ARH 382 The Art of Roman Dictatorship  
Dr. Penelope Davies  
W 9-12, ART 3.432  
This seminar focuses on public art and architecture created in Rome during the last decades of the Republic (ca. 100-44 BCE), when through territorial expansion individual politicians amassed wealth on an unprecedented scale. Against a backdrop of electoral bribery and judicial corruption, three men—Sulla, Pompey and Caesar—rose to absolute power and helped to bring down the government.

ARH 383 Topics in Medieval Art: The Altar  
Dr. Joan Holladay  
T 2-5, DFA  
The altar—the physical and liturgical heart of the church. This seminar will consider this pivotal object from the early Christian period up to the Reformation, using both contemporaneous and modern sources. What form did the altar take? Where was the high altar located in the church, both with respect to other altars—large abbey churches had literally dozens—and in relation to the geometry of the building? We will look at the changing requirements for altars over time and by region, their materials, their physical integrity, the requirements and procedures for their consecration, and the relationship of the altar and the saint’s tomb. As art historians, however, we will pay special attention to the decoration of altars, including retables and frontals, antependia, and altarpieces, including painted and sculpted objects with moveable wings and works intended to hold relics.

Weekly discussion based on readings; oral report; and substantial research paper.

ARH 384 Bosch and Bruegel  
Dr. Jeff Smith  
M 12-3, ART 3.432  
Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel the Elder have been the subject of intensive new research in the last few years. On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Bosch’s death, he was honored with major exhibitions in ’s-Hertogenbosch, his hometown, and Madrid, as well as dozens of new publications and a multi-year Dutch research project. Bruegel’s jubilee tied to the 450th anniversary of his death, will occur in 2019 though the largest modern exhibition of his paintings will open in mid-October 2018 in Vienna. This seminar will examine the artists’ oeuvres, recent discoveries, persistent questions, and their varied scholarly reception.
ARH 386P Archives and the History of Everyday Life  
Dr. Ann Reynolds  
W 12-3, HRC/ART 3.432  
The “everyday is often considered to be only a monotonous backdrop to the “significant” or “singular” events of history. Yet, for some, everyday life conceals the purloined letter of history itself. In this seminar, we will read the work of a variety of individuals who consider history, biography, and the study of archives through the lens of the seemingly ephemeral or lived experience. We will also necessarily address the relationship between writing biography and autobiography, archives and archival research and the production of knowledge, and the impact these choices have on the writing of history in conjunction with archival research in the Harry Ransom Center, where we will meet each week.  
ASSIGNMENTS: short presentations on archival materials related to weekly assigned readings, films or videos; a progress report on a research project based on archives in the Harry Ransom Center; and an annotated bibliography and abstract of this research project.

ARH386P Writing About Contemporary Art  
Dr. Richard Shiff  
T 3:30-6:30, ART 3.432  
The art of the past two decades, essentially the art of the new twenty-first century, escapes effective characterization by the categories most familiar to art historians. For example, the work of a nominal “painter” may not fit the category of work in painting as a medium conventionally understood. But the new work also tends not to fit those categories designed to circumvent identity with any particular medium (or even with an individual), including installation art, environmental art, performance art, participatory art, and the many modes of conceptual art. Nearly all recent art can be described as “questioning” or “subverting” the tenets of so-called modernism, which have been treated as obsolete at least beginning with the generation of artists who came to prominence during the late 1960s and 1970s. Can modernism still be questioned (and still be defined) when so few admit to practicing it? Are there alternative, more direct means of assessing the value of the various contemporary practices, rather than identifying ways in which they differ from past practices or applying a theoretical construct from a parallel discipline? Are there effective ways of discussing the politics of various practices, given the current changes in “world order”? This seminar will explore strategies for effective writing about contemporary art, with an emphasis on developing the students’ observational and analytical skills. Artists of interest because of the difficulty of placing the range of their practice will become objects of our study. In a previous version of this seminar, featured artists were Katharina Grosse (environmental “painting”), Jim Campbell (electronic deconstruction of images), Theaster Gates (social transformation?), and Kai Althoff (immersive installation?).
ARH 387 Theories of Art and Identity  
Dr. Cherise Smith  
T 9:30-12:30, CMA 3.108  
This course will historicize the politics of identity in American art by tracking its trajectory over the period from 1970 to 2010. Students will compare discourses that theorize identities as “real,” “authentic,” fixed, stable, and unchanging, to those that understand identities to be inauthentic, fluid, transitory, and ever-changing constructions. Texts that fall under the rubrics of Feminism, Black Cultural Studies, Critical Race Art History, Multiculturalism, and Queer Studies among others will be read to discern similarities and divergences. Key events, ranging from the NEA controversy (1989), The Decade Show (1991), the Crown Heights and Los Angeles uprisings (1991 and 1992), and the Whitney Biennial Exhibition of 1993, will also be studied. Artists to be studied include Catherine Opie, Marlon Riggs, Robert Mapplethorpe, Adrian Piper, Mickalene Thomas, Juan Capistran, Cindy Sherman, and Eminem, among others.

ARH 390 Visible Speech: The Art of Writing  
Dr. David Stuart  
T 9-12, ART 3.432  
Systems of writing – the visible encoding and display of language – are integral to many traditions of art and visual culture. By its very nature writing creates a conceptual bridge between the visual and linguistic realms, playing an inherently problematic yet important place in the theory of text/image relationships. Since ancient times artists have experimented with, and have even abandoned outright, the boundaries between categories of image and text, raising persistent analytical issues for students of art history and related fields. This seminar will address such questions through a look at intersections between art, text and language, with a focus on ancient visual cultures but taking a broad cultural and geographical scope.

ARH 394 Islamic Ornament  
Dr. Stephennie Mulder  
F 10-1, ART 3.432
Islamic art is famous for its tradition of ornamented surfaces, while Western art has often used ornament primarily to highlight or enhance the impact of an image. This course is a comparative study of the role of ornament, which takes as its founding premise that both Islamic and European art emerged from the same Late Antique visual milieu: in which abstract, geometric, and vegetal ornament played a key, (though often neglected) role. The study of ornament has a long and important history in art and design, but with the advent of modernism, ornament was deemed ethically suspect and inimical to art's higher purposes. Nevertheless, in the past few decades, under the aegis of postmodern theory, ornament has assumed a renewed significance. We will explore multiple scholars' perspectives on ornament: its practical function and creation, its ability to transform surfaces and thereby change their reception and meaning, and its role as a semiotic device and broader social function as a marker of class, faith, or exoticism.

An important proposal we will explore is the idea that ornament is not mere “decoration,” but rather has a rich functional and symbolic role to play in the human response to and understanding of art. With this role in mind, a key skill students will acquire in this course is the ability to make a visual analysis of a work of art whose primary feature is its ornament. What is the place of abstraction, and when and how is it employed? To what degree may we say ornament is linked to the natural world, especially vegetal ornament? How, in Islamic art, does writing function as ornament? What is phenomenological promise of ornament, its role in the enhancement of diversion and pleasure, and how does ornament fulfill that promise? We will also explore the way in which ornament has a distinctly transient role, how it is often associated with a conception of the “exotic” and as such, tends to move fluidly across boundaries of medium, culture, and society. Examples of this transience range from the reception in Islamic lands of medieval Chinese porcelain, to medieval Europe's hungry market for elaborately decorated Islamic metalwork and textiles.

Class Requirements:
Attendance and participation
Periodic presentations of readings
Presentation of research project to class at end of semester
Research paper on topic of your choosing (15-20 pgs.)
ART HISTORY
GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
FALL 2018

The task of this seminar is to parse historiographical, methodological, and (inter)disciplinary problems and debates that have given shape to the practice of art history and visual culture studies through the close reading of (mostly recent) texts from a variety of temporal, geographical, and critical vantage points. We will also view art exhibitions on campus in order to test these approaches. Students will produce weekly response papers or curate selections of images to facilitate discussion. They are also expected to attend the art history division’s lecture series. By the end of the semester, students will be able to think critically about the writing of art histories and their own place in the discipline.

ARH 398T Supervised Teaching in Art History
Dr. David Stuart
Time TBD
Teaching under the close supervision of the course instructor for one semester; weekly group meetings with the instructor, individual consultations, and reports throughout the teaching period.