Art History, Curating and Visual Studies

Module Descriptions 2019/20

Level I (i.e. 2\textsuperscript{nd} Yr.) Modules

Please be aware that all modules are subject to availability.

Where a module’s assessment happens in a different semester or term, and you are unsure if you will be here, please contact the Art History, Curating and Visual Studies department at ahcvsadministrator@contacts.bham.ac.uk to see if they are happy for you to take this module.

For many of these modules, some experience of studying History may be required, and you should remember this when choosing your modules. If there is another module that you need to have studied before taking this, it will be stated in the module description (pre-requisite).

Please note that at the time this document has been prepared (February 2019) the following information is provisional, and there may be minor changes between now and the beginning of 2019/20 academic year.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MODULE TITLE</strong></th>
<th>Renaissance Art in Italy and the Netherlands c. 1400-60</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MODULE CODE</strong></td>
<td>24004</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CREDIT VALUE</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ASSESSMENT METHOD</strong></td>
<td>one 4000-word essay</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TEACHING METHOD</strong></td>
<td>one one-hour lecture per week plus one two-hour seminar per week</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SEMESTER</strong></td>
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**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.
PLEASE NOTE THIS MODULE IS NOT OPEN TO EXCHANGE STUDENTS STUDYING WITH US FOR SEMESTER 1 ONLY AS PART OF THE ASSESSMENT TAKES PLACE IN SEMESTER 2.

DESCRIPTION

This module focuses on art museums and galleries in Europe and North America. The first part takes a historical and theoretical view of galleries and museums, introducing students to a variety of permanent collections, exhibition spaces and concepts of display. Local collections as well as those associated with the canon of Art History will take prominence, providing not only a contextualisation of the specific collection on which the students concentrate in their assignment, but also introducing an approach to the art work as a displayed object.

The second part provides an insight into museum departments; those of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts will be taken as an example to explore curating, publicity and marketing, interpretation/education and finance. Workshops will help students apply gained knowledge to the various aspects involved in organising an exhibition. The module is largely based on group work, which is also dealt with as a topic in the module.
DESCRIPTION

This module examines the way that art historians support their work by drawing on concepts and theoretical methods to shape and support their arguments and interpretations. Its aim is to further develop students’ understanding of the concepts and theoretical approaches employed by art historians, and first introduced at Level C.

Students will undertake comparative analysis of two or more contrasting interpretations of a particular work of art or topic, and focus on identifying the key concepts or theories they rely on, as well as considering the respective merits of their approaches. The analysis will also consider how the theoretical approach shapes the kind of evidence that is used to support the interpretation being advanced.
**DESCRIPTION**

This module will explore material culture from a variety of perspectives. It will draw on the university’s extensive range of museums, collections and archives and the expertise of the arts and science academics and heritage professionals. Through object-based learning in its broadest sense the module will enable students to engage critically with the material world. It will focus on issues around the collection, interpretation and display of material culture; current debates about ‘ownership’, ethics and public engagement; and the impact of new digital technologies.
**MODULE TITLE**
Impressionism and After: An Introduction to Art and Society in Late Nineteenth Century France

**MODULE CODE**
26713

**CREDIT VALUE**
20

**ASSESSMENT METHOD**
One 4,000-word essay

**TEACHING METHOD**
1 hour lecture and 2 hour seminar per week

**SEMESTER**
1

**DESCRIPTION**

This module will consider images, techniques and practices by leading innovative artists of the period such as Cassatt, Morisot, Manet, Degas, Seurat, Gauguin, Van Gogh and Cezanne. It will analyse key critical categories (including Impressionism, Neo-Impressionism and Symbolism) and key genres (including landscape painting, the painting of modern life, the nude) whilst linking art and the making of art to a broader visual and institutional culture. Finally, by analysing representation in relation to the key themes of gender, class and ethnicity the module will locate artistic practice within the socio-political terrain of the period.
**DESCRIPTION**

This course explores the different social and political functions of religious art produced in Northern Europe (France, Germany, Low Countries) from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It will focus in particular on how artists and patrons responded to the changing religious climate at this time, and how religious works of art like altarpieces, reliquaries, and manuscripts were used as means of constructing power, politics and social identity in times of instability.

Case studies will analyse themes such as: the power and performative nature of images; religious allegory and secular rulers; religion and social identity; and Northern responses to the Council of Trent and the Counter Reformation. Students will be encouraged to draw on the collections of the Barber Institute and Birmingham Art Gallery. By spanning the shift between the late medieval and early modern periods, students will be encouraged to examine and problematise broader questions pertaining to the study of periods and categories such as ‘medieval’ and ‘Renaissance’, ‘North’ and ‘South’, and ‘public’ and ‘private’.
**MODULE TITLE**  
Art, Architecture and Design in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna

**MODULE CODE**  
24000

**CREDIT VALUE**  
20

**ASSESSMENT METHOD**  
one 4000-word essay

**TEACHING METHOD**  
one one-hour lecture per week plus one two-hour seminar per week

**SEMESTER**  
2

**DESCRIPTION**

This module will examine art, architecture and design produced in fin-de-Siècle Vienna. It will focus on Secessionist artists such as Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele and Koloman Moser, and will explore their work in relation to a series of social, cultural, psychological and literary issues using the work of writers such as Arthur Schnitzler and Stefan Zweig, and the sexologists Richard Krafft-Ebing and Otto Weininger. It will provide a deeper understanding of ‘modern’ Vienna with regards to the changing conditions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at beginning of the twentieth century. The impact of design projects by Adolf Loos, Otto Wagner and the Wiener Werkstätte will also be investigated in the context of modernist architecture and design, and with particular reference to the notion of Gesamtkunstwerk. It will critically engage with the concept of ‘fin-de-siècle’ and ask how this ‘phenomenon’ may, or may not have, influenced an intense period of artistic production in Vienna and the rest of Europe. Although the course will primarily focus on art, architecture and design, it will also incorporate extracts and discussions on film, music and theatre where relevant.
**MODULE TITLE**  | Engaging with Art History  
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**MODULE CODE**  | 30801  
**CREDIT VALUE**  | 10  
**ASSESSMENT METHOD**  | 1000 word public engagement resource (50%)  
| 1000 word reflection (50%)  
**TEACHING METHOD**  | 1 hour seminar per week  
**SEMESTER**  | 2

**DESCRIPTION**

This module will introduce students to different ways of interpreting, communicating and engaging with art history. Its aim is to develop students’ transferable skills, in particular to practise and develop their communication (written and oral) of works of art to non-specialist audiences, such as gallery-goers and primary school children. It also aims to promote public engagement as part of the degree programme, as students will produce resources for engaging the public with art history as part of their assessment. It requires students to think about the kinds of information that is conveyed in different public resources, such as blogs, audio guides, and gallery labels and how these relate to the history of museums, collecting and interpreting works of art. As such the module will include sessions on the history of interpretation as well as on the use of different media. This is primarily a skills-based module; where group or individual tasks are required, students will be encouraged to apply content from other modules that they are taking.
<table>
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<th><strong>MODULE TITLE</strong></th>
<th>Political Art</th>
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<td><strong>ASSESSMENT METHOD</strong></td>
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**DESCRIPTION**

This module studies the relationships between art and politics. It focuses on contemporary art in public space, site specific and performance art. The longstanding troubles between ethics and aesthetics, between artists and activists are explored through scrutiny also of emotions, passions and populism in political art. The analysis of cultural appropriation and propaganda is examined through the contexts of decolonization and resistance movements. Feminism in the global art world and the role of art in social justice work is read together with other political spheres in which art is made instrumental or has historically had real world influence. Artists from Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, and Oceania will be expand the Euro-American histories of political art. The module may also include museum and gallery practices and visits to exhibitions together.
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<th><strong>MODULE TITLE</strong></th>
<th>Modern Sculpture: Rodin and his Legacy</th>
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**DESCRIPTION**

In this module, students will engage with and demonstrate a critical engagement with the history and theory of modern sculpture. Auguste Rodin has long been hailed as the father of modern sculpture. Through close engagement with texts and objects, students will understand the concept of modern sculpture and how it relates to specific practices identified with Rodin’s work. The module will also draw attention to the problems involved in defining and analysing ‘modern sculpture’. It will work thematically, touching on themes such as the fragment, assemblage, reproduction, the touch of the maker, science, photography, classical art and movement. The module will focus on Rodin’s work and on those of his contemporaries and later sculptors.