AD 497d: Special Topics in Art History

Ornament: (Squiggles, Curves, Curlicues, Zigzags, Flowers, Fronds, Shells, and other Meaningful Marks…)

Spring 2011
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Professor Stacey Sloboda
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Office: Allyn 006d

Monday 12:00-2:50
Allyn 112

Office Hours:
Wednesday and Friday, 11:00-2:00

Course Description:
This seminar shall explore theories of ornament in art, design, and visual culture from a global and historical perspective. A subject that has traditionally carried connotations of extraneousness and frivolity, we shall instead seek to understand ornament as a bearer of meaning and to develop practical frameworks for its interpretation. In doing so, this course also examines the apparent boundaries between the decorative and fine arts, and theories of art and craft.

Course Prerequisites:
Students in this course should have basic familiarity with the history of art and have had some previous art history coursework. An ability and willingness to read around 100 pages per week, and come to class prepared to discuss that reading is required.

Course Materials:
The required readings for this course are drawn from the following sources:

- Individual articles posted on Blackboard
Grading Criteria:
This course is organized as a combination of lecture and seminar-style discussions. Your grade will assess your preparation for and participation in class, discussion leadership, and your written work.

Attendance and Participation  
14 classes @ 8 points each. 25% of final grade

Regular attendance and informed participation are required and constitute a substantial portion of the course grade. During each class meeting, you will receive half credit for simply attending, or full credit for attending and participating in class. Throughout the semester, you can accrue up to 112 points on a 100 point scale, meaning it is possible to miss approximately 1 ½ classes without penalty to your final grade. Since it is not possible to make-up a class discussion, there is no distinction between an “excused” and an “unexcused” absence. If you miss a class for whatever reason, you should come to my office hours to discuss the material you missed.

Discussion Leadership  
10% of final grade

Class meetings will typically be organized with a combination of lecture and seminar-style discussion in which students will discuss the issues and ideas presented in the assigned reading for that day. Sometimes lengthy and presenting complex ideas, these readings must be read analytically and critically in order to fully understand them.

To facilitate these discussions, you will be responsible for leading discussion on one of the readings once during the semester. You will be expected to provide a critically informed response to the reading and prepare questions that will stimulate discussion about that reading. You should plan to lead discussion for about an hour. You are encouraged to ask provocative, challenging questions and use to images to facilitate discussion. If you need assistance finding or projecting images, please ask me. You should prepare two copies of your questions: one to hand in to me at the beginning of class, and one to keep for yourself during discussion.

Journal  
15% of final grade

Throughout the semester you shall create a journal of informal writing on the topic of ornament, as it is relevant to you. This may include reflections on readings or class discussions (not simply your notes, but a reflective analysis of the topic), visual imagery, relevant information you come across in your other studies, readings, internet browsing, visits to museums, galleries, shops, etc., or daily life. The content is entirely up to you, as long as it is related to the broad topic of ornament. You are encouraged to use the journal as a tool for clarifying your understanding of the concepts and material presented in class and the readings, and also as resource for future reference.
The final journal shall have a written component of 2,500-3,000 words (generally, 10-12 pages double-spaced), and may include as many images as you wish. The journal may be handwritten, typed, or take the form of a blog or website. Whatever medium you choose, your journal must be neat, with clearly organized entries, and be presented in a coherent, logical format. You will submit the journal for review on the following dates:

1/3 of journal (750-1,000 words) 25 points: February 28th
2/3 of journal (1,250 – 1,500 words) 25 points: April 4th
Completed journal (2,500-3,000 words) 50 points: May 2nd

Additional Requirements for Graduate Students: At the last class (May 2nd), each graduate student will make a presentation to the class on material from his or her journal. This may include a discussion of your own work and/or other work related to the topics and ideas presented in class. The presentation should be 20-25 minutes, and be organized in a well-illustrated powerpoint presentation.

Exams 2 @ 25% each = 50% of final grade

There will be two take-home exams that will test your understanding of information and ideas presented in class and in the readings. Each exam will consist of a shorter essay question that will ask you to analyze and interpret a selected image or object in a 2-3 page typed (double-spaced) essay, and a longer essay question that will test your understanding of the conceptual and historical ideas presented in class and in the readings with a 5-7 page typed essay answer. You may hand your completed exam in anytime after it is posted, though no later than the following dates:

Midterm Exam: March 21st (posted on Blackboard March 7th)
Final Exam: May 13th (posted on Blackboard May 2nd)

Record Keeping: Please keep backup copies of all work you submit for the course, and save all of the graded work that is returned to you over the course of the semester. If there is any dispute about your recorded grade, you will be expected to provide the original graded copy handed back to you.

Office Hours:
I warmly encourage you to take advantage of my office hours to carry on further discussions of material covered in lecture or the readings, or to address any problems or questions relating to this course. Please use this venue, rather than e-mail for substantive answers to questions related to lectures and assignments. Office hours will be held on Wednesday and Friday from 11:00-2:00 in Allyn 006d. If these times do not fit your schedule, please contact me for a separate appointment.

Emergency Procedures:
The following is SIUC’s statement on emergency preparedness. Please read it and familiarize yourself with the information on the websites listed.
“Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on BERT's website at www.bert.siu.edu, Department of Safety's website www.dps.siu.edu (disaster drop down) and in Emergency Response Guideline pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.”

Course Schedule:

January 24: Course Overview

January 31: Seminar: What is Ornament?
Read:
• Bloomer, Preface, Introduction, and Chapters 1 and 2, pp. 9-33.
• Trilling, Preface, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2, pp. xiii-70.
• Gombrich, Introduction, pp. 1-16.

Discussion Leader: Professor Sloboda

February 7: Case Study: The Rococo
Read:
• Gombrich, Chapter One, 17-32.

Discussion Leader: Carlee East

February 14: Analyzing Ornament: Form
Read:
• Bloomer, Chapters 4-9, pp. 46-123.
• Gombrich, Part Two, pp. 95-170.

Discussion Leader: Kane Kerley
February 21: Case Study: Islamic Ornament
Read:

Discussion Leader: Ian Fromm

February 28: Analyzing Ornament: Meaning **First Journal Review**

Read:
  • Bloomer, Chapter 3, 34-45.
  • Trilling, Chapters 3-4, pp. 71-111.
  • Gombrich, Chapter 9, pp. 217-250.

Discussion Leaders: Carman and Kevin Gray

March 7: Case Study: Chinese Ceramics and Textiles
Take-home Midterm Exam will be posted on Blackboard today.

Reading:

Discussion Leader:

March 14: Spring Break

March 21: Case Study: Medieval Ornament **Midterm exam due in class**

Reading:

Discussion Leader: Mackenzie Prather

March 28: Victorian Ornament
Reading:
  • Gombrich, Chapters Two and Eight, pp. 33-62 and 195-216.
  • Bloomer, Chapters 10-11, pp. 124-171.
  • Trilling, Chapter 5, pp. 115-136.

Discussion Leaders: April Dill and Daniel Childs
April 4: The Modernist Rejection of Ornament
Reading:
- Trilling, Chapters 6-8 and Epilogue, pp. 137-231.

Discussion Leader: Rebecca Rea and Reece Farness

April 11: The Modernist Embrace of Ornament  ** Second Journal Review due**
Reading:
- Bloomer, Chapter 12-14, pp. 172-232.

Discussion Leader:

April 18: Craft and Ornament I
Reading:

Discussion Leader: Jake Greene

April 25: Craft and Ornament II
Reading:
- Adamson, Chapters 3-6, pp. 68-169.

Discussion Leader:

May 2: Graduate Student Journal Presentations  **Final Journal due**

Take-home Final Exam will be posted on Blackboard today. It is due in my mailbox (Allyn 113) by Friday, May 13th at noon.