Spring, 2022 Course Descriptions

ART 81000 Rethinking Ink Art in 19th and early 20th century China  
Professor Chou Wen-shing  
Tuesday, 2:00-4:00 pm, 3 credits, hybrid (mostly in person), no auditors, permit and non-art history with permission  

Description TBA  
This course fulfills either a Modern Art requirement or an Asian Art requirement

ART 86020 Post-Museum (Mellon Seminar)  
Professor Claire Bishop, and Katherine Carl, Curator of the James Gallery  
Thursday, 9:30-11:30 am, 3 credits, in person, auditors by permission

Recent writing by Ariella Azoulay and Dan Hicks would have us believe that that the Western museum is so imbricated in imperial violence and financial capitalism that it is no longer compatible with the visions of freedom and imagination expressed by the works of art it collects. Rather than itemizing these problems afresh, Post-Museum seeks to imagine cultures of display after the Western museum. What alternative value systems might be institutionalized around the object? How might these reach new audiences and tell new histories? Combining real-world examples with speculative exercises in radical imagination, Post-Museum aims to bring together overlapping issues from archaeology, Indigenous/African heritage, and modern/contemporary art. The research undertaken during this course will result in programming for the James Gallery (exhibition or talks) and/or a publication outlining new cultures of display in the twenty-first century.  
This course fulfills a Modern Art requirement

ART 86040 Attention/Internet: Spectatorship Today  
Professor Claire Bishop  
Thursday, 2:00-4:00 pm, 3 credits, in person, auditors by permission, cross-listed with Theatre and English, 12 students max  

Online: clickbait, pop-ups, pageviews, likes, upvotes, web-blockers, information overload. Offline: ADHD, mindfulness, distraction, willpower, being “woke.” All these terms indicate the centrality of attention to contemporary life, but the quality and quantity of our gaze has never been more sought after or contested. This interdisciplinary seminar seeks to identify changes in looking and reading that have arisen in tandem with digital technology and the Internet, and how these shifts impact upon the reception and consumption of contemporary art, performance and literature since the 1990s. A strong aspect of this course is methodological: attending to theories of looking and reading that pit depth (the traditional model of the humanities) against surface and speed (associated with online consumption). A range of texts from Art History, Psychology, Cultural Studies, Philosophy, English, and Theatre will be juxtaposed with cultural objects selected by the participating students.  
This course fulfills a Modern Art requirement
ART 77400: Topics in Modern Latin American Art and Architecture
Photohistories of Latin America
Professor Katherine Manthorne
Wednesday, 11:45-1:45 pm, 3 credits, online, auditors with permission

Embracing the multiple dimensions of photographic practice 1839 to the present from Mexico, the Caribbean and South America, this course combines illustrated lectures and critiques of readings supplemented by short student research papers, an image-based midterm examination and a take home essay final examination. Organized loosely chronologically, we focus on critical themes in key nations at select moments. We analyze formal, technical and biographical considerations of the photographic documents and their makers against their socio-historic context. Emphasis is placed on Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and Peru- nations that have generated strong photographic traditions and related literatures – complemented by material from other regions. Highlighting native-born photographers, we explore how Latin American photographers have drawn upon their rich history to reveal issues of identity, spirituality, and society.

This course fulfills a Modern Art requirement

ART 83000 Manuscripts and Materiality: Making and Using Books in the Middle Ages (Mellon Seminar)
Dr. Joshua O’Driscoll (Morgan Library) and Professor Cynthia Hahn (CUNY)
Mondays, 2:00-4:00 pm, Ed Center, in person, 3 credits, no auditors, 12 students max

Books were experienced intimately in the Middle Ages. As small objects that invited the viewer’s gaze and required bodily engagement in order to be read, they provided a unique occasion of exquisite sensory stimulation. This course will attend to the complex and surprising ways that medieval people related to their books: the ways they made them, touched them, read them, altered them, and the ways they used books to construct identities. Whether by turning their pages made of smooth and polished animal skin, or interacting with them in more unexpected encounters—as amulets, charms, rituals objects, or reliquaries—medieval books both invoked and provoked bodies.

In this course, students will engage with illuminated medieval manuscripts from the renowned collection of the Morgan Library & Museum. Seminar sessions (9 at the Morgan) will include curator-led examinations of key manuscripts as well as discussions of recent scholarship (Hamburger, Hennessey, Kay, Rudy). Microscopic examination, and discussion of conservation will also be included. For their final project, students will research and present a paper on a Morgan manuscript which they will be able to examine themselves. A previous knowledge of manuscripts is not required.

This course fulfills a Medieval Art Requirement

ART 76020 Materiality: The Social Lives of Objects of the Great War
Professor Karen Shelby
Thursday, 11:45-1:45 pm, in person, 3 credits, accepts auditors by permission

During the centenary, the contributions of twenty-first century scholars provide a new understanding of the role material culture played during and after the Great War. This course will examine the war through an interdisciplinary lens and a wide-variety of conflict-related objects. Three-dimensional narratives of the war, including battlefield landscapes, dioramas, panoramas, memorials, monuments, cemeteries, museums, and the 500-mile long Western Front itself, place the living into the imaginary realms of the dead. Art, in the form of painting, sculpture, prints, and photography also serve as socially constructed palimpsests for soldiers, those at the home front, and battlefield tourists. Some artists turned to figurative expression within a nationalist context, while others attempted to express the physical, psychological, and material devastation through less conventional methods. Amateur artists provided first-person narratives
of their experiences on the front line in photographs, diary sketches, and trench art. The latter became a popular commercial product during and after the war, blurring the line between art and kitsch. Depictions of the landscape gained agency as a focal point for commemoration and social transformation. Museum exhibitions attempted to provide an embodied experience of the war’s myriad histories through art and artifact. In this course we will explore the “limits of representation” in the depiction of atrocity, art in museums as historical artifact, and representation of the war in contemporary practice. We will also address propaganda and reflections of wartime citizenship, nationalism, official and unofficial war art, the relationship between fine art, camouflage and other utilitarian art forms, and postcolonial assessment of war cemeteries.

This course fulfills a modern art requirement

ART 89902
Pedagogy for Art History
Professor Joshua Cohen
Tuesday, 11:45-1:45 pm, 0 credit, in person, no auditors

This zero-credit course will focus on the distinctive challenges and opportunities inherent in teaching at CUNY, one of the most diverse universities in the United States. The goal is to reimagine the traditional teaching of art history so that it more effectively serves the needs of our students and our society at large. Topics to be addressed include the demographics of CUNY, designing a syllabus, creating lesson plans, running discussion, formulating tests and paper assignments, and interacting with students, as well as observations and mentoring with faculty at the CUNY campuses and opportunities to practice teaching.

ART 70010
Representing Race
Professor Judy Sund
Wednesday, 2:00-4:00 pm, 3 credits, hybrid, auditors by permission, cross-listed with GEMS 83000, 12 students max

The course begins with a panhistoric survey of the way “black” people have been represented in the Western world, with emphasis on the ancient and Medieval origins of enduring tropes of blackness and consideration of the question whether “race” is a viable term in discussions of visual cultures that predate the invention of racial categories. This overview prefacess discussion of their re-presentations in modern art; of Black self-representation (including contemporary artists’ pushbacks against longstanding tropes); and of museological re-presentations in current exhibitions and installations. The class will include visits to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where curators will discuss the intents and strategies that shaped the Afrofuturist period room (“Before Yesterday We Could Fly”) and the Carpeaux exhibition (“Why Born a Slave!”).

This course fulfills an Early Modern requirement

ART 89900
Dissertation Workshop
Professor Michael Lobel
Wednesday, 6:30-8:30 pm, hybrid, no auditors
Art History Level 3 students only with permission