Attention students: Please note the background readings for each course are intended to provide foundational knowledge for students who do not have a strong background in the topic. These readings are not likely to be assigned during the course of the semester. It is recommended that students read these foundational texts before the semester begins.

**FALL 2014**

**ARHS 535: Flowers of the Red Liquor of Life: The Symbolism of Blood in Ancient Mesoamerica**
William Barnes  
Mondays, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

From the art of the Olmec at the dawn of Mesoamerican civilization in the second millennium B.C. to the art of the Aztecs in its twilight, ancient Mesoamerican visual culture brims with the imagery of blood and the implements used for its spilling. This most sacred of fluids was shed by gods, kings, queens, nobles, commoners, prisoners, and slaves to legitimize authority, nourish the gods, create worlds, and maintain the cosmos. This seminar will focus on the imagery of blood in the art of Mesoamerica from Olmec knuckledusters and jade spines, to Maya and Aztec imagery of royal autosacrifice. It will also look at Mesoamerican ceremonialism and its depiction both in the Pre-Hispanic and in the Colonial record. Seminar participants will investigate how this divine liquor became the hallmark of Mesoamerican civilization, and, in a critical approach, investigate the role that it played in the rhetoric of its European colonizers and later interpreters.
Required texts:


Recommended background reading:


**ARHS 510.01: Sacred Springs and Shiny Things: The Conversion of the North Expressed in Objects and Sacred Spaces.**
Shelly Nordtorp-Madson
Tuesdays, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

This course will explore sacred spaces, from open groves and holy springs, to the great churches; and the visual culture produced during the Christianization of the British Isles and Northern Europe, such as manuscript illumination, wall painting, sculpture, and metalwork and other decorative arts of the period ca. 100-1200. Cultures to be studied include Celtic Christianity, Ango-Saxon, Baltic, Viking, and Norman as well as looking at the influences of the Benedictines, the Carolingians and Ottonians, Byzantium, and even the Arab communities. Each region had its own visual expression of the new religion, often heavily influenced by pre-Christian beliefs and representations.
**Recommended background reading:**


Painter, K.S. “Villas and Christianity in Roman Britain.” *The British Museum Quarterly* 35, no. 1/4 (Spring 1971), 156-175.


**ARHS 500: Methods and Approaches to Art History**

Victoria Young and Heather Shirey (team teaching)

Wednesdays, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

This class will examine how we research, analyze, and interpret art. Beginning with more traditional approaches grounded in formal analysis and iconography, the course will then consider more recent theories and perspectives such as semiotics, structural analysis, post-structuralism, Marxism (socio-economic and political analysis), ritual theory and anthropology, psychoanalysis, feminism, and post-colonialism. The class will seek to balance theory and practice through a series of short and medium-length papers and class presentations, resulting in a final portfolio.

The class will begin with a consideration of the beginnings and definition of art history and then move on to a survey of different methods or approaches, considering a new method each week beginning with stylistic/formal analysis and moving on to methods that consider meaning and context. Common readings will consist of historiographical overviews, theoretical explanations, and practical applications of each method; students will present summaries and critiques on selected additional readings for class discussion. Students will be asked to write a synopsis of each method defining its goal, basic process, terminology, and evidence. In addition, they will write short essays that will apply some of the methods in assigned projects drawing from a range of historical and geographical periods. We will also spend several nights discussing the role of ethics in art history. Unlike other graduate seminars that produce an in-depth research paper, this class will produce a portfolio of shorter writing that focuses on processes.

This course is combined with ARTH 211 (for undergraduate majors) on Wednesdays, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

**Text required for class:**

ARHS 510.02: Narrative and Context in Greek Vase Painting
Mark Stansbury-O’Donnell
Thursdays, 5:30-8:30

Narrative images on Greek vases have long been a subject of study in the history of Greek art. Traditionally, scholarship focuses upon the identification and iconography of mythological scenes, the consideration of the artistic construction of time and space, and a comparison to known literary sources. Drawing upon recent studies, this course examines pictorial narrative within a more structured theoretical framework, drawing upon methodologies such as semiotics, structural analysis, post-structuralism, and feminism, among others. The class will also look at the contexts in which narrative is consumed across the Mediterranean and how meaning and identity in a narrative can shift with the functional rather than artistic context for a vase.

Recommended background reading:


ARHS 535: African American Art
Heather Shirey
Tuesdays, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

This course will investigate African American art in the United States from the early colonial period to the present. Focusing on art forms as diverse as painting, sculpture, architecture, photography, performance, installation, film, textiles, and hairstyling, we will study the visual arts in their shifting historical contexts. The course will examine the political and social dimensions of issues such as artistic training and patronage in relation to the development of African American art traditions, taking into consideration as well the intersections of gender and race. A central theme of the course will be the position of the visual arts in the creation of racial and ethnic identities, and with this the active role that African American artists have played in challenging the dominant ideologies.

The primary academic goals for this course are to: 1) Provide students with an understanding of key issues in the study of African American art as an academic discipline. This knowledge base will include work of influential African American artists throughout history, including a wide array of contemporary artists; 2) Engage in a consideration of the relationship art to other intellectual and cultural activities; this is especially important in our discussion of the Harlem Renaissance and Civil Rights movement; 3) Involve students in a sophisticated dialogue regarding race and the role of visual imagery in its construction.
Recommended background reading:


**ARHS 515: Leonardo da Vinci and the Evolution of High Renaissance Painting in Italy**  
Lois Eliason  
Wednesdays, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Between the years 1480-1520, Florence, Italy was in the midst of an intense artistic and intellectual movement that culminated in the ideals of the High Renaissance.

This revolutionary time period is arguably most traceable through the career of Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), who integrated the developments of the Early Renaissance with his intense personal interest in fields of scientific inquiry such as botany, optics, and engineering, to name a few. This seminar will explore the influence of late fifteenth-century art from Italy and the North on the young Leonardo, and how his unique assimilation of these earlier traditions enabled his prolific number of experimental drawings and paintings that would alter the course of two-dimensional artistic expression in the Western world.

While this course has its focus on Leonardo, it will also investigate the milieu of Early Renaissance and High Renaissance culture in Italy and the other key figures who shape a fuller understanding of the time period. Beginning with Leonardo’s apprenticeship with the notable Florentine sculptor, Verrocchio, we will trace the development and maturation of Leonardo’s independent artistic career that flourished despite the challenges presented by the talent of his younger rivals, Michelangelo and Raphael.

Some of the topics and questions we will explore include: the evolution of the portrait format that culminated in the Mona Lisa; the Mona Lisa as focus of iconic and iconoclast pleasure; development and meaning in Leonardo’s fantasy landscape painting; the application of scientific inquiry in drawing and painting and the relevance of Leonardo’s experiments to contemporary technology; Leonardo as artistic ambassador: painting as a vehicle for political allegiance and alliance.

**ARHS 520: Post-Minimalism**  
Craig Eliason  
Thursdays, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

In the early nineteen-sixties, Minimalism was one of the most pervasive styles respected by the contemporary artworld in the United States. Soon thereafter, many artists began to call into question the assumptions behind Minimalism. These artists, subsequently labeled Post-Minimalists, produced works that can be seen as a return of what was repressed in the earlier movement: Minimalism’s geometry gave way to Post-Minimalist biology;
universality to personality; regularity to eccentricity; product to process. In this seminar we will examine the Post-Minimalist trend in American art of the later sixties and seventies, considering its relationships to Minimalism and to our contemporary moment.

Some of the issues we will investigate include: references to the body in abstract art; subverting or circumventing the gallery system; the “dematerialization of the art object” (Lippard); “scatter pieces” and the unity of the artwork; the gender of formalism; the relevance of late Surrealism; transgressive, threatening, and abject art and the “informe” (Bataille); and the purposes, procedures, and problems of categorizing contemporary art. Artists to be considered will include Vito Acconci, Richard Artschwager, Lynda Benglis, Lee Bontecou, Louise Bourgeois, Eva Hesse, Gordon Matta-Clark, Robert Morris, Bruce Naumann, Lucas Samaras, Richard Serra, Robert Smithson, and James Turrell; movements will include Anti-Form, Earthworks, Eccentric Abstraction, Light and Space, and Process Art.

Recommended background reading: