ART HISTORY

Overview and Contact Information

Art History is the study of objects and images: painting, sculpture, architecture, film, furniture, ceramics, installations, and many other things. Our courses span the globe, from ancient Rome, Islamic cultures, medieval Paris and Renaissance Italy, to Indian cinema, American painting, contemporary photography and modern architecture. The objectives of our curriculum are: to learn the verbal language necessary to analyze and interpret objects, images, and the built environment; to understand works of art and architecture in their historical and cultural settings; and to develop a critical voice that extends to all aspects of the visual world.

Contact Information
Jessica Maier, Chair
Melissa Burke, Academic Department Coordinator
201 Art Building
413-538-2200
https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/arthistory

Learning Goals

By participating in coursework and experiences constituting a major in Art History, students will acquire the following knowledge and skills. They will:

• Demonstrate knowledge of works of art and architecture in their historical and cultural settings.
• Acquire the vocabulary needed to analyze and interpret objects, images, and built and landscaped environments across the world and through time.
• Develop visual acuity for critically examining our image-saturated world.
• Apply innovative theoretical and methodological approaches to engage with the history and politics of visual representation.
• Learn to develop research questions, and locate and assess primary and secondary sources, both print and digital.
• Develop the ability to write and speak effectively about material culture with critical sophistication.

Faculty

This area of study is administered by the Department of Art History and Architectural Studies:

Anthony Lee, Idella Plimpton Kendall Professor of Art History
Ajay Sinha, Julie ’73 and Helene ’49 Herzig Professor of Art History
Paul Staiti, Professor of Fine Arts on the Alumnae Foundation
Jessica Maier, Associate Professor of Art History
Samuel Barber, Visiting Lecturer in Art and Architectural History
Caroline Dubinsky, Visiting Lecturer in Art History and Architectural Studies

Requirements for the Major

A minimum of 40 credits:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One course at the 200 level in the Ancient and Medieval area</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>One course at the 200 level in the Renaissance and Baroque area</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>One course at the 200 level in the Modern and American area</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>One course at the 200 level in the non-Western area</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two courses at the 300 level</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three additional courses at any level</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>One course from another department or program that is chosen in consultation with an art history advisor, after the declaration of major</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Credits</td>
<td>40</td>
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1 not including ARTH-395

Additional Specifications

• Art history majors may not minor in architectural studies.
• Majors may enroll in 300-level seminars at the other Five College institutions with permission in advance from their advisor and the department chair. Students who plan to enroll in 300-level courses outside of the Five Colleges, especially yearlong courses to be taken abroad, should first consult with their advisor and the department chair to determine if the courses meet departmental criteria for 300-level credit.
• No more than four courses from other colleges or universities (including the Five Colleges) may be counted toward the major.
• Reading knowledge of a foreign language is recommended for those contemplating graduate study in art history.
• Students should be aware that preference in 300-level courses is normally given to those who have taken a relevant course at the 200 level. Majors are not automatically guaranteed preference in seminars that might be oversubscribed and, therefore, should not wait until the last semester to fulfill a seminar requirement.
• As a general rule, first-year seminars may not be counted toward the major.

Requirements for the Minor

A minimum of 20 credits:

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<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>One 100-level art history course</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any four courses in art history at the 200 level or above</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Credits</td>
<td>20</td>
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1 A student may substitute this course with AP credit in art history, but must take an additional 4 credits in art history at any level to meet the 20 credit minimum for the minor.

Additional Specifications

• Within these general requirements a student may construct a minor as focused or as comprehensive as desired.
• No more than two courses from other colleges or universities (including the Five Colleges) may be counted toward the minor.
Course Offerings

ARTH-100 Image and Environment

ARTH-100PW Image and Environment: 'The Power of Images'
Fall. Credits: 4
Bombarded daily by thousands of images, we often lack sufficient visual literacy to understand fully how they shape our reality. The course explores roles that images have played in earlier cultures and in our own, how people view, analyze, and articulate their understanding of the visual world. Topics include living statues, votive offerings, voodoo figures, relics, idolatry, iconoclasm, propaganda, and censorship.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
S. Barber

ARTH-100SE Image and Environment: 'Ways of Seeing'
Spring. Credits: 4
This course explores how artists, images, and objects have sparked revolution, defined identity, changed how people think and act, reflected and made history. We will examine moments of major change in the arts through close attention to specific themes, individuals, and works from the last seven centuries. The goal is not a fact-filled, comprehensive, strictly chronological overview, but rather an understanding of the ways in which the western visual legacy has profoundly shaped how we see the world around us.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
J. Maier

ARTH-100WA Image and Environment: 'Western Art: 1400-2000'
Fall and Spring. Credits: 4
An introduction to painting, sculpture, and architecture in Europe and America from the Renaissance to the present. Classes are organized around five focused topics: Renaissance Florence; the artist in the seventeenth century; art and revolution; nineteenth-century realism and abstraction. Lectures will be complemented by class discussion.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
C. Dubinsky, P. Staiti

ARTH-101 The Built Environment
Spring. Credits: 4
This course surveys architecture from the ancient world to the present as both a functional response to human activity and as a medium that expresses cultural values. In the service of domestic life, religious ritual, political agendas, commerce, and leisure, architecture reflects and shapes the natural environment, technology, economics, and aesthetic taste. While the history of Western architecture constitutes the primary touchstone, we will pursue themes that include sites and buildings, cities, and sites from around the world.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
The department

ARTH-104 Talking Pictures: An Introduction to Film

Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
Some of the best feature-length films of the past century have commanded our attention and imagination because of their compelling artistry and the imaginative ways they tell stories visually and verbally. This course closely studies narrative films from around the world, from the silent era to the present, and in the process it introduces students to the basic elements of film form, style, and narration. Some of the films to be considered are: Battleship Potemkin, Citizen Kane, Contempt, The Bicycle Thief, Ugetsu, Rear Window, Woman in the Dunes, The Marriage of Maria Braun, Days of Heaven, and Moulin Rouge.

Crosslisted as: FMT-103
A. Sinha

ARTH-105 Arts of Asia

Fall. Credits: 4
This multicultural course introduces students to the visual arts of Asia from the earliest times to the present. In a writing- and speaking-intensive environment, students will develop skills in visual analysis and art historical interpretation. Illustrated class lectures, group discussions, museum visits, and a variety of writing exercises will allow students to explore architecture, sculpture, painting, and other artifacts in relation to the history and culture of such diverse countries as India, China, Cambodia, Korea, and Japan.

Crosslisted as: RELIG-108
A. Sinha

ARTH-230 Italian Renaissance Art

Fall. Credits: 4
This survey outlines the arts in Italy from the late thirteenth to sixteenth centuries, a time of major cultural transformation. Our approach will be primarily geographic, focusing on individual cities and courts in order to understand the social networks that linked artists with their patrons and publics. We will also address key themes such as the functions of art; the role of women in the arts; the changing status of artists; portraiture and the fashioning of identity; the rise of print; art and ideas about faith, love, desire, and marriage; and the cross-cultural links between Italian artists and their colleagues far away.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
J. Maier

Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors

ARTH-231 Northern Renaissance Art

Spring. Credits: 4
This course covers the arts in Northern Europe during a time of upheaval. We will look at developments in panel painting, manuscript illumination, printmaking, and sculpture from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries—examining shifting patterns of patronage and production along with shifting styles, techniques, and media. We will consider major artists like Jan van Eyck, Albrecht Durer, and Pieter Bruegel, as well as seismic cultural shifts such as the print revolution, the emergence of the woman artist, the Reformation, and the origins of the art market.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
J. Maier

Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors
ARTH-233 Renaissance and Baroque Architecture in Italy
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This course focuses on architecture in Italy—including churches, palaces, villas, and urban planning—from the 1400s to the 1600s. In this period, architects took their cues from the classical tradition even as they carved out their own territory, developing new techniques and perfecting old ones to realize their designs. We will trace shifting architectural practice through key figures from Brunelleschi to Bernini, and through the lens of larger cultural forces. We will also examine buildings in light of the painted and sculpted decorative programs that were often integral to their overall effect.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
J. Maier
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors
Advisory: First-year students may seek permission if they have 4 credits in Art History.

ARTH-236 The Global Renaissance
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This class turns away from the conventional Eurocentric narrative of the Renaissance, reframing it as a time when exploration and cross-cultural encounters inspired a rich and varied array of art, architecture, and sculpture. The objects we will examine include world maps from Europe and China, West African ivories, Benin bronzes, Indian miniatures, Islamic metalwork, Mexican feather paintings, Aztec cartography, colonial Latin American buildings and murals, as well as European paintings and illustrated books. All of these items speak to expanding networks of trade and conquest. Collectively, they show just how global and connected the Renaissance world really was.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
J. Maier
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors

ARTH-241 Nineteenth-Century European Art: Neoclassicism to Impressionism
Fall. Credits: 4
This course will survey art in Europe from the French Revolutionary era to the last quarter of the nineteenth century— or, in the language of art history, from the neo-classical painters (David and his atelier) to the great painters of modern life in Paris (Manet and his followers). This chronology represents one of the most important transformations in the history of art: the origins and early development of what we today call “modern art.” We will spend considerable time tracing this difficult passage, pausing here and there to readjust ourselves to the shifting language of art and to orient art’s relationship to the modern public.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
A. Lee
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors

ARTH-242 History of Photography: The First Hundred Years
Fall. Credits: 4
This course surveys the first century of photography, beginning with its putative birth in 1839 and following its shifts and turns until the eve of World War II. We will look at a variety of photographic types: the daguerreotype, calotype, tintype, albumen and gelatin silver prints, and more. We will assess a range of practices: studio portraiture, commercial pictures, vernacular photography, journalism, and the fine arts. And we will follow camerawork in a variety of settings: China, England, France, Germany, Mexico, Russia, and the U.S.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
A. Lee
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors

ARTH-243 Architecture 1890-1990

ARTH-244 Global Modernism
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This course examines the great ruptures in late 19th and early 20th century art that today we call modernist. It relates aspects of that art to the equally great transformations outside the studio: political revolution, the rise and consolidation of industrial capitalism, colonization and its discontents, and world war. It compares different kinds of modernisms, including those in Austria, France, Germany, Mexico, Spain and Russia.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
A. Lee
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors

ARTH-245 Art of Cold War Modernity
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This course traces the different paths of painting, sculpture, and mixed media in the United States and, to a lesser extent, Western Europe between 1945 and 1989—that is, between the end of World War II and the fall of the Berlin Wall. We will begin with both the “climax” and “crisis” of modernism in midcentury and the movements and works that the crisis spawned. In the second half of the course, we will follow art’s relationship to a variety of postmodern subjects and debates. Throughout, we will measure the effects of geopolitical tensions on the visual arts. On a weekly basis, we will read a wide range of primary and secondary sources, with essays by art historians, critics, and artists. Overall, we will try to understand ambitious art’s relationship with key social, political, and cultural developments during an intense four decades of worldwide change and uncertainty.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
A. Lee
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors

ARTH-246 Photography As Art
Spring. Credits: 4
In case studies beginning in the 1930s and continuing to the present, this course explores the many uses of photographs as art. It regards pictures made as individual art works as well as those objects using photographs and photographic materials as parts of an ensemble. We will trace a chronological but also winding path through different regions of the world, including experiments in Africa, Asia, and Europe, in addition to a more prominent concern with those in North America. Some of the case studies may include works by Ansel Adams, Eleanor Antin, Diane Arbus, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Frank, Anselm Kiefer, An-My Le, Dinh Q. Le, Robert Mapplethorpe, Martin Parr, and Fazal Sheikh.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
A. Lee
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors

ARTH-250 American Art

Fall. Credits: 4
A survey of painting and sculpture, this course introduces students to the work of individual artists. Classes also develop ways of looking at and thinking about art as the material expression of American social, political, and cultural ideas, including the depictions of nature, race, revolution, and country life. The course focuses on "American Masters": Copley, Stuart, Cole, Church, Eakins, Homer, Sargent, Whistler, and Cassatt are some of the key artists.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
P. Staiti
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors
ARTH-262 Arts of Japan
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This course explores the special characteristics of Japanese art and architecture, from the early asymmetry of Jomon pottery and the abstraction of Haniwa figures to the later elite arts of the aristocratic, military, and merchant classes: narrative scroll painting, gold-ground screens, and the 'floating world' of the color woodblock print. A historical survey of the arts of Japan, highlighting the interplay of art with religious and political issues.
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
A. Sinha
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors

ARTH-263 Arts of India
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
The multicultural course will survey architecture, sculpture, painting, and other arts of India from the earliest times to the twenty-first century. Students will explore the various arts as material expressions of a relationship between religious beliefs, geography and cultural conditions of the subcontinent of India in different historical periods. Class sessions will also provide opportunities for an examination of cross-cultural issues relating to the study of non-Western art in a Western academic discipline. Students will develop strategies for visual analysis and critical thinking through written assignments, class discussions, and close reading of scholarly articles.
Crosslisted as: RELIG-225AN
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
A. Sinha
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors

ARTH-290AM Issues in Art History: 'Miniature Representations of Architecture in Asia'
Spring. Credits: 4
The course is organized around small material objects that allude to monumental architecture in different periods and regions of Asia: real and imaginary buildings unfolding into reliquary shrines in Buddhist Central Asia, portable liturgical objects in Islamic West Asia, funerary lanterns and architectural models in Chinese tombs, and Persian and Indian miniature paintings that are themselves compartmentalized as architectural enclosures. We will read scholarly articles critically, research and write collaboratively, and experience the wonders of scale-shift from architecture to hand-held things by visiting the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum and making "archimorphic" objects in the Fimbel Maker and Innovation Lab.
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
A. Sinha
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors

ARTH-290BC Issues in Art History: 'Bollywood: A Cinema of Interruptions'
Spring. Credits: 4
Indian popular cinema, known commonly as Bollywood, is usually understood to have weak storylines, interrupted by overblown spectacles and distracting dance numbers. The course explores the narrative structure of Bollywood as what scholar Lalitha Gopalan calls a "constellation of interruptions". We will learn to see Bollywood historically, as a cultural form that brings India's visual and performative traditions into a unique cinematic configuration. We will analyze a selection of feature films, read scholarly articles, participate in debates, write guided assignments, and pursue independent research papers in order to understand Bollywood's uniqueness in relation to world cinema.
Crosslisted as: FMT-230BC
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
A. Sinha
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors

ARTH-290PE Issues in Art History: 'Pompeii and the Archaeology of Daily Life in the Roman World'
Fall. Credits: 4
In 79 CE, the volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius buried the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, preserving them for future rediscovery. This course examines the unparalleled evidence for Roman daily life that archaeologists have uncovered at these sites since the start of excavation in the 1700s – including everything from public art and architecture to domestic spaces, farms, tombs, shops, graffiti, and even sewers. Through a thorough exploration of these sites, we will consider how individuals lived, worked, and died in the Roman world, and how the study of archaeology and the ancient world has evolved since the earliest excavations.
Crosslisted as: CLASS-239PE
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
C. Baker

ARTH-290RC Issues in Art History: 'Medieval Architecture in Motion'
Fall. Credits: 4
We usually encounter medieval art in the museum. There, encased in glass and opportunely illuminated, they are objects of quiet contemplation. Yet the art and architecture of the Middle Ages were seldom still or silent, and its audiences were rarely disinterested observers. In this course we will explore medieval architecture's multifaceted meanings for those who experienced its sights and sounds. We will also consider the interrelationships between objects in other media -- such as sculpture, mosaic, and textile -- and the architectural spaces in which they were situated. Course topics will proceed both chronologically and thematically, taking in sites from across Europe and the Mediterranean.
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
S. Barber
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors
ARTh-290SW Issues in Art History: 'Here +54: From the Smithsonian to Soweto, Arts of the African Americas and Africa'
Fall. Credits: 4
This course serves to articulate the cultural nuances, critical theory, and artistic practices shaping the visual art production of African American and African Diasporic artists and makers. Here +54 provides immersive encounters with both historical and contemporary expressive material culture of both Africa and the 54 countries on the African continent. The course will confront the fragility of African American cultural representation and challenge "Western-centric" views of the artistic practices of the African continent. Additionally, our considerations will analyze themes of cultural, economic, epidemic, political and social realities and their impact on African American and African Diasporic culture through time as vividly manifested in visual forms.
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
K. Newberry

ARTh-295 Independent Study
Fall and Spring. Credits: 1 - 4
The department
Instructor permission required.

ARTh-300AR Seminar: 'Practicing Art History: Tools, Methods, Careers'
Fall. Credits: 4
This intensive seminar provides a crash course in research and writing tools, critical methods, and career options for art history majors. Students will design their own research projects, conceptualize exhibitions, give oral presentations, and hear from a variety of art world professionals. They will refine their research, writing, and speaking abilities, while learning to interpret art through lenses ranging from formalism to Postcolonialism. They will draft applications for internships, jobs, and graduate programs. The ultimate goal is to strengthen the skills that are essential for art historians, and to explore how those skills can translate into rewarding careers.
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive
J. Maier
Restrictions: This course is open to juniors and seniors
Prereq: 8 credits in Art History.

ARTh-300MY Seminar: 'Building After Rome: Early Medieval Architecture'
Fall. Credits: 4
Even in ruins, the buildings of ancient Rome still amaze us: luxurious villas and palaces, monumental theaters and bathhouses, even a strikingly modern-looking public infrastructure. But how did architecture change after the Western Roman Empire's collapse in the fifth century CE? This seminar delves into the architecture of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages (ca. 300-ca. 800 CE). We will range across geographic and religious boundaries to consider themes such as: the effects of the so-called "Fall of the Roman Empire" on architectural practice; religious architecture; patronage, labor, and materials; and cross-cultural connections in the Mediterranean world.
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
S. Barber
Restrictions: This course is open to juniors and seniors
Prereq: 4 credits in Art History.

ARTh-301 Topics in Art History

ARTh-301CR Seminar: 'Making History'
Spring. Credits: 4
Description: This research seminar looks at the relationship between historical painting and the history it depicts. How much is fact; how much is fiction; and how do we explain the differences? To what ends was it painted? The focus will be on contemporary history painting in the period 1770-1875. The first half of the semester will examine these questions using critical theory and real examples. Students will then develop a major American, British, or French history painting for sustained research and analysis. Possible pictures include Turner's Slave Ship, Gericault's Raft of the Medusa, Copley's Watson and the Shark, David's Marat, and others. Numerous papers and class presentations.
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
P. Staiti
Restrictions: This course is open to juniors and seniors
Prereq: 8 credits in Art History.
Advisory: A course in American or modern art is recommended.
Notes: Four class presentations, four short papers, and one term paper.

ARTh-301MU Topics in Art History: 'Anthropology in/of Museums'
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
What is a museum, and how is it relevant to all of our lives? This course considers "the museum" as an object of ethnographic inquiry, examining it as a cultural institution perpetually under negotiation and reconfiguration. We reflect on how museum principles of classification, practices of collection and exhibition, and the uptake of digital technologies are central to what and how we know. We investigate and analyze museums as social actors in anthropological debates on power, representation, materiality, value, authenticity, state-making, Indigenous sovereignty, and the preservation and activation of contemporary cultures. The museum is never simply a repository of artifacts, artworks, histories, or scientific inventions, but also a site of tremendous creativity and a field of complex social relations.
Crosslisted as: ANTHR-316MU
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
S. Thorner
Restrictions: This course is open to juniors and seniors
Prereq: 4 credits in Anthropology and Art History.
Advisory: Students enrolled in or considering the Nexus in Museums, Archives, and Public History are encouraged to take this course

ARTh-302RM Great Cities

ARTh-302SM Great Cities: 'Rome, the Eternal City'
Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4
This seminar will survey the past, present, and future of the Eternal City through its remarkable art, architecture, and urbanism. We will examine the material traces of Rome's journey from ancient capital to center of Christianity, seat of the caesars to that of the popes and prime ministers, beacon to pilgrims and tourists, then finally modern capital and perhaps - sustainable city. Despite its problems, this "mother of all cities" continues to be a model of urban relevance and staying power.
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
J. Maier
Restrictions: This course is open to juniors and seniors
Prereq: 8 credits in Art History, Classics, or History.
ARTh-310 Seminar in Ancient Art

ARTh-340 Seminar in Modern Art

ARTh-340AM Seminar in Modern Art: 'After Impressionism'

Spring. Credits: 4

This seminar will focus on the works of four painters, and we will choose from among the following: Bonnard, Cezanne, Gauguin, Pissarro, Seurat, Toulouse-Lautrec, and van Gogh. We will study their works in relation to the feverish debates about painting in the 1880s and 1890s that the previous generation's Impressionism brought about. As we will discover, the four artists were hardly a unified group, took distinct paths away from Impressionism, and pursued projects that had limited allegiance to its main tenets or, indeed, to the ideas and practices of each other. In all, they will represent the extraordinary vitality of art suddenly loosened from the academic world.

Applies to requirement(s): Humanities

A. Lee

Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors

Prereq: 8 credits in art history.

ARTh-395 Independent Study

Fall and Spring. Credits: 1 - 8

The department

Instructor permission required.