

NORTHERN RENAISSANCE ART



The course will explore the painting, printmaking, and sculpture of Northern Europe from the late 14th through the mid-16th centuries, and will provide an introduction to some of the major artists of the Northern Renaissance, including Jan van Eyck, Hieronymus Bosch, Albrecht Dürer, and Pieter Bruegel the Elder. We will also investigate some of the major themes of the Northern Renaissance, including (1) the nature and meaning of "realism" in Flemish panel painting; (2) how artworks were produced and marketed in Northern Europe; (3) how the newly developed medium of the print served as a tool of persuasion and subversion before and during the Reformation; and (4) how and why landscape and portraiture developed into independent art forms. We will also examine images of death and the occult, two themes

that increasingly came to preoccupy artists and their audiences during the Northern Renaissance.

Contact information:

Prof. Stephen C. Clancy

Office: G110 Gannett

Office hours: MW 3-4; Th 10-11; and by appointment

Phone: 274-1261 (leave a message if I'm not in!)

Email: clancy@ithaca.edu

Texts:

James Snyder, Larry Silver, and Henry Luttikhuisen, *Northern Renaissance Art*

Various readings that I will make available in pdf format through the course web site (www.ithaca.edu/faculty/clancy/231/)

How I will determine your final grade (*assuming good attendance – see below*):

3 exams (two during the semester, one during finals week)
-each worth 22.5%

Project (worth 22.5%; I will give you separate instructions)

Reading responses (and other class participation): 10%

PARTICULAR COURSE RULES AND REGULATIONS

Attendance, class participation, and class conduct

Attendance is essential: come to class and be prepared to contribute. We will be approaching the course material from perspectives not readily obtainable outside of class, and listening, looking, and discussing while the images are on the screens are the only sure ways of mastering the material. Also, *I encourage constructive class participation, and take it into account when I assign final grades.* If you are not in class, then you are not participating in the class. Excessive absence from class (more than 3 absences, excluding those due to

religious beliefs) may result in reduction of your final grade, or in being dropped from the course.

Also, grant your professor and fellow students respect and attention. Arrive on time, and only leave if you have a serious issue to deal with. It is disruptive and distracting to have students come and go during class. If you are disruptive in class, then you are not participating constructively. *Disruptive behavior will reduce your grade, or result in your being dropped from the course.*

Exams and make-up policy

I normally *do not give make-up tests*. The dates of the tests are given in this syllabus, so *plan your schedules accordingly*. I will give a make-up exam *only* (1) if some unforeseen and documented emergency arises, and (2) you let me know *before* the date and time of the exam.

You must submit all required work

In order to pass the course, you must submit all of the required work. Do not fail to take an exam or hand in a project; if you do, you will receive an "F" for a final grade.

Use of classroom computers and other electronic devices

- The computers with cinema display monitors will be our vehicles for in-class interactions with the digital material that forms the core of this course. However, these computers can also be distractions and temptations. You are welcome to use the computers to check email, etc., *before our class begins, but once the class begins you may use them only for tasks directly related to our in-class discussions and exercises.*
- Also, *turn off your cell phones, PDAs, and other digital devices* once you come into the classroom. Personal laptops or netbooks may be used *only by permission of the instructor, and only for tasks directly related to our in-class discussions and exercises.*
- **Repeated or disruptive violations of these rules will result in your being dropped from the course.**

Academic honesty

The project will require that you consult some books and articles. *You must cite any source not only from which you quote, but also from which you paraphrase words or borrow ideas*. I will not tolerate any student using another person's words *or* ideas, and passing them off as his or her own, even if unintentionally. If you have any questions about documentation, *ask me before you hand in the paper*. Do not end up failing the course or getting suspended because of an avoidable mistake.

Academic Support Services

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodation will be provided to students with documented disabilities on a case-by-case basis. Students must register with the Office of Academic Support Services and provide appropriate documentation to the college before any academic adjustment

will be provided.

TENTATIVE SEQUENCE OF TOPICS AND ISSUES

Note: All reading assignments listed below are from our text. I will assign additional readings (with advance notice) during the semester, and will make them available in pdf format through the course website.

Week 1 (8/26 & 8/28)

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND: THE "WHERE, WHEN, WHO, AND WHAT" OF NORTHERN RENAISSANCE ART

Important frameworks

- the idea of a "Renaissance"
- geography and social fabric

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN AN "INTERNATIONAL" STYLE: ART AND PATRONAGE INTO THE EARLY 15TH CENTURY

Emperor Charles IV and Bohemia: the imperial melting pot

Readings: Snyder, ix-15

Week 2 (8/31-9/4)

Charles V of France: dreams and realities in landscape and portraiture

Jean, Duc de Berry: genre and flattery of the connoisseur

Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy: importing piety at the Chartreuse de Champmol

- Claus Sluter and the individualizing of sculpture

Readings: Snyder, 16-52

Monday, September 7: NO CLASS (Labor Day)

Week 3 (9/9 & 9/11)

THE EMERGENCE AND MEANINGS OF "REALISMS" IN PAINTING IN THE LOWLANDS

Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy: importing piety at the Chartreuse de Champmol (cont.)

- Melchior Broederlam and "mystic naturalism"

The Earlier Fifteenth-Century: New Roles for Reality in Courtly and Bourgeois Circles

Jan van Eyck: particularity and aspiration in the courtly circles of Burgundy

- the Ghent Altarpiece: multiple "realisms" in their physical setting

Readings: Snyder, 52-56; 86-95

Week 4 (9/14-9/18)

Jan van Eyck: particularity and aspiration in the courtly circles of Burgundy (cont.)

- personalized religion and the visual pilgrimage in paintings of the Virgin Mary
- fact, symbol, and social ideology in the Arnolfini Wedding
- portraiture and observation

Robert Campin and the new bourgeoisie

- social class and "bourgeois realism": the Merode Altarpiece

Readings: Snyder, 95-117

Week 5 (9/21-9/25)

Rogier van der Weyden. master of Brussels

- the "Deposition," the "Crucifixion diptych," and theatrical realism
- exploring the altarpiece format
- portraits and signs of status

Developments in the Mid-Fifteenth Century

Dieric Bouts and the impact of Holland

- the paradox of intensity and detachment in the "Last Supper Altarpiece"
- history lessons in a civic context: "The Justice of Otto III"

Readings: Snyder, 118-37; 145-54

Week 6 (9/28-10/2)

Petrus Christus and the legacy of Jan van Eyck

- mercantile "genre" with a religious veneer: "St. Eloy in His Studio"
- multiple functions of portraiture

FIRST EXAM: 9/30/09 (in class)

Hugo van der Goes and the spiritual melancholy

- the "Fall of Man," the "Lamentation," and the Monteforte Altarpiece: indebtedness and idiosyncrasy

Readings: Snyder, 138-45; 163-70

Week 7 (10/5-10/9)

Mysticism, Naturalism, and Narrative in the Later Fifteenth Century

Hugo van der Goes and the spiritual melancholy (cont.)

- a case study in levels of reality: the Portinari Altarpiece
- Geertgen tot sint Jans and "mystic naturalism"

- mysticism and landscape

Hans Memlinc and audience taste

- the triumph of landscape and narrative

Readings: Snyder, 174-86; 196-203

Week 8 (10/12 & 10/14)

Gerard David: a final, "pretty" resolution

The final flowering of manuscript illumination: "Ghent-Bruges"

BEFORE AND AFTER THE REFORMATION: CHANGING ROLES OF IMAGES AND ARTISTS INTO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Germany

Printmaking and the ownership of images

Martin Schongauer

- the "Northern graphic style"

Readings: Snyder, 170-73; 186-93; 203-13; 242-59

Friday, October 16: NO CLASS (Fall Break)

Week 9 (10/19-10/23)

Matthias Grünewald and the seeds of the Reformation

- the "Isenheim Altarpiece" and the extreme personalization of religion

Albrecht Dürer and the concept of the "creative genius" in the north

- artisan vs. artist: new images of the maker and the patron
- Readings: Snyder, 289-99; 302-14

Week 10 (10/26-10/30)

Albrecht Dürer (cont.)

- Dürer and Italy: travels across the Alps and the clash of cultures
- Dürer's print series: mass dissemination of ideas, old and new
- Dürer and the Reformation: the Four Apostles

Readings: Snyder, 314-33

Week 11 (11/2-11/6)

SECOND EXAM: 11/2/09 (in class)

Tilman Riemenschneider and limewood sculpture c. 1500

- the Reformation and iconoclasm

Lucas Cranach the Elder

- the Reformation, court paintings, and escapism

Readings: Snyder, 275-89; 337-51

Week 12 (11/9-11/13)

Albrecht Altdorfer

- the emergence of the visionary landscape

Hans Baldung Grien

- images of women and witchcraft

Readings: Snyder, 351-67

Week 13 (11/16-11/20)

Hans Holbein the Younger

- the development of portraiture
- Holbein and the Reformation

The Netherlands and Flanders

Hieronymus Bosch

- allegory and social commentary: the world goes to Hell

Readings: Snyder, 368-405

Week 14 (11/30-12/4)

Hieronymus Bosch (cont.)

- a case study in controversy: the "Garden of Earthly Delights"

Jan Gossaert and courtly art of the 16th century

- "Romanism" in the north

Pieter Aertsen and Joachim Beuckelaer

- "still life" and the inversion of religious and secular worlds

Readings: Snyder, 405-09; 453-66; 473-81

Week 15 (12/7-12/11)

Pieter Bruegel the Elder

- landscapes and genre painting: peasants and enduring truths
- the educational value of proverbs, ancient and modern
- the art of disguise in a dangerous time

Readings: Snyder, 502-23

THIRD EXAM: Wednesday, 12/16/09, at 8:15AM, in our classroom