

Draft Syllabus – Subject to Change
HR2008: Faith and Art
Semester 2 AY2024-25

Course Code: HR2008
Course Title: Faith and Art
Pre-requisites: Nil
No. of Aus: 3
Contact Hours: 39

Course Coordinator Contact Details

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Office Hours: Appointment by email

Course Aims

This course will introduce you to exemplary works and high points in art and architecture manifesting expressions of faith across a range of periods, geographic regions and media. Concentrating our inquiry on the intersections of belief, visual culture and materiality, we will examine diverse aesthetic traditions underpinning global cultural formations of faith. Each week's learning activities will centre around a theme, utilising a few examples of art and architecture as a starting point for exploration. We will investigate how art has influenced the reception of the world's religions, historically and from a contemporary perspective, and in turn consider the impact of modernism and the modern developments of media and optical technologies on the production of faith-based works of art and architecture. We will also reflect on questions relating to the perceived conflict between religion and secularism, as they pertain to the production and reception of sacred art and architecture.

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Identify and discuss key works and high points of sacred art and architecture from the world's religions and the artists and historical figures associated with the patronage and creation of these works.
2. Apply a global approach to analysing faith-based works of art and architecture, locating them in relation to each other, developing an expanded awareness of the contemporaneity of the diverse aesthetic traditions of world religions.
3. Discuss how artists and creators, patrons and other key agents express their faith and beliefs through art in a changing media landscape and the implications of new media on the circulation and reception of faith-based art as well as the impact of modernism on the reception of such works of art and architecture.
4. Use visual analysis and concepts, themes, ideas, theories and debates from the weekly readings to think about and write about these works of art and architecture critically and in a focused and cohesive way.
5. Provide constructive feedback and criticism to peer presentations drawing from visual analysis and theories and debates relating to faith-based works of art and architecture from the weekly readings.

Course Requirements and Expectations

- Students are expected to attend the weekly seminars and participate fully in class discussion and other activities.
- Students must read the assigned prescribed readings prior to class in preparation for the weekly topic.
- The use of AI software such as “ChatGPT”, “Microsoft Copilot”, “Apple Intelligence” and any other such software to generate text for course assignments will be penalised and may result in failure in the course, including the use of grammar-correcting software such as “Grammarly”.
- Plagiarism of any material will be penalised and may have possible consequences of failure in the course. Plagiarism includes self-plagiarism. Assignments plagiarising other assignments that you may have written or prepared as class presentations for other courses are not acceptable and will be penalised with possible consequences of failure in the course.
- Please email me to arrange a consultation. I welcome consultations in person and over Zoom.

Course Content

This course is a global survey of artistic expressions of faith, both historical and contemporary. Structured around a broad chronological framework, it will commence with an exploration of some of the earliest cultural formations of faith stretching from Egypt to Greece and India. Following this, we will consider the sacred art and architecture of the Italian Renaissance alongside developments in Islamic Calligraphy in Shia Safavid Iran and the reception of Catholic images at the Sunni Muslim Mughal courts of India. We will trace the diversity of aesthetic traditions promulgated through the spread of Buddhism from India through China, Thailand and Japan. Special topics will include artistic responses to global technologies as exemplified by the onset of photography, film, and the internet. This includes examples of the shifting pictorial formats of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Jain pilgrimage maps. We will consider the impact of modernism on faith-based art and architecture and discuss the display of sacred objects in secular museum spaces. Exploring creative practices of Australian and Indian Indigenous art forms will provide insights into contemporary perspectives on faith-based art. Keywords include: mimesis, iconography, iconoclasm, pluralism, polytheism, intermedial translation, modernism, and secularism.

Weekly Schedule of Learning Activities

Week 1: Introduction to the Course (Seminar) ILO 1, 2, 3

Presenting an overview of the course including its key aims, learning outcomes, sub-themes and topics and assessment exercises, we will view a few images of exemplary works of art and architecture from different parts of the world and discuss what a global approach entails. We will spend time discussing important questions such as: what do we understand by thinking and writing critically about works of art and architecture that express faith? Does the paradigm of modernism problematise the relationship between art and faith across different religions and cultures?

We will have a general discussion about the schedule of weekly activities for the course. There will be time for Q&A regarding the various aspects of the course including assessment.

Recommended Readings:

The two readings below cover salient concerns, critiques and debates pertaining to the entire course.

- S. Brent Plate, “Introduction”, *Religion, Art, and Visual Culture: A Cross-Cultural Reader* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 1-18.
- Graham Howes, “Four Dimensions of Religious Art”, *The Art of the Sacred: An Introduction to the Aesthetics of Art and Belief* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2007), 6-28.

Week 2: From Ancient Egyptian Art to Medieval Byzantine Icons: From Gods, Temples and Artistic Representations of Funerary Hieroglyphs to Icons and Iconoclasm (Seminar) ILO 1, 2, 3, 5

Prescribed Readings:

- Ian Shaw, “Religion: Egyptian Gods and Temples”, *Ancient Egypt: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 142-152.
- Ian Shaw, “Writing the Origins and Implications of Hieroglyphs”, *Ancient Egypt: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 91-99.

Recommended Reading:

- Rebecca Corrie, “The Icon”, *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Art and Architecture*, Ellen C. Schwartz ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 59-74.

Week 3: Ancient Greek Art: Ritual, Mimesis, Iconography and Narrative (Seminar) ILO 1, 2, 5

Prescribed Reading:

- Mark D. Stansbury-O’Donnell, “Meaning”, *Looking at Greek Art*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 57-88.

Recommended Reading:

- Jas Elsner, “Image and Ritual: Pausanias and the Sacred Culture of Greek Art”, *Roman Eyes: Visuality and Subjectivity in Art and Text* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007), 29-45.

Weeks 4: Hinduism and Devotional Images (Seminar) ILO 1, 2, 3, 5

Prescribed Reading:

- Richard Davis, “Introduction”, *Lives of Indian Images* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2020), 1-14.

Recommended Reading:

- Christopher S. Pinney and Shaila Bhatti, “Optic-Clash: Modes of Visuality In India”, *A Companion to the Anthropology of India*, Isabelle Clark-Deces ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011), 223-240 .

Week 5: Sacred Images in Renaissance Art: Iconography and Iconology in Renaissance Painting (Seminar) ILO 1, 2, 3, 5

Prescribed Readings:

- Laura Jacobus, “Giotto’s Annunciation in the Arena Chapel, Padua”, *The Art Bulletin*, 81 (1999): 93-107.
- Mark Zucker, “Iconography in Renaissance and Baroque Art”, *A Companion to Renaissance and Baroque Art*, Babette Bohn and James Saslow eds. (Sussex: John Wiley and Sons, 2013), 361-379.

Recommended Reading:

- Hans Belting, “Image, Medium, Body: A New Approach to Iconology”, *Critical Inquiry* 31.2 (Winter 2005): 302-319.

Week 6: Islamic Calligraphy: the Art of the Qur’an in Shia Safavid Iran (Seminar) ILO 1, 2, 3, 5

Prescribed Reading:

- Carl W. Ernst, “The Spirit of Islamic Calligraphy: Bābā Shāh Iṣfahānī’s Ādāb al-mashq”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 112.2 (April-June 1992): 279-286.

Recommended Reading:

- Oleg Grabar “The Intermediary of Geometry”, *The Mediation of Ornament* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992),119-154.

Week 7: Cross-Cultural Encounters in the Sunni Muslim Mughal Courts of India (Seminar) ILO 1, 2, 3, 5

Prescribed Reading:

- Gauvin Alexander Bailey, “The Indian Conquest of Catholic Art: The Mughals, the Jesuits, and Imperial Mural Painting”, *Art Journal*, 57.1 (Spring 1998): 24-30.

Recommended Reading:

- Simona Cohen, “Hybridity in the Colonial Arts of South Asia, 16th-18th Centuries”, *Religion and Art in the Renaissance*, Hilaire Kalendorf ed. (Printed Issue of the Special Issue in *Religions*, Basel: MDPI, 2022), 195-218

Week 8: Site Visit (9:30am-12:30pm) Curator guided tour of the Ancient Religions Gallery at the Asian Civilisations Museum (1 Empress Place, Singapore, 179555). **ILO 1, 2, 3, 5**

url: <https://www.nhb.gov.sg/acm/galleries/faith-and-belief/ancient-religions>

Weeks 9 and 10: The Politics of Display: Sacred Objects in Secular Spaces (Seminar)
ILO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Preparation for Final Assessment of the Research Essay

Prescribed Readings:

- Bruce M. Sullivan, “Introduction”, *Sacred Objects in Secular Spaces: Exhibiting Asian religions in Museums* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 1-6.
- Jeff Durham, “Entering the Virtual Mandala: Transformative Environments in Hybrid Spaces”, *Sacred Objects in Secular Spaces: Exhibiting Asian religions in Museums*, Bruce M. Sullivan ed. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 80-93.

Week 11: Jain Pilgrimage Maps: Artistic Responses to Modern Technologies (Seminar)
ILO 1, 2, 3, 5

Prescribed Readings:

- Hawon Ku, “Representations of Ownership: the Nineteenth-Century Painted Maps of Shatrunjaya, Gujarat”, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 37, no. 1 (2014): 3-21.
- Julia A. B. Hegewald, “Multishrined Complexes: the Ordering of Space in Jaina Temple Architecture”, *South Asian Studies*, 17, no. 1 (2001): 77-96.
<https://architexturez.net/doc/10-1080/00856401-2013-852289>

Recommended Reading:

- Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, “On Alternative Modernities”, *Alternative Modernities* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 1-23.

Week 12: The Spread of Buddhism: Buddhism and the Japanese Zen Garden
ILO1, 2, 3, 5

Recommended Readings:

- S. Brent Plate, “Introduction Section, Shinjin: The Seeing Body Mind in the Japanese Zen Garden”, *Religion, Art, and Visual Culture: A Cross-Cultural Reader* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 125-133.
- Richard B. Pilgrim, “Excerpt from Buddhism and the Arts of Japan”, *Religion, Art, and Visual Culture: A Cross-Cultural Reader* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 134-139.

Week 13: The Sacred in Australian Indigenous Art (Seminar) ILO 1, 2, 3, 5

Prescribed Reading:

- Howard Morphy, “Yolgnu Art and the Creativity of the Inside”, *Aboriginal Religions in Australia: An Anthology of Recent Writings*, Charlesworth, M., Dussart, F. and Howard Morphy eds., (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 159-169.

Recommended Reading:

- Jenny Green, “The Enigma of Emily Ngwarray”, *Aboriginal Religions in Australia: An Anthology of Recent Writings*, Charlesworth, M., Dussart, F. and Howard Morphy eds., (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 185-192.

Assessment (including continuous and summative assessment)

Class Participation Weighting 20% ILO 1, 2, 3, 5 [Continuous Assessment]

Weekly attendance and participation in class discussion on the visual analysis of works of art and architecture and the readings will count towards your final grade. Please read the prescribed readings and come to class with prepared comments and questions to contribute to the class discussion on a weekly basis.

Class Presentations (between Weeks 2 to 12) Weighting 20% ILO 1, 2, 3, 5 [Continuous Assessment]

Fifteen-minute group presentations which include a visual analyses of works of art and architecture relevant to the week’s topic and theme and situate the selected works of art and architecture within the concepts, ideas, and theories from the prescribed weekly readings. Please submit any notes, handouts and powerpoint slides 48 hours prior to the class.

Mid-Semester Assessment: In-Class Open-Book Quiz comprising Short Answer Responses to Stimulus Materials: Responding with a Visual Analysis and Referencing Prescribed Readings - Weighting 20% ILO 1, 2, 3, 4

Students will respond to two images of sacred art and architecture (10marks each) provided as stimulus materials, writing short answer responses (around 300-400 words each) with a brief visual analysis of the work of art or architecture and referring to prescribed readings relevant to the stimulus material.

Final Assessment Research Essay focused around Visual Analysis and Argument – 2000 words. Weighting 40% ILO 1, 2, 3, 4

Students will be required to write a formal research essay responding to one question from a set of questions distributed in class and posted on the course website. Alongside the visual analysis of work(s) selected for your essay, you will need to provide the context, argument, and theoretical or critical framework. Your essay should demonstrate your ability to undertake original research in addition to the prescribed course readings and resources.

Please attach a separate Bibliography in Chicago Style. The word count of 2000 does not include footnotes and bibliography.