The first third of the course will examine the brain and underlying theories in psychology. The majority of the course will be focused on the relationship between the brain and consciousness including self-awareness, theory of mind, deception, abstract reasoning, art, music, spatial abilities and language. Steeped in recent findings in both psychology and neuroscience, the goal of this class will be to provide a modern foundation in the mind and the brain.

3 credits

SS 393 Darwin and His Times

This course uses the life of Charles Darwin (1809-1882) to examine the nature of scientific practices during the nineteenth century and their changing, often revolutionary, role in contemporary life. We will read closely Darwin’s writings on geology and evolutionary biology, and we will consider interpretations and implications of “Darwinism.” Both readings and films will be assigned,

3 credits

SS 394 American Radicalism

This course will examine cultural radicalism in American thought from the Young Americans of the 1910s and the New York Intellectuals of the 1930s to the Beat poets of the 1950s and the Neo-Conservatives of the 1970s. Through figures such as Randolph Bourne, John Dewey, Meyer Schapiro, Lewis Mumford, C. Wright Mills and Dorothy Day, we will trace the rise and fall of the American avant-garde, the quest for an indigenous theory of culture, the social sources of counterculture, and the shifting meanings of the concepts “mass culture,” “consumer culture,” “kitsch,” and highbrow/middlebrow/lowbrow. Among the questions we will address are: Can one be a political radical and a cultural conservative? A political conservative and a cultural radical?

3 credits

SS 395 Rome

The course focuses on how the city of Rome changes through time and the way its idea of eternity reflects on its culture and urban changes. Monumental Imperial Rome will be compared to the recent results from excavations and research of the poorly preserved archaic and Medieval Rome. Fifteenth-century Rome, with its powerful popes, initiated a radical urban transformation by attracting the best architects and artists for the next 300 years. With the monarchy of the end of the 19th century and then Mussolini, the city undergoes radical changes once again.

3 credits

**SS 396 North American
Environmental History**

This course examines recent historical work that makes claims for the “environment” being the major determinant in the development of the North American continent. We will look at land use in pre-colonial times, the spread of slave-based extensive agriculture in the South, wood lot management in the north, mid-western farming, western mining, the parameters of nineteenth century urban growth as well as the consequences of the arrival of the automobile. We will also look at the growth of the environmental movement over the last two centuries.

3 credits

SS 397 History of Industrial Design

In tracing the history of industrial design from its emergence at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution to the present, this will course will not only examine aesthetics (of furniture and the decorative arts, typography, advertising, machinery, toys, etc.) but also the social and political forces that have shaped the many styles. Throughout, we will also demonstrate how movements in industrial design relate to parallel developments in the history of painting, sculpture and architecture.

3 credits

SS 398 Gender Studies

Study of the “first wave” of feminism, including Mary Wollstonecraft and Abigail Adams, through the achievement of suffrage in 1920 and then study of the more radical claims of “second wave” feminists in the 1970s, with Marxist and Freudian analysis. This course will conclude with contemporary post-feminisms” and changing gender relationships.

3 credits

**SS 99 Independent Study
(Social Sciences)**

3 credits

History and Theory of Art

While contributing to the required curriculum of students enrolled in the School of Art, courses in the History of Art are also available to students in the other schools.

All HTA courses are normally offered for two credits. In exceptional circumstances, students may petition to take an HTA course for an additional credit. The student must get permission from both the instructor and the dean of Humanities and Social Sciences.

CORE CURRICULUM

**HTA 101, 102 Modern to
Contemporary: An Introduction to
Art History**

This two-semester art history core course, developed as part of the Foundation year for students in the School of Art but open to all students, is organized around a set of themes running through the history of modernity from the 18th century to the present. Within specific themes, significant works, figures and movements in art/design will be presented chronologically. Students will be able to identify and critically evaluate significant works, figures and movements in art/design in the modern period; be able to describe the main social and political contexts for the changes in art/design over the last two hundred years; and engage, in writing and class discussion, with theoretical perspectives on art/design production. The course will involve museum visits. Grading will be based on class participation, papers, and exams.

2 credits each semester

ELECTIVES**HTA 209 Medieval Art and Architecture**

Investigates the art, architecture and archaeology of medieval Europe from Constantine (fourth century) to approximately 1450, a period when different cultures clashed and mixed together to shape the eclectic Western medieval world that rose from Roman imperial ruins and ideals. This course will follow a chronological sequence, but use recent data from medieval excavations to challenge traditional art historical statements. Early Christian, Byzantine, Barbarian, Islamic, Romanesque and Gothic periods are examined.

2 credits

HTA 210 The Art and Culture of Fifteenth-Century Florence

This course examines the unique historical circumstances and artistic personalities that brought about a new kind of art. Special focus will be placed on the role of the Medici family as patrons. Painters, sculptors and architects to be considered include Masaccio, Fra Angelico, Ghirlandaio, Botticelli, Ghiberti, Donatello, the Pollaiuolo brothers, Brunelleschi and Alberti. Monuments such as Orsanmichele, the Baptistery, the Cathedral and the Medici Palace will be placed in their social context and discussed in detail.

2 credits.

HTA 211 The Renaissance in Italy

An investigation of the art produced during the 15th and 16th centuries in Italy, where a revival of classical learning led to an unprecedented artistic flowering. In painting, the course deals with the period from Fra Angelico to Titian; in architecture, from Brunelleschi to Palladio; and in sculpture, from Ghiberti to Michelangelo and Benvenuto Cellini. The course will touch on such themes as the classical ideal, town planning, country villas, fresco painting, patronage, the development of perspective, and the rise of the portrait.

2 credits

HTA 220 Japanese Art

A chronological survey of Japanese art from prehistoric times to the 17th century, examining the interaction of the uniquely Japanese aesthetic sensibility with arts and cultural traditions transmitted from the Asian mainland. Although the primary emphasis is on painting and sculpture, attention is also paid to architecture, gardens, pottery, lacquerware and woodblock prints. Museum visits are an integral part of the course.

2 credits

HTA 221 Buddhist Art in Asia

An historical survey of the visual culture of Buddhism in its chronological, geographical, material and conceptual development from its origin in India, following the death of Siddhartha in the fifth century B.C.E., through various parts of the world, such as South East Asia, Central Asia, the Himalayan Mountain regions, and East Asia up to contemporary society in and beyond Asia. The class introduces the basic conventions and traditional visual strategies of Buddhist art in various media through focusing on selected examples of representative images, objects and monuments from historical Buddhist art, while investigating Buddhism as both a philosophy and a religion that has been continuously reinterpreted.

2 credits

HTA 222 Asian Painting

A chronological survey of Chinese and Japanese painting and an exploration of the aesthetic and spiritual values that shaped the arts of the brush in the Far East.

2 credits

HTA 231 History of Industrial Design

In tracing the history of industrial design from its emergence at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution to the present, this course will examine not only aesthetics (of furniture and the decorative arts, typography, advertising, machinery, toys, etc.) but also the social and political forces that have shaped the many styles. Throughout, we will also demonstrate how movements in industrial design relate to parallel developments in the history of painting, sculpture, and architecture.

2 credits

HTA 232 Is Painting Like Poetry?

Inspired by the famous dictum "ut pictura poesis" (literally, 'as painting, poetry,' or more loosely, 'poetry is like painting') from Horace's *Art of Poetry*, the course examines the interconnections between literature and the visual arts, whether as rivals or as allies, from antiquity through the present. A diverse group of topics will be considered, within a specific historical time frame and context, with the goal of seeking a common ground for a discourse with which to evaluate the nature, significance, and aesthetic parameters of each of the two modes of expression in the shared enterprise of the representation of reality and/or the world of ideas.

2 credits

HTA 233 History of Drawing

Our class will examine the changing character and purpose of drawings, from prehistory and antiquity through the Italian Renaissance, Northern Europe, impressionism, Van Gogh, Cezanne, Picasso, and others from the modern and post-modern periods. Topics will include formal accounts, connoisseurship (particularly controversies around Michelangelo and Rembrandt's drawings), technology (camera obscura, camera lucida), figuration and abstraction, and actual practice at a place like Cooper Union today.

2 credits

HTA 240 Issues in Asian Contemporary Art

In this course, students will build a foundation in critical theory revolving around issues of race, nationality, sexuality and gender as they relate to the formation of an artist's identity, and how that identity in turn is reflected in the artist's output. Attention will be paid to Asian contemporary artists working outside of their own cultures and to Asian-American artists, in an attempt to analyze the role of the Asian diaspora and its connection to contemporary art production in Asia proper. Special focus will be paid to the contemporary art of India, China, Korea and Japan, although other nations and regions will also be discussed.

2 credits

HTA 261 Special Topics in Nineteenth-Century Art

Recent topics have included Charles Darwin's writings, the "Darwin effect," and the relationship between evolutionary theory and modern art, and the history of the bather in European art, with particular attention to the work of Courbet, Manet, Daumier, Cézanne and Seurat.

2 credits

HTA 263 African Art

An introduction to the stylistic, conceptual, functional and historical aspects of sub-Saharan African sculpture and architecture, the place of these arts in the traditional context of black African life and their relationship to the worldview of the African.

2 credits

HTA 264 Black Artists of the Americas

Studies the influence of African art and culture on black painters and sculptors in North and South America. Symbols, myths, religious rituals and deities will be explicated in terms of the correspondence they develop between distant antiquity and the present, allowing, in some cases, for new creative possibilities.

2 credits

HTA 270 The Art of Greece and Rome

An introduction to the sculpture, painting, and architecture of ancient Greece and Rome with attention to the impact of the classical imagination on the art of succeeding ages.

2 credits

HTA 273 Topics in the History of Photography

Writing by the critics, historians and photographers that have influenced creation and reception of photography throughout its history. Issues include definitions and redefinitions of art, documentary debates and revisionist canons and histories.

Recent topic: *Altered images*.

2 credits

HTA 274 History of Photography (1839–1965)

A survey of the great artists and their work throughout the history of photography with emphasis on the images that were made. The importance of key images is discussed. This historical period was one of constant technical innovation and the class studies the effect this had on the work of the individual photographers.

2 credits

HTA 275, 276 Twentieth-Century Art History

Considers the flourishing “isms” of the 20th century, as well as historical events, intellectual currents and conflicting aesthetic views, explored in relation to such enduring artists as Picasso, Matisse, Malevich, Kandinsky, Miro, Klee, Dubuffet, Giacometti, Pollock, Smith, Calder and others.
2 credits each semester

HTA 277 Contemporary Art

Survey of the development of contemporary art after Minimalism and Pop Art of the 1960s. Chronological treatment includes canonical texts of critical theory and issues such as genre, multiculturalism and site specificity crucial to the current practice of art. Recent topics: German painting.
2 credits

HTA 282 Public Sculpture in New York City

This course will examine trends that have informed the history of public sculpture in New York City, including commemoration of historical events, artistic and civic education for the masses, natural history in the service of the nation, and the cult of great men and women. We will also examine individual monuments such as Augustus Saint-Gaudens’s Farragut Monument (1880), Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi’s Statue of Liberty (1886), the sculptural programs of Central Park, Prospect Park, and Green-Wood Cemetery, the decorations of Rockefeller Center (including Paul Manship’s 1934 Prometheus and Lee Lawrie’s 1937 Atlas), Isamu Noguchi’s News (1940) and the sculpture garden he created at his Long Island City studio, and Richard Serra’s Tilted Arc (1978). Emphasis will be placed on reading works or art as primary texts; viewing sculpture, in local museums or in situ, will be a key component of the course.
2 credits

HTA 283 The “Genius” of the Baroque

This course examines the genius of European Baroque art as distilled in the work of its greatest exemplars. We will also address the ideology of the counter-reformation church, the emergence of Protestant capitalism and a pluralist, bourgeois society in the north, patronage and social identity, propaganda, religious faith, skepticism, sexual identity and the family, all focused through the position of the artist in society. In no other period were body and spirit, sensual and sublime, so closely intermeshed. Art history resides precisely in the relation between our present interest in these artists and the past conditions in which they worked.
2 credits

HTA 285: Single-Work Seminar

A seminar devoted entirely to a single monument or work of art that had a particularly profound and wide resonance in the socio-political, economic, and cultural milieu in which it was created and whose range of influence extended well beyond its historical time frame. The focused nature of the course material allows for both a breadth and a depth of analysis to a greater degree than is possible in other elective art history courses. Topics have included Duccio’s *Maestà*, Van Eyck’s Ghent Altarpiece, and Chartres Cathedral.
2 credits

HTA 296 Synartesis

A recurring seminar with a changing focus taught by Professor Dore Ashton.
2 credits

HTA 297 History of Printmaking

Explores the history of printmaking and its various processes from the 15th century to the present with an eye to the unique contribution of this graphic art to the history of visual language in both popular and fine art. While major printmakers (e.g., Durer, Rembrandt, Daumier, the Nabis, the German Expressionists, Jasper Johns) will be addressed, attention will also be given to the practical and popular use of prints through the centuries.
2 credits

HTA 298 History of Graphic Design

A study of the history of graphic design work arising out of the important cultural, political and social configurations in Europe, Asia and the United States from the time of the industrial revolution to the present day. Points of reference include posters, publications and promotional pieces being drawn from an unusual collection.
2 credits

HTA 300 Single-Artist Seminar

A course devoted entirely to the life and work of one important artist, selected anew from across the spectrum of world art each time it is offered. The seminar is designed to allow for an in-depth experience in the discipline of art history that extends well beyond what is possible in period survey courses. Recent topics: Leonardo; Rembrandt; Degas.
2 credits

HTA 313 Seminar in Art History

A seminar based on a special topic in the study of art history. The seminar may be repeated for credit with the permission of the dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Recent topics: Picasso.
2 credits

HTA 315 Mysteries of Northern Renaissance Art

This course examines some of the most hauntingly beautiful and enigmatic works in the history of art, from a period of deep religiosity and aristocratic ideals, emerging contrary middle-class values and exceptional artistic ambition and self-consciousness. We will begin with a solution for the still unsolved riddle of the Ghent Altarpiece and the birth of modern painting in the north, move through debates about disguised symbolism and new conceptions of the artwork in Robert Campin and Rogier van der Weyden, the crisis of modernity in Hieronymus Bosch and the emergence of a new (sublime) order in the art of Pieter Bruegel, among others.
2 credits

HTA 317 Art and Architecture of Ancient Peru

Introduction to the ancient cultures of Peru from about 3000 B.C.E. to the Spanish conquest, as seen in architecture, stone sculpture, ceramics, metalwork and textiles.
2 credits

HTA 318 Pre-Columbian Art and Architecture in Mesoamerica

A survey of the arts and architecture of the pre-Columbian civilizations of Mexico and Central America from the earliest times through the Spanish conquest. Visits to museums and private collections are an integral part of the course.
2 credits

HTA 323, 333 Islamic Art and Architecture

An introduction to the evolution of Islamic aesthetics, history and philosophy by examining samples of architectural monuments, painting, ceramics, metalwork’s and calligraphy, as well as literary texts, from the 12th century and the Mongol invasion to the Reconquista and the fall of Granada in the 15th century. The course traces the development of the truly multi-cultural art of this turbulent period, from Central Asia through Iran and Iraq and the Levant, to Egypt, the Maghrib, and Spain.
2 credits

HTA 324 Arts of the Islamic Book

This course looks at the elements that contributed to the evolution of Islamic book illustration from the 10th century to the 17th century, such as materials, styles, patronage, administration, choice of text and the relationship between text and image, with special concentration on the Persian book.
2 credits

HTA 327 The New York Art Collector

This course investigates the history of art collecting as it unfolded in Manhattan and the surrounding boroughs. Beginning in colonial times with Governor Morris’ acquisition of 18th-century French furniture and ending in the mid-20th century with the formation of such public institutions as the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the course will focus on both the men and women instrumental in the establishment of these collections and the specific objects they collected.
2 credits

HTA 328 Dada and Surrealism

Since their appearance early in the 20th century, Dada and Surrealism have had a profound and lasting influence on the arts. This course explores the art and ideas of these two movements within the social, political, intellectual and art historical context of the years 1914–1947.

2 credits

HTA 329 Nineteenth-Century Printmaking

The 19th century witnessed an explosion of imagery, in part led by the technical developments in commercial printmaking and the advent of photography. This course will survey the major themes of the period, including the changing cityscape, the iconography of peasants and local landscapes, the influence of caricature and the popular press and the development of Japonism. Classes will be based on the hands-on viewing of original prints in the New York Public Library by artists including Eugene Delacroix, Edouard Manet, Charles Meryon, Camille Pissarro, Mary Cassatt and James McNeill Whistler.

2 credits

HTA 331 The Arts of China

This course is a chronological survey of the arts of China from the pottery-making and jade-carving cultures of the Neolithic up to contemporary works of art. A brief discussion of historical events as well as background in Chinese philosophy, political systems and religious practices will be presented in order to allow students to recontextualize selected works within their originating culture. The course is designed to provide students with a foundation in visual literacy of China, facilitate written expression and familiarize them with New York City's cultural institutions exhibiting Chinese art.

2 credits

HTA 333 Islamic Art and Architecture

See HTA 323

HTA 334 Art and Architecture of Islamic India

A chronological study from the 16th century to the 19th century of the development of the art and architecture of the Mughals; and an examination of the Arab, Persian, Indian and European influences that shaped that culture.

2 credits

HTA 335 Art and Architecture of the Ancient Near East

From the temples of the land of Sumer to the tower of Babylon, this course provides an overview of the civilizations of ancient Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) and Iran, as well as surrounding regions, from the Neolithic period to the 1st millennium B.C.E.—some 10,000 years. We will study the architecture and artifacts excavated at major sites in the fertile crescent including Jericho, Uruk, Ur, Nineveh and many others. In addition, we will discuss major landmarks in the history of civilization such as the development of agriculture, the beginning of urban settlement, the invention of writing, and the discovery of metallurgy, and their impact on the manufacture of art and artifacts and their iconography.

2 credits

HTA 336 Site-Specific Art

This course explores the history of site-specific art, a term that emerged in the 1960s to describe artworks created in response to a place or a set of conditions. The focus will be the role of "site" in minimalism, land-art, post-minimalism, institutional critique, new genre public art, and contemporary participatory and social practices. Each evolution of the term is also a critique of the site's role in the previous moment: the site in minimalism is complicated by feminist performance work; land-art is problematized by the post-minimalists and institutional-critical artists working primarily in the city. In the 1990s site-specificity also became a way to critique the monumentality of public sculpture that claimed to represent everyone: new-genre public art and community-based work comes out of artists' struggle to make work that responds to the social fabric of a site and not simply to its physical location. We will read key historical and theoretical texts closely, and student presentations will be a major part of the course. Material is organized thematically and structured around field trips to art installations throughout New York City.

2 credits

HTA 337 Russian Art and Culture

The class will survey the history of Russian art, reaching back to its pre-modern origins. It will address Russian arts and culture in their specific political and ideological context(s). Special attention will be paid to examining the interdisciplinary character (art, architecture, design, film and theater) of Constructivism and Suprematism of the early 20th century. The course will also address the impact of the historical (or revolutionary) avant-garde on contemporary art practices. Students will be required to prepare short in-class presentation on a specific modern or contemporary artist, architect, or designer, who uses or used the constructivist vocabulary in his or her work, and, as a final project, write a ten page research paper.

2 credits

HTA 340 The Artist in Renaissance Italy

This course will focus on artists working in the Italian peninsula between ca 1400 and ca 1600, with the goal of learning how and why they created the paintings, tapestries, sculpture, prints and decorative art that we now think as "Renaissance." In addition to studying materials, techniques and iconography, we shall consider the important role of patronage, both sacred and secular.

2 credits

HTA 341 Body Politics in Art Since 1945

This elective will examine the multiple and dynamic ways in which art since the Second World War has constructed understandings of the body. Over the course of the semester, we will meet a strange and motley assortment of bodies: the diseased body, the heroic body, the queer body, the abject body, the body-as-machine. Not primarily concerned with images of the human figure—although they will certainly make appearances from time to time—the course will instead ask, "How does art think the body?"

2 credits

HTA 99 Independent Study (History/Theory of Art)

2 credits

FACULTY

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Cynthia Hartling
Administrative Associate

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Acting Co-Director, Center for Writing

Kit Nicholls
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Visiting Distinguished Professors

Visiting distinguished professors in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences have included: Diane Ackerman, André Aciman, Stanley Aronowitz, David Garrow, David Harvey, Richard Howard, Tamar Jacoby, Floyd Lapp, W.S. Merwin, Derek Mahon, Marie Ponsot, Hillard Pouncey, Jim Sleeper and Alan Trachtenberg

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