Art of the Medieval World

The centuries following the collapse of Roman authority in Italy and Gaul, and the destructive Gothic and Lombard invasions, witnessed the spread of Christianity to the farthest reaches of Europe and the Mediterranean, and the political, economic and cultural transformation of Western civilization. The new world that emerged during the so-called “Dark Ages” was in many ways vastly different from Roman antiquity, and yet there was a surprising degree of continuity with the ancient past, especially in the visual arts. In Art History 4383 we will discuss and interpret the major masterpieces of the Middle Ages, from the earliest Christian frescoes in the Roman catacombs to the soaring Gothic cathedrals of St. Denis and Chartres (circa 250 to 1250 A.D.). We will also consider the art of Islam and its interactions with the visual cultures of Byzantium and the Latin West. The emphasis will be on painting, sculpture and architecture, although enamels, stained glass and other mediums will also be considered. As we examine the style, iconography and symbolic meaning of medieval artworks and place them within their historical, socio-political and cultural contexts, we will focus in particular on the various manifestations of classicism and abstraction (thought by many to be mutually opposed) in the period between Late Antiquity and the High Middle Ages.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Grossman earned his B.A. in Art History and English at the University of California-Berkeley and his M.A., M.Phil. and Ph.D. in Art History at Columbia University. After seven years of residence in Tuscany, he completed his dissertation on the civic architecture, urbanism and iconography of the Sienese Republic in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance. He served on the faculty of the School of Art and Design at San Jose State University in 2006-2009, taught art history for Stanford University in 2007-2009, and joined the Department of Art at the University of Texas at El Paso as Assistant Professor of Art History in 2009. He is also Coordinator of the ROMA AETERNA study abroad program and Co-Chair of the Medieval and Renaissance Studies Group. He has presented papers and chaired sessions at conferences throughout the United States and Europe. In April 2013, he gave a keynote speech at Humanities West in San Francisco, “Bernini and Borromini: Architecture, Patronage and Power in Baroque Rome,” and in the following October he presented a paper in Bracciano, Italy entitled “Francesco di Giorgio Martini and the Orsini-Odescalchi Castle of Bracciano.” In April 2014 he delivered a paper at the 67th Annual Meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians in Austin: “Ghibellines, Guelphs and the Piazza San Cristoforo of Siena in the Duecento”; and in the following June he presented yet another paper, at the 3rd International Meeting of the European Architectural History Network in Turin, Italy: “Sienese Fortifications in the Age of the Guelph
Commune.” In May 2015 he will be chairing a triple session, sponsored by the Italian Art Society and hosted at the 50th International Congress of Medieval Studies: “Civic Foundation Legends in Medieval Italian Art and Architecture.” Dr. Grossman’s book review of Fabio Gabbrielli, *Siena medievale: l’architettura civile* (Siena: Protagon, 2010) appeared in *CAA Reviews* during fall 2012, and his article “A Case of Double Identity: The Public and Private Faces of the Palazzo Tolomei in Siena” was published in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* in March 2013. He is currently co-editing a large volume that will be published under the title *Condottieri and Courtly Culture in Renaissance Latium: The Orsini of Bracciano*; and he is writing a book stemming from his doctoral dissertation, the first synthetic treatment of the total architectural production of an Italian city-state. At present his research focuses on the political iconography of the Sienese commune, as manifest in painting, sculpture, architecture, coinage, seals and manuscripts. In addition, he is studying the development of the Italian civic palace, from its origins in the twelfth century through its final transformations in the quattrocento, with the aim of challenging and revising traditional paradigms while forming a new critical apparatus for interpreting the architecture and urbanism of medieval and Renaissance city-states. Off campus, Dr. Grossman serves as Vice-Chair of the El Paso County Historical Commission, where he presides over the Architectural Preservation Committee, whose mission is to formulate and implement strategies for protecting the architectural heritage of El Paso while promoting the economic development of the designated historic districts of both the city and county. He also serves on the board of the Texas Trost Society and on the advisory boards of the Tom Lea Institute and Humanities West.

**STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

1. To acquire a deep appreciation of the artworks of the Middle Ages in the Near East, Western Europe and the Mediterranean, and an understanding of the diverse historical, cultural and socio-political conditions of their creation.

2. To master the basic art historical terminology of the medieval period and attain the necessary analytical and critical skills for describing, dating and interpreting medieval artworks.

3. To understand how medieval artists developed innovative methods for communicating meaning and truth, and how their visions and aims evolved over time.

4. To analyze critically the use of classicism and abstraction by artists and patrons between Late Antiquity and the High Middle Ages, and to formulate theories of medieval classicism and abstraction that are based upon a thorough evaluation of available evidence.

5. To improve one’s ability to respond to works of art both analytically and affectively, and to write clearly, concisely, coherently, and with grammatical correctness.

6. To build a solid intellectual foundation on which to expand one’s knowledge of art history in other specialized upper-division courses.
COURSE PREREQUISITES

Students must be declared art history majors with at least junior status; they must have completed at least nine credit hours of ARTH 3300+; and they must have the permission of the instructor. Completion of Art History 1305 is recommended.

COURSE FORMAT AND GRADING

All lectures will be accompanied by digitally projected images of artworks. In addition to regular readings, students will be required to take two scheduled midterms, write a paper of at least twelve pages on a topic to be assigned in class, and take a cumulative final examination. The final grade will be determined as follows:

- Midterm #1: 20%
- Midterm #2: 20%
- Term paper: 25%
- Final examination: 25%
- Attendance/Participation: 10%

Make-up examinations will only be permitted following a documented emergency or illness. Papers must be submitted at the start of class on the due date or will not be accepted. Unexcused failure to submit the paper on time or to show up for an exam will automatically result in a grade of 0% (F). There will be no extra-credit assignments. All grades will be calculated as follows:

- 94-100% A
- 90-93% A-
- 87-89% B+
- 84-86% B
- 80-83% B-
- 77-79% C+
- 74-76% C
- 70-73% C-
- 67-69% D+
- 64-66% D
- 60-63% D-
- <60% F

Those students who will earn a failing grade (F) for the course no matter how well they perform on the final examination will not be permitted to take the final examination.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND BEHAVIOR

Attendance at all class meetings is absolutely mandatory as well as essential for success in this course since a substantial portion of the material on the midterms and final examination will be discussed only in lectures and will not be available in the assigned readings. Students who do not plan to attend every single lecture (and punctually) are advised to drop the course immediately and re-register in the future, when perfect attendance will not be an issue. Role will be taken at the start of every class. Students are required to arrive on time, refrain from talking, eating, sleeping, kicking up their feet, and using electronic devices; and they must remain for the duration of the class. The following rules are expected to be observed:

1. Students who arrive late must see the instructor after class in order to be marked as present.
2. If a student must leave early and has a documented excuse, the instructor must be informed before the start of class; otherwise the student will be marked as absent. Only serious illness or an actual emergency is a legitimate excuse.

3. In the event of an excusable absence, the instructor must be notified by email within 24 hours and written documentation of the absence must be presented to him within one week.

Each unexcused absence will result in a 2% reduction of the final grade. Each late arrival will be counted as half an unexcused absence and thus result in a 1% reduction of the final grade. Five unexcused absences will automatically result in a failing grade (F) for the course. Two unexcused absences between the first class and Census Day (September 10) will result in an automatic and permanent drop from the course.

**ADDING, DROPPING, WITHDRAWALS, PASS/FAIL, INCOMPLETES**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about adding and dropping, and for withdrawing from the course in a timely manner if it becomes necessary. September 19 is the last day to select the Pass/Fail option and October 31 is the last day to drop the course. See [http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=74281](http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=74281). An incomplete grade (I) can be given at the discretion of the instructor and approval of the department chair; in order to be granted an “Incomplete”, the student must be passing the course and encountering a legitimate emergency beyond his/her control that requires extra time to complete the coursework.

**LAPTOP COMPUTERS AND NOTE-TAKING**

The use of computers and other electronic devices (including recording devices) are prohibited during class. It is important that students focus their attention on the lectures and projected images without distractions and that they take careful and detailed notes. Students should write down and memorize key terms, phrases and dates. Any student caught using an electronic device during class will be marked as absent and expelled from the classroom.

**LIBERAL ARTS HONORS PROGRAM**

This class has been designated as a Liberal Arts Honors Program [LAHP] course. It has received this designation because it features at least five of the Honors course criteria, which include student leadership, advanced readings and/or reviews, opportunities for intensive writing, opportunities for intensive research, opportunities to utilize technology, opportunities to make extensive use of campus resources, community-based experiences, pre-professional opportunities, and development of critical thinking. In broader terms, this course is honors-designated because of its creativity and/or intellectual rigor, both of which are integral components of the Liberal Arts Honors Program. No additional coursework is necessary for this course to count towards the LAHP Honors minor. If you are not a member of the LAHP, and are interested in the program, please visit the LAHP website at [http://academics.utep.edu/lahp](http://academics.utep.edu/lahp).
BLACKBOARD

All files posted on Blackboard are the intellectual property of the instructor and may only be used for Art History 3310/4383, except with his written consent. These include but are not limited to:

1) The course syllabus.

2) Supplementary reading assignments.

3) A study sheet listing key artworks in the order in which they appear in the course and textbook. This should be brought to class so that lectures may be followed easily.

4) PowerPoint lecture files corresponding to each section of the course. These include all key artworks from the lectures as well as dates, terms, and other information.

5) PowerPoint flashcard files that contain all the study sheet images that must be memorized for exams.

PREPARATION FOR EXAMS

Attendance at all lectures, punctual completion of all assignments, and regular review and memorization of key artworks are essential for earning a passing grade on examinations. The two midterms and final will each consist of four sections:

1) Image identifications
2) Multiple-choice questions
3) Fill-in-the-blanks
4) Two short essays

To prepare for the exams, students should use the PowerPoint lectures files along with their notes and textbook to review all the course material very thoroughly. The major artistic periods and themes should be well understood, as well as all chronological sequences and vocabulary terms (in yellow in the PowerPoint lecture files), and other important facts discussed in lectures.

Furthermore, the artworks on the study sheet must be completely memorized: the names of artists (when listed), the titles of artworks or buildings, locations (when listed), dates of execution (within a margin of error of 10 years), and mediums (when listed). The PowerPoint flashcard files are designed to help with memorization.

FORMAT FOR PAPERS

Without exception, all papers must be double spaced and have standard one-inch margins, page numbers (beginning with the first page of the main text), and a title page (with the student’s
name, the date, the instructor’s name, and the title). All text must be in twelve-point font, preferably Times New Roman. There should be no extra spaces between paragraphs, and all paragraphs should be properly indented. Any quotations of at least three sentences must be set in block quotes with single spacing. Moreover, there should be a bibliography of cited works on a separate page at the end of the paper, followed by pages with illustrations of any featured artworks. It is recommended that students keep an extra printed copy of their written work. All papers must be received in hardcopy by the start of class on the due date. For all questions pertaining to grammar, syntax, footnoting and style, see the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style. For an excellent tutorial on how to document sources properly, see the following webpage: http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch10_s1-0001.html

Students who are concerned about the quality of their writing should contact the Writing Center and make an appointment well before the deadline: http://academics.utep.edu/writingcenter/

OFFICE HOURS AND APPOINTMENTS

The instructor will be available during office hours (M 4:30-6:00pm, T 10:30am-12:00pm) or by appointment, and can best be reached via his university email address: megrossman@utep.edu.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK


Recommended Writing Aids:


THE UTEP LIBRARY AND COURSE RESERVE SHELF

The university’s main library is an invaluable resource and contains many relevant books and periodicals. Some of these may be placed on the course reserve shelf, located at ground level. Students are welcome to contact the library staff for assistance with research.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

Cheating, plagiarism or collusion on any assignment or test will be reported to the Dean of Students and may result in a failing grade for the course and/or other disciplinary action. All papers must be original to the course (with no recycling of work from another class), meet all the requirements of the assignment, and properly cite all sources, including from the internet. Most importantly, all direct citations must be set in quotations and footnoted. See the UTEP policy on academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty: http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with limitations due to disabilities provided that they contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) and procure the proper documentation: http://sa.utep.edu/cass (tel: 747-5148). Students with documented disabilities must meet with the instructor within the first two weeks of class, with CASS documentation in hand, in order to inform him of any special needs. If particular accommodations are required for the midterms and final examination, the instructor must be informed and presented with the appropriate CASS documentation at least ten days before each scheduled test or no accommodations will be permitted.

SEMINAR/GRADUATE CREDIT

Students who are taking this course as ARTH 4383 in order to satisfy the art history seminar requirement, or as ARTH 5399 or ART 5395 in order to earn graduate-level credit, will be assigned additional reading, additional assignments, and a longer research paper (10-15 pages). These students are expected to visit the instructor during his office hours a minimum of once per calendar month.

COURSE SYLLABUS

The textbook and supplemental readings are intended to complement the lectures. The instructor may announce some minor modifications to the syllabus during the semester, with fair notice. It is expected that the reading assignments will be completed each week in a timely manner (by the Monday after they are assigned) in order that students are adequately prepared for the corresponding lectures as well as the examinations.
Snyder, chap. 1 (to be read by Aug. 27).

Aug. 25
Introduction
The Heritage of Imperial Rome

Aug. 27
Snyder, chap. 2.


Sep. 3
Late Antiquity: Art and Religion

Sep. 5
Snyder, chap. 3.


Sep. 8
Late Antiquity: Constantine and the Arts

Sep. 10
Late Antiquity: Fifth and Sixth Centuries

Sep. 15
Late Antiquity: Fifth and Sixth Centuries

Sep. 17
Byzantine Art Before Iconoclasm

Sep. 22
Byzantine Art Before Iconoclasm

Sep. 24
Middle and Late Byzantine Art

Sep. 29
Byzantine Art and Italy

Oct. 1
MIDTERM #1
Snyder, chap. 7 (135-54).

The Venerable Bede (672-735), “Benedict Biscop’s Roman Acquisitions,” in Davis-Weyer, 72-75.

Oct. 6 Northern Traditions and Synthesis
Oct. 8 Northern Traditions and Synthesis
Snyder, chap. 7 (154-63), chap. 9 (193-97), chap. 8 (164-75).

Einhard (c. 775-840), “The Palace Church at Aachen,” in Davis-Weyer, 83-84.

Oct. 13 Northern Traditions and Synthesis
Oct. 15 Carolingian Art and Architecture
Snyder, chap. 8 (175-92), chap. 9 (201-18).


Oct. 20 Carolingian Art and Architecture
Oct. 22 The Ottonian Empire and Scandinavia
Snyder, chap. 10 (219-23), chaps. 11-12.


Oct. 27 Muslims and Crusaders
Oct. 29 Muslims and Crusaders
Snyder, chap. 13 (253-70).


Nov. 3 MIDTERM #2
Nov. 5 Romanesque: Pilgrimage and Monasticism (PAPER ASSIGNED)
Snyder, chap. 13 (270-84).

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<td>Nov. 10</td>
<td>Romanesque: Pilgrimage and Monasticism</td>
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<td>Snyder, chap. 14.</td>
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<td>Leo of Ostia (1046-c.1115), “Desiderius’ Church at Monte Cassino,” ibid., 135-41</td>
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<td>Dec. 3</td>
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<td>Dec. 10</td>
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