

**College of Arts and Law**

**School of Languages, Cultures, Art History and Music**

**Department of Art History, Curating and Visual Studies**

MODULES FOR

INCOMING EXCHANGE STUDENTS

2024/2025

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# First Year (LC) modules

## 38735 LC Writing Art’s Histories I & 38736 LC Writing Art’s Histories II

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| **Credits: 10 + 10**  **Semester 1 & 2** |
| **Pre-Requisite Information:**  Incoming Exchange students who are here for a full year, must take both 10 credit modules (I&II). |
| *38735 LC Writing Art’s Histories I*  This module is an introduction to the ways in which art history has been written and constructed as a discipline. It discusses and deconstructs key historic period concepts, artistic styles, and ‘movements’ in the history of art from classical antiquity to the early modern period. The module will not, however, merely offer a survey of ‘periods;’ its aim is to encourage critical reflection on the origins of terms such as ‘Renaissance’ or ‘Baroque’, and to consider their place and meaning in art historical writing.  *38736 LC Writing Art’s Histories II*  This module is an introduction to the ways in which art history has been written and constructed as a discipline. It discusses and deconstructs key historic period concepts, artistic styles, and ‘movements’ in the history of art from the early modern period to the present day. The module will not, however, merely offer a survey of ‘periods;’ its aim is to encourage critical reflection on the origins of terms such as ‘modernism’ or ‘neoclassicism’, and to consider their place and meaning in art historical writing. |
| **Assessment:**  *38735 LC Writing Art’s Histories I*  A portfolio assignment of 2500 words (100%)  *38736 LC Writing Art’s Histories II*  A portfolio assignment of 2500 words (100%) |

## 33074 LC A History of Art in 20 Objects A & 33075 LC A History of Art in 20 Objects B

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| **Credits: 10 + 10**  **Semester 1 & 2** |
| **Pre-Requisite Information:**  Incoming Exchange students who are here for a full year, must take both 10 credit modules (A&B). |
| **Module Description:**  This module will introduce students to a History of Art in 20 Objects. Each lecture will take as its premise a single artwork or other type of visual object and focus in detail (but also in visual comparison) on its specificity as this relates to a history of art defined in broad geographical, temporal and methodological terms. The objects to be studied have been selected for a range of coherent reasons that may relate to their uniqueness, their representativeness or their capacity to act as the springboard for discussion of broader themes. One is just as likely to study an object made by a contemporary or ancient artist, or a ‘masterpiece’ by Leonardo da Vinci or Pablo Picasso, as a work by a less canonical or even unidentifiable artist. The module will not provide a chronological survey of the history of art but will introduce students to some fundamental ideas about art, its origins, functions, materials, techniques, meanings and cultural purposes.  *33074 LC A History of Art in 20 Objects A*  Topics are likely to include: Michelangelo’s Bacchus, Katsushika Hokusai’s Thirty Six Views of Mount Fuji, and the Benin Plaque.  *33075 LC A History of Art in 20 Objects B*  Topics are likely to include: Edouard Manet’s Olympia, Hannah Hoch’s Dada Performance, and Emily Kame Kngwarreye’s Untitled (Alalgura/Alhalkere). |
| **Assessment:**  *33074 LC A History of Art in 20 Objects A*  1 x 2,000-word essay (100%)  *33075 LC A History of Art in 20 Objects B*  1 x 15 minute recorded presentation (100%) |

# Semester 1 modules

## 34891 LI Inside the Gallery: Curating an Exhibition

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| **Credits: 20**  **Semester 1** |
| **Pre-Requisite Information:**  This module is only available to full year Exchange students. |
| **Module Description:**  Why and how do art galleries and museums curate exhibitions? Who visits them and why? This module introduces students to key aspects of curating temporary art exhibitions, such as selecting and developing a theme, identifying artworks and requesting loans, display issues, press and marketing, interpretation, learning and engagement, finance and administration. Students will learn how to plan an exhibition from an initial idea to presenting an exhibition proposal. They will also gain knowledge about relevant historical and theoretical contexts, and gain insight (where possible) into local gallery collections and displays. Students will also learn to consider an artwork within its display environment, an important aspect of art history. The module and its assessment are based on group work, as a significant skill required in many professional fields. The module is taught by the module convenor and, where possible, by museum and gallery professionals. |
| **Assessment:**   * Group presentation 20 min (50% - group mark); * Group portfolio (50% - group mark), which should include a combined narrative of up to 4,000 words, plus supplementary material such as a press release.   Alternative assessment if there are extenuating circumstances and a student cannot be assessed as part of a group presentation or group portfolio – as agreed with the module convenor:   * In lieu of presentation: One 2,000-word essay (50%) focusing on the exhibition theme and selected works; * In lieu of portfolio: One 2,000-word essay (50%) focusing on one key aspect of the exhibition (such as press and marketing, learning and engagement, budgets and funding; plus supplementary material (e.g. press release).   Alternative assessment if on campus activity is restricted:  live oral assessments will either be recorded presentations or conducted via Zoom/Skype |
| **Module Convenor:** Michela Giebelhausen |

## 30805 LI Post-War: Art in Britain After the Second World War

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| **Credits: 20**  **Semester 1** |
| **Pre-Requisite Information:**  This module is also available to Exchange students. |
| **Module Description:**  This module explores art in Britain in the period after the Second World War. It traces art’s relationship to post-war reconstruction, from artists who engaged explicitly and publicly with the experience of war and the spirit of reconstruction to those who developed more private or personal responses in this period. It considers how art can help us to understand the temporally unstable experience of reconstruction, making visible the multiplicity and highly contested nature of this extended period of British history; it also asks what role art might have served for those caught up in post-war reconstruction. It explores how artists engaged with questions of politics, national identity, gender, sexuality, and migration in this period. Artists include Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach, Lucian Freud, Richard Hamilton, Pauline Boty, Eduardo Paolozzi, Oscar Kokoschka, Victor Pasmore, Anwar Jalal Shemza, Frank Bowling, David Hockney, Prunella Clough, and Bridget Riley. |
| **Assessment:**   * One 4,000-word essay (100%) |
| **Module Convenor:** Gregory Salter |

## 39862 LH Michelangelo

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| **Credits: 20**  **Semester 1** |
| **Pre-Requisite Information:**  This module is also available to Exchange students. |
| **Module Description:**  The Michelangelo Special Subject will deal with the wide-ranging works of this artist, examining his artistic outlook and his special achievements. Particular emphasis will be placed on historical evidence and modern critical responses. The early weeks will focus on a chronological investigation of Michelangelo’s career and his main works of sculpture and painting, including the Sistine Chapel ceiling and the New Sacristy of S. Lorenzo. These works will be carefully chronicled and interpreted with the aid of drawings and early written sources, and will then be set into their broader historical, artistic and cultural contexts. The final part of the module will look more closely at questions of theory and artistic procedure, and particularly at Michelangelo’s own aesthetic and philosophical views, as represented in his writings and in other texts of the period. It will compare Michelangelo’s outlook towards art with those of others of the period, and it investigate various relationships between him and his contemporaries, and also various controversies, as a means of defining his artistic objectives more closely. |
| **Assessment:**   * 1 x 4000-word essay (100%) |
| **Module Convenor:** David Hemsoll |

# Semester 2 modules

## 24004 LI Renaissance Art in Italy and the Netherlands c.1400-60

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| **Credits: 20**  **Semester 2** |
| **Pre-Requisite Information:**  This module is also available to Exchange students. |
| **Module Description:**  The module examines Renaissance art in Italy and the Netherlands over the period c.1400-60. It will look at developments especially in Florence by Italian ‘founders’ of the Renaissance, Donatello, Ghiberti and Masaccio, as well as considering comparable innovations that occurred at the same time in the Netherlands in the works of their Northern contemporaries Van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden, and it will compare their achievements.  In addition to analysing many individual works in detail, the module will also be exploring the specific connections between Northern and Italian art, as well as the varying conceptions of nature and realism, and of Renaissance and revival; it will consider too the ranges of styles on offer and the most characteristic forms of art works, such as altarpieces and portraits, as well as their differing religious and secular functions and the differing systems of patronage which led to their creation. |
| **Assessment:**   * One 4,000-word essay (100%) |
| **Module Convenor:** David Hemsoll |

## 37038 LI Craft: Practices, Concepts, Activism

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| **Credits: 20**  **Semester 2** |
| **Pre-Requisite Information:**  This module is also available to Exchange students. |
| **Module Description:**  This module introduces you to key practices and concepts associated with craft. We examine craft from the Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th century, with its radical approach to the relationship between object and maker, to contemporary artists and makers engaging with craft, and the expanding area of craft activism. We consider questions of making, collaboration and the handmade; categories and hierarchies of the arts; place and memory; gender, class and national identity; and the collecting and curating of craft. The module explores these ideas by analysing a broad range of objects and media, from tapestries to ceramics, alongside close readings of a wide range of primary and secondary texts by makers, academics and curators. |
| **Assessment:**   * One 4,000-word essay (100%) |
| **Module Convenor:** Claire Jones |

## 30802 LI Making Culture: New Ways of Reading Things

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| **Credits: 20**  **Semester 2** |
| **Pre-Requisite Information:**  This module is also available to Exchange students. |
| **Module Description:**  This module will introduce you to different ways of interpreting, communicating about and engaging with objects in museums, galleries, archives and other heritage or research contexts. Through object-based learning, understood in its broadest sense, it will enable students to critically engage with the material world and will explore material culture from a variety of perspectives, considering issues surrounding collection, interpretation and display of material culture;; current debates about ‘ownership’, ethics and public engagement; and the impact of new digital technologies.  Its aim is to develop students’ transferable skills, in particular understanding, analysing and managing the kinds of information that are conveyed to different audiences, about and through collections- and how these relate to the history of museums, collecting and interpretation. It will draw on the university’s extensive range of museums, collections and archives and the expertise of our heritage professionals. |
| **Assessment:**   * 2000 word essay (50%) * A portfolio of resources demonstrating approaches to engagement, based on a specific artefact, accompanied by a 2000-word report exploring the rationale for the resources. (50%) |
| **Module Convenor:** Sophie Hatchwell |

## 37657 LH ‘Islamic’ Aesthetics in Art

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| **Credits: 20**  **Semester 2** |
| **Pre-Requisite Information:**  This module is also available to Exchange students. |
| **Module Description:**  The module studies the field of ‘Islamic’ art history and its positioning within the framework of the larger discipline of ‘Western’ art history. Approaching the relation between form, content and the aesthetics of artworks which traditionally have been labelled as ‘Islamic’ from multiple perspectives, the module critically evaluates art historical notions such as ‘decorative’ arts and emphasizes diverse applications of the term ‘Islamic’. Beginning with an exploration of classic traditions of Islamic art, such as calligraphy, geometric patterns or miniature painting, the module moves to consider its influences on modern and contemporary artists hailing from regions of the ‘Islamic world’, the diaspora and the West. Through the study of key artworks, exhibitions, and texts the module challenges dominant Eurocentric paradigms of writing and interpreting (Islamic) art’s histories, questioning binaries of East-West and centre-periphery. The module may also include site visits to exhibitions or archives, drawing on the University of Birmingham’s Mingana Collection of Middle Eastern Manuscripts. |
| **Assessment:**   * 1 x 2500-word essay (50% of the final module mark) * 1 x 1.5-hour unseen examination (50% of the final module mark)   Alternative assessment if on campus activity is restricted: proctored exams will be converted to take home papers |
| **Module Convenor:** Deniz Soezen |

## 30794 LH An Unnatural History: Animals in Modern Western Art

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| **Credits: 20**  **Semester 2** |
| **Pre-Requisite Information:**  This module is also available to Exchange students. |
| **Module Description:**  Drawing on recent developments in the field of animal studies, this special subject module will explore the representations, and uses of, animals (or ‘non-human animals’) in Western art from the nineteenth century to the present day. As an interdisciplinary, and often highly politically-charged, field of study, animal studies can offer us a new perspective on modern art, demanding consideration of objects and artists usually seen as being outside ‘the canon’. Though images of animals have always been popular (think Edwin Landseer’s Victorian dog paintings), and despite the centrality of animals in the contemporary art scene (Damien Hirst’s shark suspended in formaldehyde), art historians have often been resistant to the representation of animals – perhaps mindful of the dark truths many of these images conceal. This module offers a thematic rather than a chronological overview of the subject, with key themes including empathy, ethics, anthropomorphism, imperialism, domestication, symbolism, sexuality, and conservation. We will examine a wide range of material, from natural history illustrations to children’s books, equestrian portraits to performance art, zoo architecture to taxidermy. There may even be some works of art by animals. Artists discussed will include figures as varied as George Stubbs and Mark Dion, Beatrix Potter and Lucian Freud. |
| **Assessment:**   * 1 x 2500-word essay (50% of the final module mark) * 1 x 1.5-hour unseen examination (50% of the final module mark)   Alternative assessment if on campus activity is restricted: proctored exams will be converted to take home papers |
| **Module Convenor:** Kate Nichols |