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Office Hours MTWTh 1-2
or by appointment

Art 321: Art and Spirituality in the Middle Ages

Fall 2006

TTh 2:00-3:15; Clough 417

Course Objectives and Description

This course will examine the visual arts in Western Europe and the Byzantine East during the period normally known as the Middle Ages. Chronologically this stretches roughly from the reign of Constantine in the 4th century to the outbreak of the Black Death in Europe in 1348 (or stylistically from the end of the classical period to the dawn of the Renaissance). 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. Emphasis of the course will be placed on the nature of art and spirituality during these turbulent times. Other topics covered will include issues of aesthetics, iconography, artistic style, the making and function of art objects, and women in the Medieval world.

Textbooks

Required:

- *Snyder's Medieval Art* (2nd Edition) by Henry Luttikhuizen and Dorothy Verkerk, 2005.

Optional:

- Peter and Linda Murray, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture*, Oxford, 1996. [Useful and inexpensive, an optional reference.]
- Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*

Grading

- 3 Tests (25% each)
- Student Presentations (graded pass/fail)
- 1 Research Paper (25%)
- Group discussions and attendance (graded pass/fail)
- More than 3 absences may lead to a lower final grade

Three Important Notes

- All students are expected to abide by the Rhodes College Honor Code.
- Changes in content, scheduling, or other aspects of the course may be made at the discretion of the instructor. A rationale will always be provided.
- Students with disabilities will be offered appropriate academic accommodation. Requests should be made during the first two weeks of the semester and students must register with Student Disability Services.

Schedule of Classes

Part I. Late Antiquity and Early Christian Art

Aug 24: Introduction to Medieval Art and its classical background.

For next class please read the handouts provided for debate and discussion

Aug 29: Iconography, Propaganda, and Spirituality in Late Antiquity

Readings on controversies regarding Christian imagery from Tertullian, Minucius Felix, and Paulinus of Nola.

Aug 31: Early Christian Architecture

Sept 5: Iconography in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries

*Thelma K. Thomas, "The Medium Matters: Reading the Remains of a Late Antique Textile," in *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and the Object*, ed. E. Sears and T.K. Thomas, University of Michigan Press, 2002.

Sept 7: Group Discussion Session

All students must read one of the following:

*J.-M. Spieser, "The Representation of Christ in the Apses of Early Christian Churches," *Gesta*, XXXVII, 1, 1998, 63-73.

*Ann Marie Yasin, "Funerary Monuments and Collective Identity: From Roman Family to Christian Community," *The Art Bulletin*, Volume LXXXVII, Number 3, September 2005, 433-457.

*Lois Drewer, "The Alcaudete Sarcophagus," in *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and the Object*, ed. E. Sears and T.K. Thomas, University of Michigan Press, 2002 [N5975 .R425 2002].

Part II: The Byzantine Empire

Sept 12: The Golden Age of Justinian

Readings: Excerpts from various authors on the Hagia Sophia and Fox on "What, if anything, is a Byzantine?"

*Irina Andreescu-Treadgold and Warren Treadgold, "Procopius and the Imperial Panels of S. Vitale," *Art Bulletin*, LXXIX, 1997, 708-723.

Sept 14: Middle and Late Byzantine Art

*"Icons," from Thomas F. Matthews, *Byzantium: From Antiquity to the Renaissance*, New York, 1998, pp. 43-72.

Sept 19: Byzantium in Italy

Sept 21: Group Discussion

All students must read the following:

*Excerpts from *Byzantine Women and Their World*, exhibition catalogue from Harvard and Yale, 2003, pp. 35-41, 67-73, 113-118, 139-143, 161-166, 215-220, 233-238, 275-280 (less than 50 total pages, with pictures).

Sept 26: Exam 1

Part III. The Early Middle Ages

Sept 28: Northern Traditions

Reading: The Treasury of Bishop Desiderius

*Martin Werner, "On the Origin of the Form of the Irish High Cross," *Gesta*, XXIX/1, 1990, 98-110.

*Robert D. Stevick, "Shapes of Early Sculptured Crosses of Ireland," *Gesta*, XXXVIII, 1, 1999, 3-21.

Oct 3: Monasticism and Manuscripts

Reading: How to Paint the Apostles

Video on the Lindisfarne Gospels

Oct 5: Carolingian Art

Oct 10: Diffusion, Diversity, and Ottonian Art

Reading: St. Bernward as a Patron

*Adam S. Cohen and Anne Derbes, "Bernward and Eve at Hildesheim," *Gesta*, XL/1, 2001, pp.19-38.

*Harvey Stahl, "Eve's Reach: A Note on Dramatic elements in the Hildesheim Doors", *Reading Medieval Images*, ed. E. Sears and T. Thomas, University of Michigan Press, 2002, 162-175

Oct 12: Group Discussion

All students must read a chapter of choice from:

*William J. Diebold, *Word and Image*, 2000.

Fall Recess

Part IV. Islam, The West, and Romanesque Art

Oct 19: Islam and the West

Oct 24: Discussion

All students must read one of the following:

*Walter B. Cahn, "The 'Portrait' of Muhammed in the Toledan Collection," in *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and the Object*, ed. E. Sears and T.K. Thomas, University of Michigan Press, 2002 [N5975 .R425 2002].

*Oleg Grabar, "About a Bronze Bird," in *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and the Object*, ed. E. Sears and T.K. Thomas, University of Michigan Press, 2002 [N5975 .R425 2002].

Oct 26: The Pilgrimage Roads, Cathedrals and Monasteries

Readings: Church-Building Around the Year 1000

Oct 31: The Papacy, Empire, and the Cult of Saints

*Bynum and Gerson, "Body-Part Reliquaries and Body Parts in the Middle Ages," *Gesta*, XXXVI, 1, 1997, 3-7.

*Cynthia Hahn, "The Voices of the Saints: Speaking Reliquaries," *Gesta*, XXXVI, 1, 1997, 20-31.

Nov 2: Art and Politics in Normandy, England, and Italy

*Cyril Hart, "The Canterbury contribution to the Bayeux Tapestry," *Art and Symbolism in Medieval Europe: Papers of the Medieval Europe Brugge 1997 Conference*, Vol. 5, 1997, pp.7-15.

Nov 7: Discussion Romanesque

All students must read one of the following:

*Chapter of choice from Andreas Petzold, *Romanesque Art*, New York, 1995.

Or

*Michael Camille, "'Seeing and Lecturing': Disputation in the Twelfth-Century Tympanum from Reims," in *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and the Object*, ed. E. Sears and T.K. Thomas, University of Michigan Press, 2002.

Nov 9: Test 2

Part V. The Late Middle Ages and Gothic Art

Nov 14: Gothic Art in France

Readings from Abbot Suger (Holt, pp. 22-48)

*Daniel H. Weiss, "Architectural Symbolism and the Decoration of Ste. Chapelle," *Art Bulletin*, LXXVII, 1995, 308-320.

Nov 16: The Dissemination of Gothic Art

* Jacqueline E. Jung, "Beyond the Barrier: The Unifying Role of the Choir Screen in Gothic Churches," *Art Bulletin*, LXXXII, 4, 2000, pp.622-657.

Nov 21: Late Medieval and Gothic Art in Italy

*Sally J. Cornelison, "Art Imitates Architecture: The Saint Philip Reliquary in Renaissance Florence," *The Art Bulletin*, LXXXVI, 4, 2004, pp. 642-658.

*Nancy M. Thompson, "The Franciscans and the True Cross: The Decoration of the Cappella Maggiore of Santa Croce in Florence," *Gesta*, 43/1, 2004, pp. 61-79.

Thanksgiving Recess

Nov 28: Discussion:

Read chapter of choice from:

*Michael Camille, *Gothic Art: Glorious Visions*, New York, 1996.

Nov 30: Discussion: Medieval Revivals

All students should read (or at least skim) this first “Gothic” novel:

Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*

If time allows we may also discuss Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*

Dec 5: Last Class: Museum Visit—From Medieval to Renaissance

We will meet at the Memphis Brooks Museum at 2:15 so nobody has to hurry to class.

Final papers due.

Final Exam

The final exam is scheduled for Dec. 13 (Wednesday) at 1:00

Since this is the last day of exams and students often wish to leave campus earlier we will make arrangements for an alternate exam time or a take-home system bound by the honor code.

Helpful Material

Supplemental Texts with Original Documents:

Periodic reading assignments will be assigned from primary documents in order to understand the art of the period in its original context. These supplemental readings generally come from the following sources and will be distributed in class:

- Caecilia Davis-Weyer, *Early Medieval Art, 300-1150*, Toronto, 1986.
- Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, *A Documentary History of Art*, Vol. I, Princeton, 1981.
- Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453*, Toronto, 1986.
- Theresa G. Frisch, *Gothic Art, 1140-ca.1450*, Toronto, 1986.

Readings from Scholarly Journals:

Students should be familiar with the following academic journals devoted to Art History. They are especially appropriate for the study of Medieval art and supplemental readings have been chosen from the most recent issues. We currently receive each of these journals in Burrow Library and back issues may be ordered through interlibrary loan:

- *The Art Bulletin* (leading American journal of Art History)
- *The Burlington Magazine* (leading British journal of Art History)
- *Gesta* (devoted to Medieval art and published by the International Center of Medieval Art)
- *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (excellent source for studies of Byzantine art and culture)

Research Sites Online:

Research may be conducted through various online databases. Links are available through the library webpage. Note particularly the following:

Bibliography of the History of Art (BHA)

JSTOR (for Full text articles)

There are additional sites on the Internet that have pertinent information on Medieval art and architecture. The following are excellent places to begin:

Netserf: The Internet Connection for Medieval Resources

www.netserf.org

International Center of Medieval Art

<http://www.medievalart.org/>

Notes on Class Presentations and Discussions

Each student will lead a class discussion based on a scholarly article marked on the syllabus by *. The assigned student must establish the context for the reading, clearly articulate the author's thesis and method, and offer an insightful critique of the issue involved while identifying areas for further inquiry. A brief synopsis must be submitted before class following the outline below.

Each student will also act as a discussant for an additional article as well as participate in group discussions. Discussants must be prepared to discuss the article in class but need only briefly respond in writing to the presentation outline provided below. Excessive class absences (more than 2), failure to adequately prepare for discussions, or any absence on a day assigned to be leader or discussant will result in a lowering of the final grade.

Presentation Outline

The presentation leader must respond fully to all three of the following in writing, which must be turned in before class begins. Discussants need only respond briefly in writing with a few sentences for each question.

1) What is the main point of the article? (Identify the thesis or the reason we should be interested in the article in the first place.)

2) What are the methods used to make the case? (Identify the way the author goes about making an argument. Identify and new evidence brought to bear, such as theoretical, scientific, documentary, iconographic, stylistic, etc.)

3) Provide an overall critique. Was the article useful? Do you agree or disagree with the article? Would you have accepted it for publication? How might the author have strengthened the article? How does this article enhance our understanding of Medieval art? Would you recommend this article being used again?

Notes on the Research Paper

Your paper should make a significant and original contribution to our discussion of Medieval Art. You should identify a timely theme of interest and I encourage you to think broadly in terms of designing your topic to explore ideas across a wide spectrum of time, geography, and artistic contexts. The paper must be professionally presented. It must be proofread for grammar and presentation style and use consistent and proper format for notes and bibliography. It must contain a high level of 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. Get started early so 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. See the prior page for suggestions where to begin.

Nitty Gritty: All topics must be approved by November 2nd. Paper length should be 10-12 pages, supplemented by illustrations (photocopies), notes, and other relevant supporting material. **Papers are due on December 5th.**