Permanent Undergraduate Courses in Art History at Binghamton University

The following permanent courses are offered regularly by the Art History Department. Almost all of them satisfy the A (Aesthetics) General Education requirement. Those courses that also satisfy other Gen Ed requirements are noted below. All courses are for 4 credits, unless otherwise noted.

Introductory Courses

ARTH 102: Introduction to Visual Culture
This course introduces major topics and methods in the field of visual culture. It has three main areas of focus: 1) contemporary and historical strategies for the interpretation of images; 2) the significance and character of vision and visuality as a means of knowing the world; and 3) the relationships between seeing and being seen in the formation of the person as both a source and object of knowledge.
Instructors: J. Kirkwood, P. Smart, J. Tagg on rotation

ARTH 103: Introduction to Architecture
This course provides an introduction to the history of the built environment from its documented origins to the present, examining important architectural monuments as well as vernacular dwellings, infrastructural systems, and the growth of cities. We will look at methods of building and techniques of construction, but also the ideological intentions of structures, in order to determine the contexts—environmental, political, geographic, social, and economic—that govern their production across an increasingly global network of sites. In general, our goal is to understand the powerful role of architecture in shaping the lives of its users.
Gen Ed: G
Instructor: J. Walker

ARTH 110: Introduction to Art History I
An introduction to visual and material culture and built environments from the Ancient Near East through 1650. We will trace developments in cultural production at the center and periphery of the great empires of the pre-modern world in Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas, with a consideration of political and religious institutions that regulated the production and use of images, objects, buildings and space. We will also focus on the impact of technological innovation and cultural exchange on art and architecture, including changes brought about by commercial expansion, conquest, colonization, religious conversion, and pilgrimage.
Gen Ed: G
Instructors: K. Barzman, N. Um on rotation
[This course will be offered every fall semester. Please note: ARTH 110 replaces ARTH 101. If you have taken ARTH 101, you are ineligible to take ARTH 110.]
ARTH 111: Introduction to Art History II
An introduction to art, visual culture, and built environments from circa 1600 to the present. We will trace developments in cultural production alongside the emergence of a new global order of modernity that transformed political, economic, and social life in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. At a time of increasingly rapid technological change, colonial expansion, and political revolution, we will focus on the role of images, objects, buildings, and spaces in giving form to new modes of experience and in structuring relations of race, gender, and class across an interlinked globe.
Gen Ed: G
Instructors: K. Hatch, T. McDonough on rotation
[This course will be offered every spring semester. ARTH 110 is not a prerequisite for this course, although the two courses are designed to be taken in sequence.]
Intermediate and Advanced Lecture Courses

The following courses fulfill requirements for the major beyond the 100-level. Courses that fulfill the “Pre-1800” or “Post-1800” requirements are labeled Pre-1800 or Post-1800, respectively. Courses that fulfill requirements for the “Architecture and Urban Studies” track are labeled AUS.

ARTH 225: Renaissance and Baroque
A survey of Renaissance and Baroque art in Europe and its impact on cultural production in Africa and the Americas in the early modern era. Emphasis is placed on stylistic developments, workshop methods, iconography, patronage and the social functions of art from the 14th through early 18th centuries.
Pre-1800
Instructor: K. Barzman

ARTH 227: Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Arts
The early modern era witnessed the rise of the Ottoman Turks, the Safavids of Iran, and the Mughals of India, three states that were in close communication and competition with each other, as well as European counterparts. This course looks at the art, architecture, and urban culture of these three dynasties from the fifteenth through the eighteenth century, with a focus on the formation of the early modern concept of a royal capital, the diplomatic and competitive relationships between the three societies, as well as the reception of Europeans and European art practices at all three courts.
Pre-1800; AUS
Instructor: N. Um

ARTH 240: Image and Space in Early Modern England
This course explores the visual culture and built environment of England between 1500 and 1700. We examine English traditions of fine art, including painting and portraiture, sculpture and woodcarving, print and bookmaking, as well as furniture, ceramics, and design. In addition, we explore architecture and conceptions of space, focusing on the growth and layout of London as a city and its reconstruction after the Great Fire of 1666, the differing contours and uses of public and domestic space, the place of sound and music in the early modern environment, and the overlapping public and private spaces of the royal court.
Pre-1800; AUS
Instructor: A. Walkling
**ARTH 252: American Art and Society, 1930-1960**
Organized around three moments or conjunctures: The Moment of Documentary, 1933-1939; The Radical Retreat, 1939-1947; and The American Century, 1947-1960. In a period of intense crises and conflicts, new types of governmental policies attempted to negotiate threatening social conditions, while the cultural and political economy were recast and “American” culture emerged into a period of political conformity and global hegemony.
*Post-1800*
Instructor: J. Tagg

**ARTH 254: Modern Art**
Examination of the historically important concepts of modernity, modernism and the avant-garde as objects of critical study within the visual cultures of the 19th and early 20th centuries.
*Post-1800*
Instructor: T. McDonough

**ARTH 255: Museum Studies**
This course will explore recent museum innovation—addressing museums of art, natural history, science and technology, history, and ethnographic museums—informed by an understanding of the historical emergence and elaboration of the public museum form through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the robust critical discourse on museums that gained momentum toward the end of the twentieth century. We will examine contemporary expectations that museums should function variously as popular public social institutions, as technologies of cultural identification, as repositories of civic values, and as engines of urban revitalization, while being largely dependent, in the US, on private and corporate philanthropy.
*Post-1800*
Instructor: P. Smart

**ARTH 266: American Intersections, 1760-1940**
This course investigates sites of intersection in American art and visual culture from the colonial period through the eve of the Second World War, including encounters between racial, ethnic, and cultural groups; exchanges between various presumed geographic centers and peripheries; interactions with new technologies; and conflicts between classes amidst the often violent processes of modernization. Sample topics: the myth of the frontier in depictions of the American West; race and gender in Civil War-era photography; the emergence of mass culture in the early twentieth century alongside a self-consciously American “art world.”
*Post-1800*
Instructor: K. Hatch
ARTH 275: Postwar to Postmodern, 1945-1989
The second half of the 20th century was a moment of great transformation in the global political order, bookended by the end of WWII on the one hand and the expiration of the Cold War on the other. This course introduces students to the major movements and artists of that period, emphasizing the varied social, historical, and theoretical contexts that shaped them.
Post-1800
Instructor: K. Hatch

ARTH 276: Modern Architecture and Urbanism
This course surveys modernist developments in architecture and urbanism from approximately 1890 to the present. Global in scope, the course considers the built environment in terms of the technological, aesthetic, and theoretical issues intrinsic to architecture. It also examines the relationship of buildings and cities to broader forces, whether political, cultural, social, or economic, to clarify just what was "modern" about modern architecture.
Post-1800; AUS
Instructor: J. Walker

ARTH 279: Culture, Dwellings and Design
Explores the question of how culture affects the design and use of dwellings in different regions of the world. Within a cross-cultural framework, examines recent methods of cultural analysis as applied to the study of housing and design and discusses contesting theories for the explanation of dwelling form.
Pre-1800; AUS
Instructor: N. Um

ARTH 280: Histories of Photography
Introduction to problems in theory, analysis and history of photography. Nature of camera apparatus and photographic meaning; development of photography as the basis of a picture industry; growth of photographic records and documentary evidence; recent emergence of new forms of critical practice. Woven into course is study of the institutional and discursive orders in which photographies function and produce meaning.
Post-1800
Instructor: J. Tagg
ARTH 302: Maps of Modernity – Art/Theory
This course is concerned with the questions asked by art history. The first part analyzes narratives that have shaped the concept of “Art” enshrined in art history, looking critically at ideas of art’s formal autonomy, of artistic expression and genius, and of art as a reflection of the social world, the spirit of the times or a pervasive modernity. The second part asks how more recent theories of cultural production and meaning—from semiotics to deconstruction and from psychoanalysis to Marxism and Cultural Studies—might offer an alternative “tool kit” for building new models and posing new questions. The course is targeted at art history and art majors but may well be of interest to other students in the humanities and social sciences. Prerequisite: second year students and above.
Post-1800
Instructor: J. Tagg

ARTH 325: Religion and Images in the Early Modern World
Study of imagery in religious devotion, 1300 through present. Cross-cultural perspective (Italy; the Low Countries; England; France; Spain; Spanish colonial Americas; Africa; Asia). Material includes miraculous images and representations of miraculous events (weeping statues; sightings of Mary; stigmata on the bodies of the faithful). Prerequisite: any 100- or 200-level course in Art History.
Pre-1800
Instructor: K. Barzman

ARTH 326: The Drama of the Baroque
This class looks at Baroque painting, sculpture, and architecture, investigating the purposes and effects of its theatrical forms of address. It also focuses on urban space and the dramas that interrupted daily life—from parades, the reception of diplomats, and the crowning of heads of state to the staging of trials and executions, votive processions, banquets, weddings, funerals, and other rites of passage within which richly costumed individuals entered baroque systems of display. Coverage will move from the late sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries; centers of production include Italy, England, France, Spain, and the Vice-Royalties of New Spain and Peru. Prerequisite: any 100- or 200-level course in Art History.
Pre-1800; AUS
Instructor: K. Barzman
ARTH 327: Gilded Pages: Islamic Book Arts
This course explores illuminated and illustrated books of the Islamic world, from early Qur’an pages in parchment of the 8th – 10th centuries to the richly illustrated manuscripts from the Arab world, the Ottoman Empire, Iran, and India. We treat the aesthetic conventions of these manuscripts and also consider the dynamics of production, the relationship between text and image, and the politics of patronage. The course ends with the development of the large-scale portrait in oil from the Qajar Dynasty in Iran and some examples of modern and contemporary art that draw on traditional techniques and calligraphic modes. Prerequisite: any 100- or 200-level course in Art History.
Pre-1800
Instructor: N. Um

ARTH 328: Cairo: Islamic Architecture and the City
Cairo has served as a cosmopolitan hub of the Arab world, the African continent, and the Eastern Mediterranean for centuries. This course explores the built environment and the ever-changing urban shape of the historic city from the mid-7th century, when the first Muslim settlement was established. With a focus on important monuments, the course will examine the built environment of the urban area that was cultivated during the medieval and early modern eras, as it has been expanded and transformed continuously to the present time. Prerequisite: any 100- or 200-level course in Art History.
Pre-1800; AUS
Instructor: N. Um

ARTH 332: British Painting: Holbein to Hogarth
This course will explore the development of painting in Britain from the 1520s to the 1730s, focusing on an array of painting genres, including portraiture (both full scale and miniature), historical and allegorical painting, landscape, still life, and marine painting. Topics to be examined will include the development of painting styles, the relationship between painting and literature, the political and social function of artistic representation, visual symbols and their meaning and use, the contexts and nature of collecting and connoisseurship, and the complementary literary responses to images and image making during this period. The course is targeted at art history and art majors but may well be of interest to other students in the humanities and social sciences. Prerequisite: second year students and above.
Pre-1800
Instructor: A. Walkling
ARTH 333: Early Modern London
This course will explore the historical, physical, and spatial character and development of London in the 16th–18th centuries. Following an introductory survey of the growth of London in antiquity and the middle ages, attention will be given to the development of architectural styles, such as domestic and public architecture, churches, and palaces; the spaces and circumstances of cultural production, bureaucratic administration, and commerce; and changing uses of space over time, including modes of transportation, gathering points, the configuration of public and private space, and the reemergence of the city after the Great Fire of 1666. The course is targeted at Art History and English majors but may well be of interest to other students in the humanities and social sciences. Pre-requisite: second year students and above.
Pre-1800; AUS
Instructor: A. Walkling

ARTH 360: Contemporary Art, 1989-Present
This course examines the range of practices, forms, and institutions that have come to characterize contemporary art since the end of the Cold War. Global in scope, the course considers the extensive network that constitutes the contemporary art world and examines the nodes in that network where the complications and contradictions endemic to it are most intense. Prerequisite: any 100- or 200-level course in Art History.
Gen Ed: G
Post-1800
Instructor: K. Hatch

ARTH 361: Contemporary Architecture
This course introduces the architecture of the past three decades, examining the dramatic shifts in thinking about built space that have taken place in that time. Lectures will consider the forces—including the legacy of modernism, the phenomenon of globalization, the impact of technological development, and ecological imperatives—that shape contemporary architectural theory and praxis. Prerequisite: any 100- or 200-level course in Art History.
Post-1800; AUS
Instructor: J. Walker
Advanced Seminars

The following courses, in addition to other topics courses that are offered each semester, fulfill requirements for the 400-level. Most 400-level courses are conducted as discussion seminars that culminate in significant research projects. With the exception of ARTH 496, they are likely to include graduate students as well. Art History majors are advised to take 400-level seminars in the junior or senior years. Courses that fulfill requirements for the “Architecture and Urban Studies” track are labeled AUS.

ARTH 427: The Art of the Gift
While the literature on gift exchange has its roots in anthropology and sociology, art historians have recently carved out a space in interdisciplinary gift studies. In this course, we will explore the legacy of writing on exchange theory, while also exploring the social protocols that have surrounded gifting, the logic of reciprocity, and the political consequences of giving and receiving. Moreover, we will consider a wide corpus of objects that have circulated as gifts around historic networks of exchange and interaction. Prerequisite: any 100- or 200-level course in Art History.
Instructor: N. Um

ARTH 427: The Sultan’s Palace
This course examines palaces and palatial cities of the Islamic world, including the desert palaces of the eastern Mediterranean, the royal cities of Baghdad, Samarra, and Cairo, the Alhambra in Spain, Topkapi in Istanbul, the Persian palaces of the city of Isfahan, Emperor Akbar’s palatial city of Fatehpur Sikri and Shah Jahan’s seat in Delhi. We will endeavor to understand how these structures were used during the time that they were built and served as royal seats, but will also consider the ways in which the space of the palace has been constructed through Orientalist literature, art, and scholarship. Prerequisite: any 100- or 200-level course in Art History.
AUS
Instructor: N. Um

ARTH 461: Acquiring Art for the Museum
This 2-credit course offers students the opportunity to select, by consensus, a work on paper that will be purchased for the permanent collection of the Binghamton University Art Museum. Students will learn about gaps in the print collection and each advocate for a specific work on paper to be acquired for the museum. Students will become familiar with different print media and build connoisseurship; research an artist and his/her oeuvre; identify and compare similar works recently on the market; and develop and present a purchase recommendation for a specific work of art. Prerequisite: permission of instructor.
Instructor: D. Butler, Director, University Art Museum
**ARTH 496: Theories and Methods**
Discussion of major approaches to art history, past and present, through reading and analysis of critical theory and selected major historical studies. Required for Art History majors; others must obtain consent of instructor. Senior Art History majors have first priority for enrollment.
Gen Ed: J
Instructors: on rotation

**ARTH 498: Honors Thesis**
For students who wish to pursue independent research in an area of art history, culminating in a written honors thesis. Offered in the fall; requires students to take ARTH 499 in spring (course will be graded as incomplete until ARTH 499 has been completed). Open to Art History majors with at least 3.5 cumulative GPA in the major. Requires approval of proposal and recommendation of a faculty member.

**ARTH 499: Honors Thesis**
For students who wish to pursue independent research in an area of art history, culminating in a written honors thesis. Offered in the spring, to students who have successfully completed ARTH 498. Open to Art History majors with at least 3.5 cumulative GPA in the major. Requires approval of proposal and recommendation of a faculty member. Prerequisite: ARTH 499.

Updated KH NU 6/1/15