

## Art History: Theories and Approaches (ARH456 01)

Spring 2012  
 Professor Reva Wolf  
 Smiley Art Building (SAB) 118A  
 Tuesdays, 3:05-5:45

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**Office Hours:** Monday, Tuesday, 1-3; by appt.

### Course Description, Objectives, and Outcomes

What is art history? We examine this question by reading selected passages from the history of the discipline and from recent writings that call into question traditional approaches to the interpretation of art. We look at a wide variety of approaches that have been used to study art, including biography, psychoanalysis, formalism and style, periodization and national identity, iconography and iconology, patronage, feminism, Marxism, reception theory, and semiotics. This course is **writing intensive**, and can be used to fulfill the writing intensive (WI) requirement. Students conclude the course with a solid grounding in the history of art history and the debates surrounding the discipline. Students also gain skills for improving their writing and for pursuing in-depth research.

### Requirements

The Research Paper:

	<b>% of grade</b>
1. Topic proposal, two double-spaced, typewritten pages (due February 14)	5
2. Preliminary bibliography (due March 6)	5
3. Draft of paper (due April 10)	15
4. Final paper (due May 8)	30

Other Writing Assignments:

5. Three in-class essays	15
6. Midterm exam essay	15
7. Final exam essay	15

For the term paper, each student will select one essay or book of significance to the subject matter of the course, and will write an in-depth analysis of it based on careful research. The paper topic will be developed in stages, as outlined above. Detailed and concrete guidelines for all required assignments will be distributed in class in a timely way. The guidelines will include tips on approach and organization. The SUNY New Paltz policy on academic integrity is strictly enforced ([www.newpaltz.edu/advising/policies\\_integrity.html](http://www.newpaltz.edu/advising/policies_integrity.html)).

### Miscellaneous SUNY New Paltz Academic Policies

The last date to withdraw from a course without a penalty is March 30. Students who have made arrangements with the Disability Resource Center will be appropriately accommodated. Student Evaluations of Instruction (SEIs) will be administered electronically between May 1 and May 8 and your feedback is valued.

### Required Texts (available at the campus bookstore)

Freud, Sigmund. *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*. New York: W. W. Norton (most recent edition).

Preziosi, Donald, ed. *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*. 2d ed. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

## Schedule of Classes

**January 24 Introduction and discussion of paper topics**

**January 31 Early approaches to the art object**

Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 7-11.

Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, selected passage about portraits  
(**Blackboard**).

**February 7 Biographical approaches**

Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, selected passage about Apelles  
(**Blackboard**).

Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*  
(1568), selected passages from the life of Michelangelo (**Blackboard**).

Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the  
Artist: A Historical Experiment* (1934; English translation, 1979),

Introduction (**Blackboard**).

In-class writing exercise

**February 14 Approaches to understanding styles and periods: the Renaissance**

Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 13-21.

Vasari, "Preface to the Third Part," *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters,  
Sculptors, and Architects*, in Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 22-26.

**Approaches to understanding styles and periods: the seventeenth  
and eighteenth centuries**

Roger de Piles, *The Principles of Painting with a Balance of Painters*  
(1708), selected passage (**Blackboard**).

Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in  
Painting and Sculpture* (1755), selected passages, in Preziosi, *The Art of Art  
History*, 27-34.

REMINDER: TOPIC PROPOSALS DUE

**February 21 Approaches to understanding styles and periods: the nineteenth  
century**

Charles Baudelaire, "What Is Romanticism?" (1846), Salon of 1846  
(**Blackboard**).

Giovanni Morelli, *Italian Painters: Critical Studies of their Works*  
(translation, 1900), passage on the "study of form," 75-79 (**Blackboard**).

David Grann, "The Mark of a Masterpiece," *New Yorker*, July 12, 2010,  
online version (**Blackboard**).

**February 28 Approaches to understanding styles and periods: the twentieth  
century**

Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 115-18 and 151-54.

Alois Riegl, "Leading Characteristics of the Late Roman *Kunstwollen*," from  
*Late Roman Art Industry* (1901), in Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 155-61.

Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History* (1915), excerpt, in Preziosi, *The*

*Art of Art History*, 119-28.

- March 6**      **Formalist approaches**  
Roger Fry, Clement Greenberg  
**Review for midterm exam**  
REMINDER: PRELIMINARY RESEARCH PAPER BIBLIOGRAPHIES DUE
- March 13**      **Midterm exam**
- March 20**      **Spring break**
- March 27**      **Iconographic and contextual approaches: Aby Warburg, Erwin Panofsky**  
Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 215-19.  
Edgar Wind, “Warburg’s Conception of *Kunstwissenschaft*” (1930), and Claire Farago, “Silent Moves” (2002), in Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 189-212.  
Erwin Panofsky, “Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art” (1939), in Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 220-35.  
In-class writing exercise
- April 3**        **No Tuesday Classes (Friday Classes Meet)**
- April 10**      **Approaches to artistic production and reception**  
E. H. Gombrich, “Truth and Stereotype,” in Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (1961) (**Blackboard**).  
**Psychoanalytical approaches: Sigmund Freud and beyond**  
Sigmund Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*.  
REMINDER: DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE
- April 17**      **Politics and art history: Marx through World War II**  
Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1936), as published in Benjamin, *Illuminations* (**Blackboard**).  
Unpublished revised edition of the above essay by Benjamin, in Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 435-42.  
**Politics and art history: “Orientalism”**  
Timothy Mitchell, “Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order” (1989), in Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 409-23.  
In-class writing exercise
- April 19        Art History Association Symposium on “Orientalism,” details TBA; highly recommended

- April 24**      **Feminism and art history**  
Linda Nochlin, “Women, Art, and Power” and Ludmilla Jordanova, “Linda Nochlin’s Lecture ‘Women, Art, and Power,’” both in *Visual Theory: Painting and Interpretation*, ed. Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (**Blackboard**).  
Craig Owens, “The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism” (1983), in Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 335-51.
- May 1**      **Semiotics and art history / theories of authorship**  
Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 317-20.  
Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author” (1968), in Barthes, *Image / Music / Text* (**Blackboard**).  
Michel Foucault, “What Is an Author?” (1969), in Preziosi, *The Art of Art History*, 321-34.  
Michel Foucault, chapter 1 of *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1966), on Diego Velázquez’s painting *Las Meninas* (**Blackboard**).
- May 8**      **Conclusions and review for final exam**  
**REMINDER: FINAL PAPER DUE**
- May 15**      **Final exam, 2:45 pm**  
**(Tuesday)**

Note: This course outline is subject to minor revisions.