

**Art History 107**  
**HISTORY OF ASIAN ART**

**BULLETIN INFORMATION**

ARTH 107 – History of Asian Art (3 credit hours)

**Course Description:**

Art and culture of India, China, and Japan from prehistory to the present.

**SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW**

History of Asian Art is a selective survey of the visual arts of India, China, and Japan from prehistory to the present. This course emphasizes the understanding of representative paintings, sculptures, and architectural monuments in their cultural and historical contexts. Lectures stress the methods of stylistic and iconographic analysis, as well as the religious, social, and political history of South and East Asia.

**ITEMIZED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**Upon successful completion of Art History 107, students will be able to:**

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the principles of historical thinking to understand human societies, specifically through examining the development of the visual arts across Asia from prehistory to the present.
2. Define and summarize major events and developments in the history of Asian art from prehistory to the present.
3. Evaluate significant themes, issues, and styles in the history of Asian art from prehistory to the present.
4. Demonstrate basic skills in the comprehension and analysis of selected sources and their relevance in the context of art historical knowledge.
5. Demonstrate ability to recognize the differences between original art historical source material (primary sources) and later scholarly interpretations of those sources (secondary sources).
6. Demonstrate ability to develop interpretive art historical arguments drawing on primary and/or secondary sources.
7. Identify and discuss the sources and functions of values that guide the production of the visual arts in Asia.
8. Use the principles of historical thinking to assess the relationship between contemporary global art and its historical origins.

**SAMPLE REQUIRED TEXTS/SUGGESTED READINGS/MATERIALS**

1. Neave, Dorinda, et. al. *Asian Art*. Boston: Pearson, 2015.

2. Sources posted to Blackboard (see schedule in Topical Outline of Course for specific information)

### **SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR EXAMS**

This course will assess student achievement through the evaluation of class participation (including attendance and performance in directed class discussion), exams, and short essays based on historical sources. The exams will include short-answer section[s] and/or essay section[s] and will cover key terms, concepts, and interpretive themes and will require students to identify and analyze art historical developments and social values held in the past by various communities and apply art historical methods and cultural frameworks to interpret the past.

Written essays and weekly class discussions will encourage students to use diverse methods and skills to explore primary and secondary historical sources and apply historical methods and frameworks to interpret the past; they will also encourage students to analyze and reflect on how values and ethics have shaped the production of art in Asia from prehistory to the present.

1. Class Participation and Group Activities (4)
2. Essays (5)
3. Exams (4)

<i>Exams (100 pts ea. x 3)</i>	<i>300 points</i>
<i>(Four exams in total, lowest exam score is dropped. The final exam is not comprehensive.)</i>	
<i>Take-Home Comparative Essay</i>	<i>30 points</i>
<i>Reading Responses (10 pts ea. x 4)</i>	<i>40 points</i>
<i>Group Activities (10 pts ea. x 3)</i>	<i>30 points</i>
<i>Attendance &amp; Participation</i>	<i>100 points</i>
<i>Total Possible</i>	<i>500 points</i>

### **SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE WITH TIMELINE OF TOPICS, READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS/PROJECTS**

Week 1: Introduction and Prehistoric Indian Art- *Discussion of the methods of art history; consider what may be learned by assessing an art object's function, style, iconography, and historical context. Locate India geographically and temporally as a changing multicultural collection of multiple kingdoms for most of its history. Explore persistent questions about the Indus Valley Civilization (its mysterious socio-political system and indecipherable script) in relation to artifacts found at Mohenjodaro and Harappa; examine the "proto-Shiva" seals and consider the roots of the yogic tradition with a discussion of Dhyansky reading. Introduce the Vedic period as the foundation of Indian civilization, define concepts such as the caste system, prana ("vital energy") and the worship of yaksha and yakshi fertility deities.*

Main Topics:

- Introduction to the course: scope and methods
- Prehistoric Indian art: the Indus Valley civilization and the foundations of Indian religions

Secondary Source Reading:

- Dhyansky, Yan Y. "The Indus Valley Origin of a Yoga Practice." *Artibus Asiae*. Vol. 48, No. 1/2 (1987), pp. 89-108.

Week 2: *Buddhist Art- Introduce basic Buddhist concepts and overview the Buddha's life story; provide information about the Maurya dynasty and Emperor Ashoka, the first great patron of Buddhism; explore the concept of axis mundi as incorporated in Buddhist monuments such as stambhas and stupas; identify and define common elements of Buddhist iconography. Discussion of the ways in which worshippers interact with Buddhist monuments as well as the multiple functions of Buddhist imagery. Discussion of the Linrothe reading: What is the theory of aniconism in early Indian Buddhist art favored by Dehejia? Is the counter-theory forwarded by the Huntingtons plausible? Examine possible reasons for the emergence of the Buddha icon; compare the two sculptural traditions of the Kushan dynasty; analyze the perfected style of the Gupta period, the golden age of Buddhist art.*

Main Topics:

- Early Buddhist art: Buddhist symbols and narrative themes at Sanchi
- Origin of the Buddha image and the rock-cut temples at Karle and Ajanta

Secondary Source Reading:

- Neave, ch. 1
- Linrothe, Rob. "Inquiries into the Origin of the Buddha Image: A Review," *East and West*. Vol. 43, No. 1/4 (Dec. 1993), pp. 241-256.

**Essay #1: Reading Art:** *View the PDF posted to Blackboard and write an essay identifying and comparing the images. You should first identify the images by providing the title, medium, period for each. Your comparison should consider differences and similarities in function, iconography, style, and historical context. You will be graded on spelling and grammar, clarity, and content. Your essay must be written entirely in your own words.*

Week 3: *Hindu Art- Introduce basic Hindu concepts and overview the major Hindu gods; examine the significance of myths to the Hindu religion and its art; visit major monuments of Hindu art in situ (such as Udayagiri, Mamallapuram, and Elephanta) and discuss the Indian tradition of carving into living rock; view artistic renditions of the many manifestations of the Hindu gods Vishnu and Shiva and identify major iconographic elements for each; define the hallmarks of the Hindu sculptural tradition; explore the function and complex symbolism of Hindu temples; discuss modern Hindu practices and the continuation of tradition at local site of worship.*

Main Topics:

- Hindu cosmology and the rock-cut caves at Elephanta
- The Hindu Temples at Khajuraho

Secondary Source Reading:

- Neave, ch. 2

**Essay #2: Differences between Buddhist and Hindu Art:** *Read the chapter from the Ramayana and write 1-2 pages in response to the reading. Your discussion should consider how the hero Rama is portrayed. What type of language is used to describe him? How does he defeat his enemy Ravana? Your essay should also compare this Hindu epic to what you have learned about the Buddha's life story.*

*How is Rama's defeat of Ravana different from the Buddha's defeat of Mara? In what ways is the Buddha different from or similar to Rama?*

Week 4: Islamic Art- *Introduce basic Islamic concepts and overview the religion's impact on the visual arts in India, in particular the Hadith's prohibition of the human form; cover essential characteristics of Mughal architecture; discuss the symbolism incorporated into the great Mughal monuments (Tomb of Humayun, Taj Mahal, Jami Mosque, etc.); explore the architecture of Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar's abandoned city; assess influences (Persian, Indian, and European) on Mughal miniature painting; analyze the meaning of Jahangir's allegorical portrait and view pictorial evidence of his interest in natural science; identify the basic components of a mosque; discuss the main stylistic characteristics of Rajput painting and compare to Mughal miniature painting; discuss the Ramayana and view examples in art. Discuss the cultural legacy of the Taj Mahal.*

Main Topics:

- Islam comes to India and the grand architecture of the Mughal emperors: Humayun's Tomb and Fatehpur Sikri
- Mughal art and architecture continued: the Taj Mahal, Jami Mosque, and miniature painting

Secondary Source Reading:

- Neave, ch. 3

Week 5: Prehistoric and Bronze Age Chinese Art- *Introduce the prehistoric origins of Chinese culture with an analysis of "pottery" vs. "jade" cultures, discuss the possible functions of Yangshao painted pottery, such as sympathetic magic; investigate the ritual pig-dragon jades and "goddess altar" of the Hongshan; compare these two cultures to later stratified societies, the coastal Liangzhu and Longshan cultures; consider the significance and possible function of the Liangzhu's jade cong and bi; discuss elite gravesites and specialized pottery of the Longshan. Note the beginning of the historical era and the bronze age with the start of the Shang dynasty. Explore how "dragon bones" and modern excavations proved the existence of the legendary dynasty. Discussion of Thorp and Vinograd as means to overview Shang material culture, the largescale oracle bone and bronze casting industry, and the use of bronze vessels in ritual divination ceremonies. Investigate the royal tomb complex at Anyang and the tomb of Lady Hao and use this singularly intact tomb to investigate the status of women in ancient China; examine the mysterious taotie glutton mask motif.*

Main Topics:

- Neolithic cultures
- Ritual and art in the Shang dynasty: the tomb of Fu Hao
- Social stratification and human sacrifice in Neolithic and Bronze Age China

Secondary Source Reading:

- Neave, ch. 6

- Thorp, Robert L. and Richard Ellis Vinograd, "The Shang Royal Cult" and "Divination: Communicating with the Ancestors." In *Chinese Art & Culture*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001, pp. 59-62.

Week 6: *Classical China- Introduce new concepts from the Zhou moral code and the pervasive influence of these beliefs throughout Chinese dynastic history; analyze subsequent changes in ritual bronze manufacture, decoration, and use. Discussion of the "Hundred Schools of Thought" in the Late Zhou and comparison of basic beliefs and practices for Confucianism and Daoism. What aspects of these belief systems carry through to the present? Explore the prevalence of these beliefs as evidenced in the Warring States tomb of Marquis Yi, the Qin-dynasty tomb of the First Emperor, and the Han-dynasty tombs of Liu Sheng and Lady Dai. Examine new bronze casting technology (lost wax technique, inlay); discuss Legalism and the First Emperor's totalitarian rule as well as his significance in subsequent Chinese civilization; consider indigenous concepts of the afterlife with the illustration of the cosmos in Lady Dai's funerary banner; explore traditional materials and formats used in Chinese painting; discuss classical moral and political ideals and the influence of these ideals on the major stylistic characteristics of early Chinese figure painting.*

Main Topics:

- The Late Zhou's Age of the Philosophers and the Warring States period
- Extravagant preparations for the afterlife: the tomb of Qin Shihuangdi
- Han-dynasty art for the dead: the tomb of Liu Sheng and the tomb of Lady Dai
- Early Chinese figure painting; Early Buddhist art at the Yungang Grottoes

**Essay #3: Beliefs in afterlife, Confucian & Daoist thought:** *Complete the readings and write 1-2 pages in response. In your essay consider the following questions. What did Xunzi think of human nature? As a Confucian philosopher, what was his world view? According to Xunzi, what role do rites (rituals) play? How are the beliefs expressed in the Dao De Jing different? What do you think the legendary Laozi would have said about rites and societal obligations? Think about the extravagant bell set owned by the Marquis Yi of the tiny state of Zeng. What would followers of Confucianism or Daoism have said about them and the rest of his wealth?*

Week 7: *Chinese Art as Political Propaganda- Trace the flow of Buddhism and Buddhist art to East Asia; identify key ways in which early Chinese Buddhism differed from its South Asian predecessor; examine the Indian roots of two common types of Chinese Buddhist monuments (pagodas and cave temples); analyze Chinese renditions of popular Buddhist motifs and narratives, and compare to Indian prototypes; explore examples of Chinese Buddhist art in situ (the cave temple complexes at Dunhuang, Yungang, and Longmen); assess the iconography and function of the Cosmic Buddha in the Fengxian Grotto at Longmen. Discussion of Ning reading and critique Empress Wu's role in the colossal monument's creation. How is Empress Wu portrayed today and why? Analyze the major*

*stylistic characteristics of the Tang International Style in both Buddhist and secular art; compare extant copies of Zhou Fang's paintings to reliably dated murals from Princess Yongtai's tomb. Overview of major characteristics of the Northern Song monumental landscape painting tradition. Discussion of Guo Xi's essay and the use of political symbolism in Northern Song court paintings.*

Main Topics:

- The Fengxian Shrine at the Longmen Grottoes: the Tang International Style of Buddhist art
- Chinese landscape painting of the Northern Song

Secondary Source Reading:

- Neave, ch. 7
- Ning, Qiang. "Gender Politics in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Art: Images of Empress Wu at Longmen and Dunhuang." *Oriental Art*. Vol. 49 No. 2 (2003): 28-40.

Primary Source Reading:

- Guo, Xi. "The Lofty Message of Forest and Streams." In *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*. Edited by Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985, pp. 168-169.

Week 8: *Chinese Art as Social Expression- Introduce the literati aesthetic that emerged from the tastes and interests of Su Shi and his circle. Discuss the Jurchen invasion and the court's flight to Hangzhou at the start of the Southern Song dynasty. Analyze the stylistic differences between the landscape painting of the Northern and Southern Song and relate to socio-political climate. Introduce the Mongol conquest of China during the Yuan dynasty; read excerpts from Zhao Mengfu texts in class and discuss his concept of the "spirit of antiquity"; explore the paintings of the Four Great Masters of the Yuan as expressions of the Han literati's socio-political discontent. Introduce Ming dynasty as the restoration of native rule and a reinstitution of traditional imperial practices; explore Shen Zhou's selective use and creative interpretation of literati landscape painting styles.*

Main Topics:

- The gentlemanly arts of the Chinese literati; Landscape painting of the Southern Song
- Zhao Mengfu, the Four Great Masters of the Yuan, and "the return to antiquity"

Secondary Source Reading:

- Neave, ch. 8

Week 9: *Imposing Social Order in China through Art- Discuss Dong Qichang's Northern and Southern Schools theory, its division of the entirety of Chinese painting history into two camps, the moral implications of his theory and its continued influence on the study of Chinese art history up to the present. Introduce Manchu conquest of China and the embrace of Chinese values and culture during the Qing dynasty. View paintings belonging to the Orthodox School of painting and analyze the work of Wang Yuanqi in particular; compare his paintings to masters of the past;*

*assess the conventionality of his work and how traditional literati ideals conflict with Wang's paintings on demand for an imperial patron. Compare the Orthodox School to the work of the Individualists; highlight paintings by Shitao and Badashanren; discuss these artists' playful challenges to established artistic practices. Explore the Forbidden City palace complex and illustrate principles of imperial architecture, such as fengshui, symmetry, and centrality. Discuss the Forbidden City's uses and symbolism in 21<sup>st</sup> century China.*

Main Topics:

- The Orthodox School of painting and the Individualist painters
- The Forbidden City

Secondary Source Reading:

- Neave, ch. 9

Week 10: *Beginnings of Japanese Art and Culture- Introduce the stages of prehistoric Japan's Jomon period and identify the basic characteristics of its "cord pattern" pottery. Explore questions surrounding the rise of the Yayoi Neolithic culture and examine dotaku "bronze bells" while discussing the Yayoi's technological and societal developments. Survey the keyhole-shaped "old tombs" of the Kofun period; note the spread of new funerary practices coincided with emerging political alliances; as a class ponder the possible functions of haniwa clay tomb figures. Discussion of primary and secondary readings as means to identify practices and beliefs of Japan's indigenous religion, Shinto. Overview the Shinto creation myth and the chief kami, Amaterasu, the sun goddess. Explore the national Shinto shrine at Ise Jingu and discuss the ways in which the architecture and layout of the complex express Shinto beliefs and an indigenous aesthetic. Discuss the spread of Buddhism to Japan and the importation of Chinese culture by analyzing Horyuji temple's architecture, sculpture, and painting. What roles do Shinto monuments and aesthetics play in 21<sup>st</sup> century Japan?*

Main Topics:

- Prehistoric and Kofun-period Japan
- Shinto architecture
- Early Buddhist art in Japan: Prince Shotoku and Horyu-ji

Secondary Source Reading:

- Neave, ch. 12
- Nelson, John K. "Ritual and Ceremony: An Overview." In *A Year in the Life of a Shinto Shrine*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996, pp. 34-41.

Primary Source Reading:

- Wheeler, Post. "The Deity Age." *The Sacred Scriptures of the Japanese*. New York: Henry Schuman, Inc., 1952, pp. 3-29.

Week 11: *Classical Japan- Introduce the full implementation of Chinese imperial models with the capital city of the Nara period. Discuss continental influences while viewing the colossal Buddha at Todaiji and the artifacts from Emperor Shomu's*

court contained in the Shosoin repository. Move onto the cultural florescence of the Heian period and note Japan's inward turn and invention of indigenous script. Use a discussion of primary source reading *The Tale of Genji* to explore the heightened aesthetic tastes and cultural refinement of the Heian court and analyze the status of women in classical Japan. Overview the rise of the Fujiwara family through marriage politics; the popularity of Pure Land Buddhism and its associated beliefs as seen at Byodoin temple; and an advanced indigenous sculptural tradition as developed under master sculptor Jocho. View examples of the illustrated narrative handscroll painting tradition and analyze characteristics of Yamato-e, indigenous painting style and subjects.

Main Topics:

- Todaiji and the Tang International Style in Japan
- The Phoenix Hall of the Byodo-in at Uji
- Emakimono: illustrated narrative handscroll painting

Secondary Source Reading:

- Neave, ch. 13

**Essay #4: The Heian Aristocracy and *The Tale of Genji*:** Read "A Branch of Plum," Chapter 32 from *The Tale of Genji*, and write 1-2 pages in response. How would you describe court culture during the Heian period? According to the text, in what types of activities did the men and women of the court engage? What personal qualities and types of objects did they value? How did they interact with one another?

Week 12: Japanese Art in the Age of Samurai- Discuss the rise of samurai rule, explore the Ashikaga shogunate's wide-ranging patronage of the arts: from conspicuous luxury at Temple of the Golden Pavilion to the understated aesthetic of Chan Buddhist painting and garden design. Analyze the influence of Southern Song on Japanese landscape painting. Examine Japanese castle design and painted interiors, identify the Kano School of screen painters and its painting styles. Introduce the Edo period and the Yoshiwara pleasure district, define ukiyo-e and discuss each step of the woodblock printing process. Contrast the cheap, mass-produced nature of ukiyo-e prints to their widespread and enduring popularity in the West.

Main Topics:

- Samurai culture and Zen painting and architecture of the Muromachi period
- Japanese castle architecture and decorative painting of the Momoyama and Edo periods
- Japanese woodblock prints: pictures of the floating world

Secondary Source Reading:

- Neave, ch. 14

Week 13: Modern and Contemporary Art- Explain the British use of diplomacy and force to control India mid 18<sup>th</sup>-mid 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; overview genres, style, and patronage of Company Painting; introduce gentleman artist Raja Ravi Varma and his

*synthesis of European realist style with Indian mythological subjects; explore the styles and interests of the Tagore family and discuss the concept of Pan-Asianism; introduce female artist Amrita Sher-gil and discuss the vast gulf between the life of privilege she lived and the lives of the rural women she painted; contrast Jamini Roy's interest in the style and work practices of the indigenous artisan against his status as an international artist; explore M.F. Husain's desire to create images of universal significance for an international audience. In what ways have traditional Indian institutions (such as the caste system) and religions continued to shape the artwork of modern India? Turn to China and overview the collapse of dynastic order under rebellion and foreign invasion; introduce the Republican period and education reformer Cai Yuanpei; examine the Lingnan School's modernization of traditional Chinese painting, Liu Haisu and the Shanghai Academy of Art's embrace of the Western oil painting tradition, and Xu Beihong's merging of the two styles/media for nationalistic purposes. Analyze the role of art in the first few decades of the People's Republic of China and identify the characteristics of Socialist Realist style. What elements of traditional Chinese art and culture persist into the modern era despite repeated rejection of historical models?*

Main Topics

- Painting under colonial occupation and in the beginning of the Republic of India
- Chinese art during the Republican period and the Mao era

Secondary Source Reading:

- Neave, ch. 4, 10

Week 14: *Modern and Contemporary Art Cont.- Introduce the push for industrialization and modernization under the Meiji Emperor and examine the new role of woodblock prints as documentary and propaganda images of the frontlines of the Sino-Japanese War. Define Nihonga as a modern invention resulting from Fenollosa's and Okakura's revival of traditional painting. Introduce Kuroda Seiki as the "father of oil painting in Japan" and his efforts to institutionalize Yoga painting in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Discuss Japan's rise to role of colonial power and its official sponsorship of nationalist art before and during the Pacific War. Explore the aftermath of the war and Japan's unconditional surrender with analysis of radicalized artworks by the Gutai group in the 1950s. Bring Asian art up to the present with a comparison of three transnational artists—Anish Kapoor, Ai Weiwei, and Murakami Takashi—who cater to an international audience and who challenge assumptions about Asian art. Do these three artists continue to represent the values and tastes of the countries of their birth? In what ways do traditional aesthetics and historical artmaking practices inform the art world of today?*

Main Topics:

- Nationalism in the Empire of the Sun: art from the Meiji period to the end of WWII
- Biennials, auctions, and the transnational contemporary art market

Secondary Source Reading:

- Neave, ch. 15

**Essay #5: The two Xus debate and the role of art:** *Read the Storm Society Manifesto and Xu Beihong's essay and write 1-2 pages in response. How would you characterize these artists' feelings about art and its role in society? How do the Storm Society's and Xu Beihong's viewpoints differ? Are any concerns shared by the two? How do the interests of early 20th century Chinese artists compare to those of India and Japan?*

**FINAL EXAM according to university exam schedule**