

Prof. Victor Coonin  
412 Clough, x3824  
coonin@rhodes.edu

## **Northern Renaissance Art**

Spring 2001  
TTh, 9:40-11:10

### **Course Objectives and Description**

This course will investigate Northern European art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Students will be introduced to the major artists, subjects, and stylistic developments during this time period. Additional emphasis will be placed on issues such as iconography, stylistic developments, social context, patronage, techniques, and recent developments in the field. Students will also be introduced to current research methods appropriate for art historical inquiry. Students are expected to actively participate in the course through regular attendance, class discussions, outside readings, and completion of all assignments.

### **Textbooks**

- James Snyder, Northern Renaissance Art, New York, 1985.
- Craig Harbison, The Mirror of the Artist: Northern Renaissance Art in Its Historical Context, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1995.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

### **Grading**

Students will be evaluated by the following criteria:

Class Presentations	20% (10% each)
Research Paper	30%
Mid-term Test	20%
Final Test	30%

## **Notes on Graded Assignments:**

### **Class Presentation**

Each student will lead at least two class discussions based on a reading assignment. Students may choose any article listed on the syllabus. Students should prepare to address the following four issues:

**1--** What is the subject of the article and why was it written? In other words, why should anyone care to read and discuss this piece in the first place.

**2--** What are the methods used to address the issue? This is more subtle, but each author has a definite strategy or methodological approach to the material, which you should identify.

**3--** What are the conclusions reached? What do we learn from the study?

**4--** What is your critical reaction to the article? This is of crucial importance! Did the article make sense? Do you think the conclusions are valid? What did the author ignore? Could there have been an alternative conclusion? Would a different method have helped? Is this the definitive interpretation?

**Note:** Students may choose to lead an extra discussion and the grades will be averaged. **Hint:** This is a nice (optional) way to improve one's grade.

### **Paper Assignment**

Each student will choose a paper topic in consultation with the instructor. The possibilities are endless and students are encouraged to find a topic that is creative, original, and that they find personally interesting. Papers should be written in a format consistent with MLA guidelines and spelling, grammar, style, etc., will all be taken into account. All sources consulted must be cited, and important visual points should be supported by illustrations of the work under discussion.

**Important:** Students are expected to do independent research and locate their own source material. Many of these sources are listed on the syllabus but students are expected to consult articles and books not listed. Additionally, students are encouraged to consult on-line resources (especially the BHA) and use of these should be clearly noted in the text. Length of paper should be about 8-10 pages with no extraneous filler.

### **Class Participation**

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions, to raise questions, to complete reading assignments, and generally contribute to class activities. Excessive absences (more than three) will be penalized at a rate of 1/3 letter grade per absence.

## Essential Bibliography: Books

Baxandall, Michael, The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany, 1475-1525, New Haven, 1980.

Blunt, Anthony, Art and Architecture in France, 1500-1700, New Haven, 1988.

Christensen, Carl C., Art and the Reformation in Germany, Detroit, 1979.

Cuttler, Charles, Northern Painting from Pucelle to Bruegel, New York, 1968.

Friedländer, Max, J., Early Netherlandish Painting from van Eyck to Bruegel, London, 1956.

Harbison, Craig, The Mirror of the Artist: Northern Renaissance Art in Its Historical Context, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1995.

Andrée Hayum, The Isenheim Altarpiece: God's Medicine and the Painter's Vision, Princeton, 1989.

Huizinga, Johan, The Waning of the Middle Ages, any translation.

Lane, Barbara, The Altar and the Altarpiece: Sacramental Themes in Early Netherlandish Painting, New York, 1984.

Meiss, Millard, French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: The Limbourg and Their Contemporaries, New York, 1974.

Muller, Theodore, Sculpture in the Netherlands, Germany, France and Spain, 1400-1500, Harmondsworth, 1966.

van der Osten, Gert, and Vey, Horst, Painting and Sculpture in Germany and the Netherlands, 1500-1600, Harmondsworth, 1969.

Panofsky, Erwin, Early Netherlandish Painting, Its Origin and Character, 2 vols., Cambridge, MA, 1953.

\_\_\_\_\_, The Life and Times of Albrecht Dürer, Princeton, 1943.

Purtle, Carol J., The Marian Paintings of Jan van Eyck, Princeton, 1982.

Snyder, James, Northern Renaissance Art, New York, 1985.

Stechow, Wolfgang, Northern Renaissance Art, 1400-1600: Sources and Documents, New York, 1989.

## **Schedule of Classes\***

### **January 11: Introduction to Northern Renaissance Art**

Discussion of Erwin Panofsky, Early Netherlandish Painting, Its Origin and Character, 2 vols., Cambridge, MA, 1953.

### **January 16: The International Style and Illuminated Manuscripts**

#### **Readings:**

B. Buettner, "Profane Illuminations, Secular Illusions: Manuscripts in Late Medieval Courtly Society," Art Bulletin, 74, 1992, 75-90.

van Buren, Anne Hagopian, "Thoughts, old and new, on the sources of early Netherlandish Painting," Simiolus, 16, 1986, 93-112.

### **January 18, 23, & 25: Jan Van Eyck and Iconography**

#### **Readings:**

James Marrow, "Symbol and Meaning in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance," Simiolus, 16, 1986, 150-169. [and response by Craig Harbison, pp. 170-172.]

Jan Baptist Bedaux, "The Reality of Symbols: The Question of Disguised Symbolism in Jan Van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait," Simiolus, XVI, 1986, 5-26.

van Buren, A., "The Canonical Office in Renaissance Painting II: More about the Rolin Madonna," Art Bulletin, 60, 1978, 617-633.

Edwin Hall, The Arnolfini Betrothal: Medieval Marriage and the Enigma of Van Eyck's Double Portrait, Berkeley, 1994.

E. Melanie Gifford, "Van Eyck's Washington Annunciation: Technical Evidence for Iconographic Development," Art Bulletin, LXXXI, 1, 1999, 108-116. And Carol J. Purtle, "Van Eyck's Washington Annunciation: Narrative Time and Metaphoric Tradition," Art Bulletin, LXXXI, 1, 1999, 117-125.

### **January 30 & February 1: Robert Campin, Rogier van der Weyden, and Religious Imagination**

#### **Readings:**

Barbara Lane, "Sacred versus profane in early Netherlandish Painting," Simiolus, 18, 1988, 107-115. [and reply by Craig Harbison, "Religious Imagination and Art Historical Method: A Reply to Barbara Lane's 'Sacred Versus Profane,'" Simiolus, 19, 1989, 198-205.]

Meyer Schapiro, "Muscipula Diaboli: The symbolism of the Mérode Altarpiece," Late Antique, Early Christian and medieval Art, New York, 1979, 1-19.

Cynthia Hahn, "Joseph Will Perfect, Mary Enlighten and Jesus Save Thee: The Holy Family as Marriage Model in the Mérode Triptych," Art Bulletin, 68, 1986, 54-66.

Barbara G. Lane, "'Requiem aeternam dona eis': the Beaune Last Judgement and the Mass of the Dead," Simiolus, 19, 1989, 167-180.

### **February 6: Dieric Bouts, Petrus Christus**

#### **Readings:**

Schabacker, P., "Petrus Christus's 'Saint Eloy': Problems of Provenance, Sources and Meaning," Art Quarterly, 35, 1972, 103-122.

Maryan W. Ainsworth, "The Art of Petrus Christus," Petrus Christus: Renaissance Master of Bruges, exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum, New York, 1994, 25-65.

### **February 8: Hugo van der goes, Geertgen Tot Sint Jans**

#### **Readings:**

Julia I. Miller, "Miraculous Childbirth and the Portinari Altarpiece," Art Bulletin, 77, 1995, 249-262.

Barbara Lane, "'Ecce Panis Angelorum': The Manger as Altar in Hugo's Berlin Nativity," Art Bulletin, 57, 1975, 476-486.

### **February 13: Hans Memling, Gerard David**

Maximiliaan P.J. Martens, "The Dialogue between Artistic Tradition and Renewal," Bruges and the Renaissance, Bruges, 1998.

### **February 15: Hieronymus Bosch**

#### **Reading:**

Laurinda Dixon, "Bosch's Garden of Delights Triptych: Remnants of a 'fossil' science," Art Bulletin, 63, 1981, 96-113.

Morganstern, A., "The Pawns in Bosch's Death of the Miser," Studies in the History of Art, 12, 1982, 33-41.

Virginia G. Tuttle, "Bosch's Image of Poverty," Art Bulletin, 63, 1981, 88-95.

### **February 20: France and Germany in the Later 15th Century**

### **February 22: First Test**

### **February 27: 15th-century German Sculpture**

#### **Readings:**

Michael Baxandall, "Functions" and "The Market," in The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany, 1475-1525, New Haven, 1980, Chapters III & VI, pp. 50-122.

## **March 1: No Class**

### **\*Spring Break\***

## **March 13, 15, 20: Albrecht Dürer**

### **Readings:**

Michael Levey, "Dürer and the Renaissance," Essays on Durer, ed. C.R. Dodwell, Manchester, 1973, pp. 1-23.

Erwin Panofsky, The Life and Times of Albrecht Dürer, Princeton, 1943, "Melancolia I," pp.157-171.

Carl C. Christiansen, "The Four Apostles as Reformation Painting," in Art and the Reformation in Germany, Detroit, 1979.

A. Hayum, "Dürer's Portrait of Erasmus and the Ars Typographorum," Renaissance Quarterly, 38, 1985, 650-687.

## **March 22: Luther and the Reformation**

### **Readings:**

Jeffrey Chipps Smith, "Art or Idol?," German Sculpture of the Later Renaissance c.1520-1580, Princeton, 1994, Chapter 2, pp. 31-45.

## **March 27: Art in Renaissance Nuremburg**

### **Readings:**

Keith Moxey, "The Function of Secular Woodcuts in Nuremburg of the 16th Century," New Perspectives on the Art of Renaissance Nuremburg, J.C. Smith, ed., Austin, Texas, 1985.

Keith Moxey, "Festive Peasants and Social Order," Peasants, Warriors and Wives: Popular Imagery in the Reformation, Chicago, 1989, 35-100.

## **March 29: Discussion of The Mirror of the Artist**

### **Required Reading:**

Craig Harbison, The Mirror of the Artist: Northern Renaissance Art in Its Historical Context, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1995. Individual chapters will be assigned for discussion.

## **April 3: Matthias Grünewald, Albrecht Altdorfer, and Hans Baldung Grien**

### **Readings:**

A. Hayum, "The Meaning and Function of the Isenheim Altarpiece," Art Bulletin, 59, 1977, 501-517.

Larry Silver, "Nature and Nature's God: Landscape and Cosmos of Albrecht Altdorfer," Art Bulletin, LXXXI, 2, 1999, 194-214.

C. Talbot, "Baldung and the Female Nude," Hans Baldung Grien Prints and Drawings, exh. Cat., Washington, 1981, 19-37.

Dale Hoak, "Art, Culture, and Mentality in Renaissance Society: The Meaning of Hans Baldung Grien's Bewitched Groom," Renaissance Quarterly, 119, 1987, 488-510.

#### **April 5: Lucas Cranach and Hans Holbein the Younger**

##### **Readings:**

Helmut Nickel, "The Judgement of Paris by Lucas Cranach the Elder: Nature, Allegory, and Alchemy," Metropolitan Museum Journal, 16, 1981, 117-129.

S. Foister, A. Roy, and M. Wyld, Making and Meaning: Holbein's Ambassadors, London, 1997, "Part I," 14-57.

**Thursday, April 5<sup>th</sup>: Special Lecture by Prof. Gary Radke, Hardie Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.**

#### **April 10: Antwerp and Holland (or Museum Visit)**

##### **\*Easter Recess\***

#### **April 17: Romanists, Specialists, Lucas van Leyden, and Maerten van Heemskerck**

#### **April 19: Pieter Bruegel the Elder**

##### **Readings:**

Svetlana Alpers, "Bruegel's Festive Peasants," Simiolus, VI, 1972-3, 163-176.

#### **April 24: Fontainebleau School and Final Discussion**

##### **Readings:**

Larry Silver, "The State of the Research in Northern European Art of the Renaissance Era," Art Bulletin, 68, 1986, 518-535.

Erwin and Dora Panofsky, Pandora's Box, Chapters IV and V.

#### **April 26: Second Test**

\*Note that the schedule may be modified during the semester to accommodate a museum visit and other special opportunities.