

AH 400: Seminar in Art History Methods and Practice

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Outline

'Seminar in Art History Methods and Practice' is an advanced course in the practices of critical reading, thesis-driven writing, and scholarly research methods in art history. The course is discussion-based and provides a forum for students to share their research and writing, leading to the completion of the senior thesis. The course culminates with students submitting their senior theses to the members of the seminar.

'Seminar in Art History Methods and Practice' has three main objectives. First, the course is designed to guide students through the process of writing a substantive art historical research paper. In this endeavour, students will complete a number of reading, research, and writing exercises that will aid them in the creation of an original thesis pertinent to the field of art history. Concurrently, the course introduces students to methodological approaches to the interpretation of works of art. Students will become acquainted with the theoretical and critical issues that currently dominate art historical scholarship and will build confidence in discussing them in relation to various works of art. Finally, students will develop the skills they need to effectively present their work using visual evidence through the informal and formal presentation of their research.

N.b., Although we will attempt to adhere as closely as possible to this syllabus, details are subject to change.

Required books:

- Wayne Booth, et.al. *The Craft of Research*, 2nd ed., 2003
- Laurie Schneider Adams, *The Methodologies of Art: An Introduction*, Westview Press, 1996/2010
- Readings in my NT Account Outbox

Week 1

1/20 – Introduction

Read (for next Wednesday): Books	Read (for next Wednesday): Readings
Booth: Chap. 1-3 (pp. 9-50)	
Prepare an Art History/Fine Arts CV; bring enough copies to distribute.	
For chapters 1-2, write a short and thoughtful response focusing on at least two issues related to research that you had not considered before. For chapter 3, follow all steps for finding a topic and narrowing it to a manageable scope. Answer questions on pp. 46-47. Consult pp. 49-50 for help identifying a topic. Come to class prepared to present your ideas, even if you feel they are unclear.	

Week 2

1/27 – Research Unit 1: Research and Readers; Asking Questions, Finding Answers

DUE: CV, Short response to Booth 1-2, answers to pp. 46-47.

Read (for next Wednesday): Books	Read (for next Wednesday): Readings
Adams: Chap. 1-2 (pp. 3-41).	Vernon Minor, Chapter Eleven, "Visual Supremacy: Connoisseurship, Style, Formalism," pp. 125-139.
Booth: Chap. 5-6 (pp.68-100)	Yve-Alain Bois, "On Two Paintings by Barnett Newman," <i>October</i> , no. 108 (spring 2004): 3-34.

Week 3

2/3 – Methods Unit 1: Formalism & style

Read (for 2.17): Books	Read (for 2.17): Readings
Booth: Chap. 4, 7, 16 (pp. 51-67; 108-119; 232-248); also pp. 211-212.	
Follow all the steps in chapter 4 pertaining to framing your project as a problem. After reading chapter 16 and pp. 211-212, draft an introduction/abstract to your research paper that can serve as a proposal. Be prepared to share your work with the class, even if you are unsatisfied with your progress.	
Begin preparing 'state of research' for 3.3 (seriously!).	

Week 4

2/10 – No class – Research day

Week 5

2/17 – Research Unit 2: Asking Questions, Finding Answers: framing your question as a problem

DUE: Thesis Abstract

Read (for next Wednesday): Books	Read (for next Wednesday): Readings
Adams: Chap. 3 (pp. 43-64)	Erwin Panofsky, "Jan van Eyck's <i>Arnolfini</i> Portrait"
Prepare CV and paper proposal for 2.24.	

Week 6

2/24 – Methods Unit 2: Iconography

DUE: CV and Proposal

Read (for next Wednesday): Books	Read (for next Wednesday): Readings
Using your abstract as a guide, write an introduction for your paper. Be prepared to share your work with the class, even if you are unsatisfied with your progress.	

Week 7

3/3 – Research Unit 3: Peer review and the state of your field

DUE: Introduction, State of Research

Read (for next Wednesday): Books	Read (for next Wednesday): Readings
Adams: Chap. 4 (pp. 65-96).	Karl Marx, "Communist Manifesto"
	Meyer Schapiro, "The Nature of Abstract Art"
Writing assignment: Summarize the argument and methodological approach of Elliott H. King, "Le temps dalinien fait mouche: Réflexions sur les « montres molles », " in Astrid Ruffa, Philippe Kaenel, Danielle Chaperon (eds.), <i>Salvador Dalí à la croisée des savoirs</i> , Éditions Desjonquères, Paris, 2007, pp. 37—52.	

Week 8

3/10 – Methods Unit 3: Marxism and Social History

DUE: Foreign Language Writing Assignment

Read (for next Wednesday): Books	Read (for next Wednesday): Readings
Adams: Chap. 5 (pp. 97-124).	Anna C. Chave, "New Encounters with Les Demoiselles d'Avignon: Gender, Race, and the Origins of Cubism" in Reclaiming Female Agency, eds. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, (University of California Press, 2005).

Week 9

3/17 – Methods Unit 4: Feminism and Gender

Read (for 3.31): Books	Read (for 3.31): Readings
Booth: Chapt. 8, 9, 10 (pp. 120-151)	
Test your claims, evaluate the quality of your evidence, and begin to consider questions readers might have about your argument. Share drafts of any completed writing.	

Week 10

3/24, Spring Break!

Week 11

3/31, Research Unit 4: Claims, reasons, evidence, and responses

DUE: Thesis samples

Read (for next Wednesday): Books	Read (for next Wednesday): Readings
Adams: Chap. 7-8 (pp. 159-211).	Excerpt from Michel Foucault, "This Is Not a Pipe"
Booth: Chap. 13-14 (187-212).	
Prepare a significant portion of writing to share with the group on 4.7 to discuss 4.14.	

Week 12

4/7, Methods Unit 5: Semiotics

DUE: Lengthier thesis sample for peer review

(4/10 – student art history symposium at MCADenver)

Read (for next Wednesday): Books	Read (for next Wednesday): Readings
Adams: Chap. 9-10 (pp. 213-247)	Bradford R. Collins, "Dick Tracy and the Case of Warhol's Closet: A Psychoanalytic Detective Story"
Read others' writing and make thoughtful comments for final edit on 4.14.	

Week 13

4/14, Methods Unit 6: Psychoanalysis, final peer edit

Week 14

4/21, Research Unit 5: Preparing your Powerpoint Presentation

Week 15

4/28, Research Unit 6: Final Presentation Preparation

Week 16 (finals week)

5/5, Presentations (University of Colorado at Colorado Springs Undergraduate Art History Symposium)

Week 17 (finals week)

Final papers are due May 10th!

Requirements

Required books:

Available in the bookstore:

- Wayne Booth, et.al. *The Craft of Research*, 2nd ed., 2003
- Laurie Schneider Adams, *The Methodologies of Art: An Introduction*, Westview Press, 1996/2010
- Readings TBA in my NT Account Outbox

Class Meetings:

The class meets Wednesdays, 10:50pm-1:30pm, in COB 323.

Policies:

Readings:

As an upper-division seminar, this course is principally based on reading and discussion. It is therefore imperative that all students come to each class meeting having read the assigned readings and/or completed the writing exercises so that all are prepared to participate in the discussion. You will be expected to share your writing and participate in peer critiques.

Attendance:

This is a very small seminar class, so everyone's participation is very important. Punctual attendance of class is mandatory, and repeated tardiness will affect your final grade.

You *must* have a valid excuse to miss class (a valid excuse includes documented illness or personal emergency). If you must miss class, *you are responsible for informing me beforehand*. Excused absences for matters other than illness need to be cleared with me – in person, by phone, or by e-mail – two days before the date in-question. In the event of illness, a doctor's note may be required for the absence to be excused.

Unexcused absences occur when you do not notify me that you must miss class. Unexcused absences will result in penalization of your grade. **More than three unexcused absences will**

result in a failing grade for the class (in cases of illness or family emergency, please contact me as soon as possible).

Late Work:

Writing assignments are intended to help you with course material and progress you through preparing your theses. It is imperative that you work on your thesis throughout the semester so that you are not pressed for time at the end. As such, *late assignments will be penalized 1/2 letter grade per day late* (again, in case of emergency, please talk to me as soon as possible). Except in the case of extraordinary circumstances at my discretion, late theses will not be accepted.

Academic Integrity:

Upholding academic integrity is a very serious issue. You are expected to be familiar with the Honor Code, to follow it, and to work to achieve the community of trust and the atmosphere of intellectual integrity that it aims to create. Using sources without documentation – including borrowing work and ideas from fellow students without citation – is intellectual theft. Not only is this a violation of the UCCS Academic Honor Code, but, more globally, intellectual theft encourages a distrustful academic environment that readily impairs the progression of the intellectual discourse.

You must always cite information that is not considered common knowledge, regardless of whether you quote directly from a source or paraphrase. Although this is most directly applicable to research papers, it is important to credit your sources on all assignments. Plagiarized work receives a grade of "0".

ADA Questions:

If you have a disability and require accommodations for this course, please speak with me as soon as possible so that your learning needs will be appropriately met. Students with disabilities should turn in their disability verification letters within the first two weeks of class. For further information, contact Disability Services, Main Hall 105, 255-3354. For more information, see the [Disability Services page: http://www.uccs.edu/~dservice/](http://www.uccs.edu/~dservice/)

Military:

If you are a military student with the potential of being called to military service and/or training during the course of the semester, you are encouraged to contact me no later than the first week of class to discuss the class attendance policy. Please see the Military Students website for more information: <http://www.uccs.edu/~military/>.

Grading:

You will receive one grade for the course based on the following criteria: 'State of Field' paper (25%); Final Thesis (25%); Final Presentation (20%); 'Homework' (20%); Participation (10%).

Thesis (25%)

You may write your thesis on any topic relevant to the history of art. Use the introduction of your essay to engage your reader's interest in a problem or question that you would like to address in your paper. Show your reader what makes the question both significant and problematic. The body of your thesis should be divided into roughly two parts. The first part is to be devoted to a review of all the scholarly literature about your topic to-date. The second part of your thesis

should be your response to your own question made as persuasive as possible through appropriate analysis and argument, including effective use of visual evidence.

Papers must:

- be approximately 15-20 pages
- have 1.5 spacing
- be written in 10-12 pt font
- have 1" margins
- include proper footnotes (see below)
- include page numbers.
- include images, even if theoretical in nature. Note: Images should be included at the end of the paper (black and white or color are equally acceptable). Please caption the images – e.g., Salvador Dalí, *The Lugubrious Game*, 1929. Oil and collage on cardboard. Private collection.
- Include a bibliography.

For citations, use quotation marks and footnotes for all information that is not general knowledge, including information that you paraphrase. Please use the following format as a guide for footnoting:

1. Rudolf Kuenzli, "Surrealism and Misogyny", in Mary Ann Caws, Rudolf Kuenzli, and Gwen Raaberg (eds.), *Surrealism and Women* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 17-26.
2. Jean Clair, "Surrealism and the Demoralization of the West", http://watch.windsofchange.net/themes_39.htm (accessed 9 December 2008). Originally published in French as "Le surréalisme et la démoralisation de l'Occident", *Le Monde* (Paris), 21 November 2001.

Internet resources should buttress your research, not comprise it!

Except in the case of extraordinary circumstances at my discretion, late theses will not be accepted.

State of Research (25%)

This is a substantial paper (10-15 pages) in which you assess the state of the research in a particular field of art history related to your intended thesis topic or period of concentration; this will provide the groundwork for the opening of your thesis. This is not a time for you to express your own viewpoint. Rather, you will research the bibliography on your topic and prepare an in-depth overview and analysis of the state of the research in that area. You will want to pay particular attention to the types of questions and methods that are (and have been) applied to this area of research.

Class participation (10%)

Class participation is based on individual performance in class discussions and other contributions, including arranging auxiliary meetings with me outside class, if applicable. I will take participation as well as attendance and marked improvement into account during final grading, especially for those whose final letter grade is on the "borderline".

Remember, quiet students often make the most important contributions.

Grading standard:

A range: Excellent. "A" work is truly exceptional. It achieves a very high degree of originality and insight and shows intellectual sophistication and mastery of the course material. "A" papers take into account required readings and may include additional materials as well. They are technically perfect and written with elegance and style.

Lower "A" range work demonstrates that the student is capable of independent, creative, and critical thought, can synthesize their knowledge well, and can produce a finely wrought product. This level of work contains significant insights and ideas deriving from the student's own research and understanding of the course materials. In addition to the "B" qualities listed below, an "A-" paper is also very well written.

B range: Very good. "B" work indicates the student demonstrates sound knowledge of all the facts and information given concerning the object or issue in question. "B" projects will show the student thinking clearly and with rigor about issues and ideas. The student also has the ability to articulate his or her knowledge in the form of a clearly written essay.

Upper and lower ends of this range will indicate, for the former, a higher degree of performance, or, for the latter, a corresponding loss of clarity, insight, sophistication, and/or writing ability.

C range: Adequate. "C" work demonstrates the student's basic understanding of the material, with some mistakes or gaps in knowledge of relatively minor import. There may be flaws in written ability or expression (e.g. lack of coherence and organization, spelling and word choice issues, and inability to clearly express ideas or opinions) which detract from the student's ability to demonstrate his or her knowledge.

D range: Poor. "D" work displays meager comprehension of the basic course material and major gaps and flaws in the amount and quality of the student's knowledge. "D" papers and exams have serious flaws in factual information or written expression.

F: Failure. Failing work shows no knowledge or that the student cannot pull together the few things he or she does know into any synthetic understanding of the material of the class. "F" work will have serious flaws in writing, grammar, spelling, and structure.

How you can reach me:

If you feel lost or have any questions at all about the course, please email me at XXX or call me at XXX.XXX.XXXX (personal mobile); I check my email obsessively and will respond as quickly as possible. You may also make an appointment to meet in my office, COH 2007. I will be generally available from 2pm until 4pm Wednesdays, though I encourage you to arrange an appointment if possible. I am also usually available directly before and after class.

Remember that I am here to help you. *Please* ask for help anytime! **The only truly bad question is the one you don't ask!**