Art 321: Early Christian, Byzantine, and Medieval Art
Fall 2000
TTH 9:40-11:10; 417 Clough

Course Objectives and Description
This course will examine the visual arts in Europe during the period normally known as the Middle Ages. It stretches roughly from the reign of Constantine in the 4th century to the outbreak of the Black Death in 1348 (or from the end of the classical period to the dawn of the Renaissance). The course will also cover art emanating from the Byzantine Empire. During this era, Europe saw strikingly new and original artistic forms, both in a secular context and in art related to the increasingly influential Christian church. Topics covered will include issues of aesthetics, iconography, style, functionality, and spirituality.

Textbooks:
James Snyder, Medieval Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture 4th-14th Century, New Jersey, 1989. [Required]

Supplemental Texts with Original Documents:
An emphasis of the course is the reading of primary documents in order to understand the art of the period in its original context. Supplemental readings come from the following sources and will be distributed in class:


Readings from Scholarly Journals:
Students should be familiar with the following academic journals devoted to Art History:

- The Art Bulletin leading American journal of Art History
- The Burlington Magazine leading British journal of Art History
- Gesta published by the International Center of Medieval Art
- Dumbarton Oaks Papers studies of Byzantine art and culture
- Simiolus journal of Medieval History

We currently receive each of these journals in Burrow Library. Supplemental readings have been chosen from these sources. They are challenging yet accessible articles and all have been published within the past dozen years.
Computer Resources and the Internet
There are several excellent sites on the Internet that have pertinent information on Medieval art and architecture. Many are available through links on my homepage. The most complete is called Netserf and is maintained by Catholic University. The address is as follows: www.cua.edu/www/hist/netserf/

Grading
Two Class Presentations
Research Paper on topic of choice
Museum Presentation

Class Presentations
Each student will lead class discussions based on a contemporary scholarly article (or in some cases, a medieval source reading). Each student must establish the context for the reading, discuss its significance, and offer an insightful critique of the issue involved. A written synopsis of class discussion must be submitted by the discussion leader at the first scheduled class following the presentation. The synopsis should take into account any issues, questions, or interesting comments generated in class. Late papers will be penalized 1/3 letter grade per class period.

Research Paper
For your paper you should explore a timely theme of interest in the study of Medieval Art. Your paper should cover the following four areas: 1) clearly state the issue and/or hypothesis under consideration; 2) review how the subject was treated in the past; 3) explain what new methods, discoveries, or theories, are being applied to your topic; 4) finally, discuss the importance and relevance of the issue today. This is not designed to be an extensive research project nor are you expected to come to definitive new interpretations or solutions. Rather the paper is intended to be a critical review of past and recent scholarship, and a reasoned analysis of your topic. Merely rehashing old ideas will not earn a good grade. I expect analytical and critical thinking.
Sources: You are expected to consult the most recent sources regarding your topic. This will include both books and articles, some of which may not be available in our library. So get started early and I can help you obtain materials. In addition, much information is available on the Internet. While I encourage you to use (and cite) these sources note that the quality and reliability of web sites is radically mixed so be very careful which ones you use. My Homepage will guide you to some reliable research sites.
Nitty Gritty: All topics must be approved by October 12th. Paper length should be 6-8 pages supplemented by illustrations (photocopies) and other relevant supporting material. Papers are due on November 16th, the final class before Thanksgiving break.
Museum Presentation
Each student will choose a work of art from the Memphis Brooks Museum that will serve as the basis for a class presentation. The presentation must be clearly organized and the student should be prepared to respond to questions from classmates and the instructor. The following guideline will help your preparation.

- **1-- Describe the Salient Characteristics of the work-- its medium, formal elements, and general Baroque characteristics. Identify the style, subject matter, time and place of execution.**

- **2-- Establish the Historical Context of your piece. What do we know about the artistic and cultural context that is specifically relevant to your work? Is it from a church or a home? Is the subject matter common? How, where, and by whom would the object be seen? Can you compare this to similar works located in books or seen in class? Is your work indicative of the period in which it was produced? Is it anomalous?**

- **3-- Interpretation-- What are the meanings the work carries? How does one “read” the work in the context in which it was produced as well as today? What does the work teach us?! What are some specific areas that remain enigmatic and could be investigated? You may find that for many of the pieces the dating seems a bit late for the style and you should address that issue.**

Presentations should last a minimum of 10-15 minutes; there is no maximum limit. Those listening are expected to respond to the presentations and raise questions. Individual presentation dates will be assigned.

**Note:**
Below is a list of the most appropriate objects for presentations. There are additional manuscript pages available for students particularly interested in the later Byzantine influences on art from the Russian Orthodox Church. These are particularly difficult objects and students should have the appropriate language skills. If you locate any other appropriate objects in Memphis that you wish to study please let me know so this can be accommodated.
List of Objects at the Brooks museum Available for Class Presentations

Sarcophagus Panels Depicting the Good Shepherd
Roman Sculpture, 4th century

Mocking of Christ
German Stained Glass, 1485-1510

The Annunciation
English Sculpture (Alabaster), 1430-40

Processional Cross
Spanish, Silver & Enamel, ca.1390

Hood of Cope with Ascension
S. Netherlandish, fabric, 15th century

Stained Glass with Catherine and Agnes
English, 1450-60

Candlestick
German, ca.1480

St. Michael Sculpture
German, limewood, 1450-60

Hexagonal Censor on Chain
Byzantine, ca.900-1100

Font Supported by Lions
(This is probably a nineteenth-century object made in the Romanesque style.)

Madonna and Child with Four Saints
Panel painting, ca.1285

Madonna and Child with Saints and the Crucifixion
Follower of Duccio, ca.1300

The Crucifixion with Scenes of Christ and St John the Baptist
Lippo di Benivieni, ca.1315

Leaf from a Book of Hours, Service for the Dead, ca.1450

Leaf from a Book of Hours, October Calendar, ca.1450
Schedule of Classes

I. Late Antique and Early Christian Art

For next class please begin reading the first chapters in your textbook on “The Beginnings of Christian Art.” Handouts will be provided for supplementary readings.

Aug 29: Images, Propaganda, and Spirituality
Snyder: Chapter I, II, III, IV
Tertullian, Minucius Felix, and Paulinus of Nola on the decoration of churches (D-W, pp.3-7 and 17-19).

Aug 31: Brooks Museum Visit
The main purpose of this visit is to introduce you to the Medieval works of art in the Memphis Brooks Museum. We will meet at the front doors of the museum at precisely 9:55 a.m. so we can view objects that are not normally on display.

Sept 5: Early Christian Architecture
Snyder: Chapter II, III, IV
The Book of the Popes and Prudentius on St. Peter’s and St. Paul’s (p.11-15)
Eusebius on the Church of Tyre; The Holy Sepulchar; and The ideal church;
(Mango: 3-7, 11-14, 24-26)

Sept 7: Early Christian Iconography and the Decoration of Churches
Holt: Theoderich (p.74-79)
D-W: Prudentius on Inscriptions (p.25)

Sept 12: Early Illuminated Manuscripts
Snyder: Chapter V
D-W: Instructions for a Painter of Miniatures (p.23-25)

II. Byzantium

Sept 14: The Golden Age of Justinian
Snyder: Chapter VI & VII
Excerpts from Paulus on Hagia Sophia; Mango: Various writers on Hagia Sophia (p.72-102); Holt: Robert of Clari (p. 79-88); Mango: Agnellus on Ravenna (p.104-8).

Sept 19: Iconoclasm and Later Byzantine Art
Snyder: Chapter VIII
Mango: Intro & excerpts p.149-177
*Charles Barber, "From Image into Art: Art after Byzantine Iconoclasm," Gesta, XXXIV/1, 1995, 5-10.

Sept 21: Byzantine Art at Home and Abroad
Snyder: Chapter IX, X
Mango on miracle-working images (p.210-214)

*On this day we will also attend the Moss lecture to be given by Professor Harold Cohen. Time and place TBA.*

III. Early Middle Ages

Sept 26: The North
Snyder: Chapter XI
D-W: Treatise of Bishop Desiderius; and St. Eloy of Noyen (p.66-70)

Sept 28: Monasticism and Manuscripts
Snyder: Chapter XII
D-W: How to Paint the Apostles (p.78-9)

Oct 3: Carolingian and Ottonian Art
Snyder: Chapter XIII, XIV
*D-W: Einhard (p.83-4); Two Monasteries (p.92-99); St. Bernward as a Patron (p.122-3)

IV. Romanesque Art
*Note: Prof. Schriber will join us at some point during this section to discuss the Bayeux Tapestry.*

Oct 5: The Pilgrimage Roads
Snyder: Chapter XVI
D-W: Glaber (p.124-5) and Santiago di Compostela (p.147-156)

Oct 10: Monasticism Across Europe
Snyder: Chapter XVI, XVII
D-W: Cluny (p.128-132); Holt: St. Bernard (p. 18-22)

Oct 12: Reliquaries and the Cult of Saints

Fall Recess

Oct 19: Normandy, England, and Italy
Snyder: Chapter XVIII, XIX
D-W: Eadmer (p.112-114); Gervase (p. 141-6); Leo of Ostia (p. 135-141)

V. Gothic Art

Oct 24: Gothic Architecture in France
Snyder: Chapter XXII
*Holt: Abbot Suger excerpts (p. 22-48)

**Oct 26: Sculpture, Manuscripts, and the Minor Arts**
Snyder: Chapter XXIV
Holt: Theophilus (p. 1-8); Letters on Chartres (p. 49-51); Villard de Honncourt (p.88-91) and Jean Pucelle (p. 129-134)

*On this day we will also attend the Moss lecture to be given by Professor Caroline Jones. Time and place TBA.*

**Oct 31: The Spread of Gothic and the Rayonnant Style**
Snyder: Chapter XXII, XXIII
Holt: Letters on Canterbury (p. 52-62); Roriczer (p.95-101)

**Nov 2: Italian Gothic Architecture**
Snyder: Chapter XXV
Holt: Milan Cathedral (p. 107-114)

**VI. Late Medieval Art in Italy**

**Nov 7: Italian Sculpture**
Snyder: Chapter XXV

**Nov 9: Class Rescheduled**
I will be at an Italian Sculpture Conference.

**Nov 14: Giotto and Duccio**
Snyder: Chapter XXV
Holt: Procession (p. 134-6)

Nov 16: Museum Visit— Medieval Panel painting and the Dawn of the Renaissance
Holt: Cennini (p. 136-150); Excerpts from Boccaccio’s Decameron

Thanksgiving Recess

Nov. 21: Museum Presentations

Nov. 28: Museum Presentations

Nov. 30: Museum Presentations

Dec. 5: Museum Presentations