Interpretation is not (as most people assume) an absolute value, a gesture of mind situated in some timeless realm of capabilities. Interpretation must itself be evaluated, within a historical view of human consciousness. — Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation*

This seminar explores the many methodologies employed by art historians to understand works of art, including Biography, Formalism, Psychoanalytic Theory, Iconography, Semiotics, Post-Structuralism, Marxism, Feminism, and Postcolonial Theory. We will engage with the questions and debates that have shaped the field of art history, and attempt to understand how the discipline itself is part of historical processes. Through critical reading and reflective response, we will not only investigate art history’s history, but also begin to articulate our own positions and voices.

**Course Materials**

Grant Pooke & Diana Newall, *Art History: The Basics* (2008) [required; available at Tufts Bookstore]


Jonathan Harris, *Art History: The Key Concepts* (2006) [recommended; available at Tufts Bookstore]

Additional required and recommended texts on reserve at Tisch Library, on reserve in the Art History Department, available in online databases; online course materials at Trunk.
Course Structure and Requirements

Monday meetings will be primarily lecture, with student participation; Wednesday recitations will center on student-led discussions extending from Monday’s lecture topics. Discussions will be generated from assigned readings, so it is imperative to keep up with the substantial and challenging readings, and to be prepared to engage with their ideas. Read actively. Take notes, not only on content but also on your own thoughts as you read: make connections with other readings, with other images, and with your own experience. I recommend – though do not require for your grade – keeping a reading journal, in which you record your thoughts, comments, questions and expansions on the readings and discussions. Come to class prepared to talk about both the readings and your ideas – you’ll find some questions for each topic on Trunk; use these as a starting point for digging into the texts, especially for those you find particularly difficult.

Your grade in the course includes assessment in the following areas:

**Participation:** 20% of course grade
- Engaged participation in class discussions (including online assignments);
- Preparation of readings

**Discussion Leading:** 25% of course grade
- Collaborative presentation and discussion on a group of texts and related issues;
- Small groups prepare class plan, post reading guide and discussion questions, and lead one class session. Guides and rubrics for this assignment will be posted on Trunk.

**Research and Methods Assignments:** 25% of course grade
- Several short writing assignments, including an iconographic analysis; an evaluation of research resources; a critical literature review; and an analysis of an exhibition. Guides for each assignment will be posted on Trunk. The research assignments will total 25% of your grade.

**Research Project:** 30% of course grade
- 12-15 page paper centered on critical analysis and assessment; topic and approach to be developed in consultation with instructor. Most projects will investigate at least 2-3 different methodological approaches to an art historical topic/problem. Your topic can be a) a single work of art, an artist or an art movement that has been interpreted from several points of view or b) a state-of-the-research paper on a specific problem in art history/art historical methodology. Your final project will include a bibliography with at least 8 sources, and an annotated bibliography is one of the stages in the project. We will spend some class time sharing, discussing and revising preliminary drafts or papers. Process (and grade) includes proposal, conference, annotated bibliography, peer workshops/drafts, and brief oral research report.

Your recitation leader will grade all your assignments and presentations. Both instructors will consult together on grading standards and final course grades.

Course Policies
Special Needs
Students with special needs must inform instructor within the first two weeks of the semester, so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged in consultation with the office of Academic Services.

Deadlines, and Policies regarding assignments
- All work is due as noted on the course calendar and/or Trunk.
- No late work will be accepted for this course without prior written permission of the instructor. (Emailing me the night before an assignment is due does not constitute permission.)
- Any arrangements for extensions are at the instructor’s discretion, and may include a grade reduction.
- Computer and/or printer failure will not be considered a valid excuse for late or missing assignments.
- Keep a copy of all assignments until you receive your final grade for the course.
- Unless specifically requested, do not submit assignments as email attachments.
- If you are absent from class, for whatever reason, be prepared for the next class meeting by following the syllabus.
- Attendance at all class meetings is expected. More than two unexcused absences will result in a lower grade, as will excessive lateness. Do not enroll in this class if you have foreseeable scheduling conflicts. Excused absences must be documented as emergencies by your academic Dean or advisor. If you have six total absences, you will fail the course.

Especially in the work of the course that is collaborative, be respectful of the members of your team in organizing and planning your work.

Plagiarism
You will receive an F (zero) on any paper, exam or assignment (print or electronic) you turn in that is plagiarized in any way; plagiarism may result in a failing grade for the course and/or in disciplinary action by the University.

Plagiarism is intellectual theft, using someone else’s words and/or ideas as if they were your own; plagiarism is dishonorable, and a violation of Tufts’ policies on academic ethics and integrity. You are responsible for educating yourself about what constitutes plagiarism; please read the policies on Academic Integrity, and speak with me if you have any questions. Tufts’ Academic Integrity policy is available as a PDF on this course’s Trunk site, as well as online here:

http://uss.tufts.edu/studentaffairs/publicationsandwebsites/AcademicIntegrity.pdf
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<tr>
<td>09.05</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Reading and online assignment: Art History and ‘Theory’</td>
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<td>09.10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Course Intro; Lecture: Art History’s History/Biography and Authorship</td>
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<td>09.11</td>
<td>T</td>
<td><strong>evening</strong>: 5:30-8, Opening Reception at Tufts University Art Gallery</td>
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<td>09.12</td>
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<td>Discussion: Representation</td>
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<td>09.17</td>
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<td>Lecture: Formalism &amp; Style History</td>
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<td>Library Workshop I</td>
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<td>09.24</td>
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<td>Lecture: Iconography &amp; Iconology</td>
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<td>Discussion: Iconography</td>
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<td>Lecture: Marxism and Social Histories of Art</td>
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<td>Discussion: Reproduction &amp; Display</td>
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<td>10.08</td>
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<td><strong>Columbus Day University Holiday – no class meeting</strong></td>
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<td>10.09</td>
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<td>Monday schedule: Lecture: Semiotics and Sign Systems</td>
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<td>Lecture: Postcolonialism and Globalism</td>
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<td>Discussion: Globalism, Art, Exhibition</td>
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**final project due 12.14**

FAH 100 Syllabus
09.05  W  Art History and “Theory”

read:  Harris, *Art History: The Key Concepts*, entries for Theory, and Art History


In this essay, Lippard reflects on her practices as an art historian, and on what ‘theory’ means in contemporary scholarship. Read her essay, and use the Trunk online forum to share your responses.

Consider: What is *theory*? How and why does Lippard “practice” theory? What does it mean to approach art (history) from a point of view, a *theoretical perspective*?

Make your first post on Thursday 9.06 by 10:00 pm; this post should be at least a couple of thoughtful paragraphs. Post a second time by Sunday 9.09 at 4:00 pm. Use this second post to engage with a post by one or more of your classmates – question, develop, and/or expand, in order to work through some of the implications of Lippard’s ideas.

Additional suggested reading: Critical Terms 12 “Art History”

09.10  M  Lecture: Biography and Authorship

read:  Pooke & Newall, 1-32

Vasari, *Lives of the Artists* (link on Trunk: read Cimabue, Paolo Uccello, and at least one other of your choice)


suggested: Harris, *Key Concepts*: Genius, Author, Canon

*online, after class: sign up for discussion groups and topics*

09.11  T  Tufts University Art Gallery

please plan to attend the opening reception for *Global Flows* (5:30-8:00 pm)

09.12  W  Discussion: Representation

read:  Critical Terms 1 “Representation”
Albert Boime, “Van Gogh’s Starry, Starry Night,” in Revelation of Modernism: Responses to the Cultural Crisis in Fin-de-Siècle Painting (University of Missouri Press, 2008), pp 1-51 (PDF)

reading guide & discussion questions posted on Trunk by Tuesday morning 09.11

09.17 M Lecture: Formalism & Style History
read: Critical Terms 7, “Style”
       Pooke & Newall, 33-58
       Meyer Schapiro, “Style” in Theory and Philosophy of Art (PDF)
suggested: Harris, Key Concepts, Formalism, Style, Modernity, Critic, Period

09.19 W Library Workshop I
both sections meet in Tisch Library, Electronic Resources Center

library resources assignment due by Monday 09.24 (guide on Trunk)

09.24 M Lecture: Iconography & Iconology
read: Harris, Key Concepts, Iconography, Narrative
       Erwin Panofsky, “Iconography and Iconology” in Meaning in the Visual Arts pp 26-54 (PDF)

09.26 W Discussion: Iconography
read: Critical Terms 5 “Narrative”

Iconography Assignment due (see guidelines on Trunk)

10.01 M Lecture: Marxism and Social Histories of Art
read: Pooke & Newall, 59-89
Critical Terms 25 “Production”

And choice of either

- TJ Clark, “Olympia’s Choice” in *The Painting of Modern Life* (PDF)

  OR


suggested: Harris, *Key Concepts*, Ideology, Patron, Means of Production

10.03 W  **Discussion: Reproduction and Display (group 1)**

read: Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (link on Trunk)

Critical Terms 10, “Originality” and 8, “Context”

María-José Moreno, “Art Museums and the Internet: The Emergence of the Virtual Museum,” *Crossings* 5.1 (2007) (link on Trunk)

reading guide & discussion questions posted by Tuesday morning 10.09

10.08 M  **Columbus Day, University Holiday – no class meeting**
10.09  T (Monday Schedule) **Lecture: Semiotics and Sign Systems**

read: Pooke & Newall 90-114

Critical Terms 2, “Sign” and 4 “Word and Image”

suggested: Harris, *Key Concepts*, Structuralism, Semiology

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10.10  W **Discussion: Visual Semiotics (group 2)**


reading guide & discussion questions posted by Wednesday morning 10.10

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10.15  M **Lecture: Feminisms**

read: Pooke & Newall, 136-156

Griselda Pollock, “Feminist Interventions in the History of Art” (PDF))


Suggested: Critical Terms 23 “Gender” and 17 “Body”; Harris, *Key Concepts*, Feminism, Patriarchy
10.17  W     Discussion: Queer Theory and Queer Practice (group 3)

read:  Pooke & Newall, 156-163


Critical Terms 24 “Identity”

reading guide & discussion questions posted by Tuesday morning 10.16

10.22  M     Lecture: Psychoanalysis and Art

read:  Pooke & Newall, 115-135

Critical Terms 22 “Gaze”

Harris, *Key Concepts*, Psychoanalysis, View/Viewer

*Lit review assignment due* (see guidelines on Trunk)

10.24  W     Discussion: Intention and Reception (group 4)


Harris, *Key Concepts*, Subjective/Subject

reading guide & discussion questions posted by Tuesday morning 10.23

*preliminary topic proposal due online by Friday 10.26 (A & B)*
10.29  M  Gallery (Section A); Library (Section B)
for preparation, see Trunk

10.31  W  Gallery (Section B); Library (Section A)
for preparation, see Trunk

11.05  M  Lecture & Discussion: Global Perspectives
read:  Pooke & Newall, 192-212
Critical Terms 29 “Postmodernism/Postcolonialism”
Harris, *Key Concepts*, Race, Identity

11.07  W  Gallery: Global Flows
Exhibition presentations

11.12  M  veteran’s day: no class meeting

*project proposal due by Tuesday 11.13* (see guidelines on Trunk)
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