



Visual History: The Past in Pictures

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MDA 599, Spring 2017
Doheny Memorial Library 241

Description

Images make history. They document events, preserve memories, allow us to witness at a distance, and move us to act. Images can serve as both records and sources for the writing of history. This graduate seminar investigates the history of “writing” history in images (what Hayden White termed “historiophoty”) from the rise of European print culture circa 1450 to the global spread of digital media in the present, with an emphasis on the Western tradition and experience, including its imperial contexts. By investigating the many ways in which histories have been told with and in images, we aim to contextualize the current ubiquity of visually mediated evidence, documentation, and narrative.

In the age of digital media, the power of images to transmit information in the present and craft accounts about the past appears obvious. That power, however, rests on a series of widely held and sometimes contradictory assumptions, among them: that images can be trusted as evidence if their provenance and accuracy are judged adequate; that images have greater emotional impact than words, but are on their own insufficient to write history and thus serve as illustrations to textual narratives; and that images are more universal and more capable of traversing geographic distances and cultural differences than words, except when impeded by unbreachable culturally-specific interpretive walls. The epistemic work of images, their evidentiary status in relation to words and things, and their perceived value as both historical sources and historical accounts have shifted again and again in the period our seminar examines, as have notions of what “history” itself means.

This graduate seminar will be taught concurrently with the 2016–2017 Mellon Sawyer Seminar of the same title: <http://mellonsawyervisualhistory.vsri.org/>. The class is structured as a combination of (1) public events with presentations by distinguished invited speakers, followed by a dinner; (2) discussions of assigned readings, limited to graduate students enrolled in the class and the professors; and (3) guided independent

research that will result in a final project.

Requirements

Students must (1) attend all meetings indicated in the schedule below; (2) conduct all assigned readings in preparation for each meeting and participate in group discussions (readings are available on the website); (3) post on our website a short response to the readings no later than 8pm the day before the seminar meets (these postings will be password-protected); and (4) complete a final research project. The final project will consist of a short oral presentation and a 25-page paper providing a scholarly analysis of a “visual history.”

READINGS: Please note the majority of the readings are available online; each assignment is hyperlinked to the webpage or downloadable PDF file. Please purchase the following books, which we will read on their entirety:

1. Daniel Rosenberg and Anthony Grafton, *Cartographies of Time* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2010)—highly recommended as a printed book, though it is [available as an e-book](#) through USC as well.
2. Hillary L. Chute, *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016)

Grading

Weekly Posts	20%
Participation	30%
Oral Presentation	10%
Final Paper	40%

Schedule

Monday, 01/09: Introduction to the Seminar

3.30–6.30pm

In preparation for this meeting, please look at the following visual histories:

1. *The Nuremberg Chronicle*: Hartmann Schedel, *Liber chronicarum* (Nuremberg, 1493).

There are many digitized copies; look at [this one](#).

Get a sense of the contents from the [English translation](#) of the text.

If you'd like some background, read this brief and helpful [essay](#); or look at this [website](#).

2. Jacques-Louis David, *Le Sacre de Napoleon* (1806–7): [here](#) and [here](#). You can also find [here](#) a very high-resolution and zoomable copy that David produced of his original painting.
3. Simon Schama discussing Jacques-Louis David in *The Power of Art* (BBC, 2006): [short clip here](#), watch from minute 4:41 to 9:30.
4. *Sunset Boulevard*, dir. Billy Wilder (1950), 110 mins.

Readings:

1. William Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication* (Harvard University Press, 1953; MIT Press, 1969), 1–50, 158–180
2. Peter Parshall, “[The Education of a Curator: William Mills Ivins Jr. at the Met](#),” in *The Power of Prints: The Legacy of William M. Ivins and A. Hyatt Mayor* (New York and New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2016), 12–25
3. Frances Haskell, *History and Its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), [introduction](#)
4. Stephen Bann, “[The Road to Roscommon](#),” *The Oxford Art Journal*, 17:1 (1994): 98–102 (review of Haskell, *History and Its Images*)
5. Hayden White, “[Historiography and Historiophoty](#),” *The American Historical Review*, 93:5 (1988): 1193–99
6. Phil Rosen, *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), [introduction](#)

Further Reading:

Reviews of Francis Haskell, *History and its Images*:

1. Ernst H. Gombrich, “[What Art Tells Us](#),” in *New York Review of Books* (October, 1993)
2. Patricia Fortini Brown, [Review of History and Its Images](#), *Renaissance Quarterly*, 48: 3 (1995): 664–66
3. Michael Bury, [Review of History and its Images](#), *History*, 79: 255 (1994): 89–90
4. Eric Hobsbawm, “[Francis Haskell](#),” *Past & Present*, 168 (2000): 3–5
5. Joseph M. Levine, [Review of History and Its Images](#), *The Art Bulletin*, 76: 3 (1994): 539–40
6. Christopher Lloyd, [Review of Review of History and Its Images](#), *The English Historical Review*, 109: 434 (1994): 1231–33
7. Karl F. Morrison, [Review of History and Its Images](#), *The American Historical Review*, 99: 3 (1994): 858–61
8. Luke Syson, [Review of History and Its Images](#), *The Numismatic Chronicle*, 154 (1994): 293–95
9. David C. Ward, [Review of History and Its Images](#), *Archives of American Art Journal*, 34: 3 (1994): 26–28

01/16: No Meeting

Independent Project, Step 1: Start to consider the “visual history” you will investigate. Please review possible examples in our bibliography.

01/23: Visual History: Methods & Questions

3.30–6pm: Workshop One

Keith Moxey: “Art as History/History as Art”

Lynn Hunt: “Visual Images and the Political and Social Unconscious”

Peter Geimer: “Remembrance of Things Past. On Unavoidable Anachronism”

Martin Jay: “The Perils of Hindsight: Cautionary Remarks on Images as Evidence”

6.30–8.30pm: Discussion of Readings

1. Georges Didi-Huberman, “[The History of Art Within the Limits of Its Simple Practice](#),” in *Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art*, trans. John Goodman (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 11–52
2. Peter Geimer, “[Photography as a 'Space of Experience': On the Retrospective Legibility of Historic Photographs](#),” *Getty Research Journal* 7 (2015): 97–108
3. Keith Moxey, “[Material Time](#),” in Zarko Paic and Kresimir Purgar (eds.), *Theorizing Images*, ed. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 35–58
4. Martin Jay, “[Can Photographs Lie? Reflections on a Perennial Anxiety](#),” *Critical Studies*. 2 (September, 2016): 6–19
5. Carlo Ginzburg, “[Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm](#),” in *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 96–125

*** Start reading Daniel Rosenberg and Anthony Grafton, *Cartographies of Time* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2010), [available as an e-book](#) through USC.

01/30: No Class Meeting

Independent Project, Step 2: By 8pm on 01/30, post the title of the visual history on which you will write your final project, a brief (one- to two-paragraph) explanation of why you have selected this object, and at least three key questions you would like to explore through your analysis.

*** Continue reading Daniel Rosenberg and Anthony Grafton, *Cartographies of Time* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2010)

02/06: The 16th & 17th Centuries

3.30–6pm: Workshop Two

Peter Miller: “Antiquarianism and Its Images”

Christopher Wood: “The Referential Image”

Evonne Levy “The Council of Trent in Images: Subjects, Audiences and Intermediality”

6.30–8.30pm: Discussion of Readings

1. Arnaldo Momigliano, “[Ancient History and the Antiquarian](#),” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950): 285–315
2. Frances Haskell, *History and its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (Yale 1993), “Historical Narrative and Reportage,” [81–111](#)
(Optional: read also “Portraits from the Past,” 26–79)
3. Peter Miller, “[Major Trends in European Antiquarianism, Petrarch to Peiresc](#),” in José Rabasa, Masayuki Sato, Edoardo Tortarolo and Daniel Woolf (eds.), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, vol. 3: 1400–1800 (Oxford University Press, 2015), 244–260
4. Peter Miller, “[Description Terminable and Interminable: Looking at the Past, Nature, and Peoples in Peiresc’s Archive](#),” in Gianna Pomata and Nancy G. Siraisi (eds.), *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* (MIT Press, 2005), 355–97
5. Christopher Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction: Temporalities of German Renaissance Art* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), chapter 7, “[Re-enactment](#),” 331–74
6. Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York; Cambridge, Mass.: Zone Books/MIT Press, 2010), 240–74
7. Eric Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), ch. 16: “[Sacred History](#),” 445–78
8. Pamela M. Jones, *Federico Borromeo and the Ambrosiana. Art Patronage and Reform in Seventeenth-Century Milan*, (Cambridge, 1993), ch. 4, “[The Documentary Role of Sacred Art](#),” 168–99
(Optional: read also the introduction, 1–19)

02/13: No Class Meeting

Independent Project, Step 3: Preliminary Annotated Bibliography due by 8pm. You need to make sure you are well into “contextualizing” your object and have gathered the appropriate materials to give shape to your paper and presentation. This preliminary annotated bibliography will present your sources, organized, described, and with some notes that will help you begin thinking about how they will support your paper.

*** Continue reading Daniel Rosenberg and Anthony Grafton, *Cartographies of Time* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2010)

02/20: No Class Meeting, President’s Day

Independent Project, Step 4: By 8pm, submit a two page, single-spaced summary of your approach to your visual history, sketching what you currently know and why you think it is significant. Make sure you provide a very brief description of what the primary source is, and concentrate on the questions you will be asking and the arguments you will be making.

Finish reading Daniel Rosenberg and Anthony Grafton, *Cartographies of Time* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2010). Please reflect upon it in next week's post as well.

02/27: The 18th Century

3.30–6pm: Workshop Three

Darrin McMahon: "Illuminating Time: History and Historicity in the Age of Enlightenment"

Susan Siegfried: "Visual Compilations and Visual Histories in the Eighteenth Century"

Andrew Schulz: "Exoticism and Nationalism in Eighteenth-Century Visual Culture"

6.30–8.30pm: Discussion of Readings

1. Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 32–50. Available [here](#).
2. Reinhart Koselleck, "[Modernity and the Planes of Historicity](#)," in *Future's Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 9–35
3. JGA Pocock, "[Historiography and Enlightenment: a View of their History](#)," *Modern Intellectual History* 5:1 (2008): 83–96
4. Francis Haskell, *History and its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), [186–193](#)
5. Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), ch. 1, "[Inventing a History of Art](#)," 11–46
6. Andrew Schulz, "[The Porcelain of the Moors': The Alhambra Vases in Enlightenment Spain](#)," *Hispanic Research Journal* 9: 5 (2008): 389–415
7. Eirwen E. C. Nicholson, "[Consumers and Spectators: The Public of the Political Print in Eighteenth-Century England](#)," *History* 81 (1996): 5–21
8. Edgar Wind, "[The Revolution in History Painting](#)," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 2 (1938-9): 116–27. Reprinted in Wind, *Hume and the Heroic Portrait: Studies in Eighteenth-century Imagery*, edited Jaynie Anderson, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 88–99

03/06: No Class Meeting

Independent Project, Step 5: Everyone writes a 5–7 page chunk of what will eventually be a 25 page paper. It does not have to be the start of the paper; it can be any portion of the paper. Each student is part of a group of 4; everyone reads the other group members' chunks and acts as the official "respondent" to one. Everyone emails their section of text to their group by 5pm on Saturday. Bring a hard copy to your group meeting, which you will have marked up for the authors. Groups meet in locations of their own choosing.

03/13: Spring Break

As if! Do lots more independent work.

03/20: The 19th Century

3.30–6pm: Workshop Four

Michael Leja: "Politics and Spectacle: Historical Pictures and the Mass Audience in the 19th Century"

Sumathi Ramaswamy : "Empire & History, Interrupted"

Jennifer Tucker: "History as Hot News"

Please review the case study: Mason Jackson, [*The Pictorial Press: Its Origin and Progress*](#) (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1885)

6.30–8.30pm: Discussion of Readings

1. Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, translated by Patrick Camiller (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014) [1–113](#), especially 45–77
2. Stephen Bann, *Paul Delaroche: History Painted*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), [70–115](#)
3. Francis Haskell, "The Old Masters in Nineteenth-Century Painting," *Art Quarterly*, XXXIV: 1 (1971): [55–85](#)
4. Allan Doyle, "[Bad Manners vs. Good Maniera: Horace Vernet's Raphaël au Vatican](#)," in Katie Hornstein and Daniel Harkett (eds.), *Horace Vernet and the Thresholds of Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, forthcoming 2017)
5. Sumathi Ramaswamy, "[The Work of Vision in the Age of European Empires](#)," in Martin Jay and Sumathi Ramaswamy (eds.), *Empires of Vision* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 1–22
6. Michael Leja, "[Fortified Images for the Masses](#)," *Art Journal*, special issue on prints ed. by Katy Siegel (Winter, 2011): 60–83
7. Jennifer Tucker, "[Famished for News Pictures: Mason Jackson, The Illustrated London News, and the Pictorial Spirit](#)," in Jason Hill and Vanessa Schwartz (eds.), *Getting the Picture: The History & Visual Culture of the News* (Bloomsbury Academic Press, 2015), 215–20

Further Reading:

- a. Francis Haskell, "[The Manufacture of the Past in Nineteenth-Century Painting](#)," *Past and Present* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press: 1970), 109–19
- b. Stephen Bann, "['Views of the Past'—reflections on the treatment of historical objects and museums of history \(1750-1850\)](#)," in G. Fyfe and J. Law (eds.), *Picturing Power: Visual Depiction and Social Relations* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 39–64
- c. Stephen Bann, *The Clothing of Clio* (Cambridge UP, 1984); esp. Ch.2, "A cycle in historical discourse" (1970); Ch.4, "Poetics of the Museum" (1978); Ch.3, "Image and letter in the rediscovery of the past"

03/27: No Meeting

Independent Project, Step 6: Individual Meetings

04/03: The 20th Century

3.30–6pm: Workshop Five

Stephen Bann: “Visual History and The ‘Manufacture of the Past’”

Catherine Clark “Twentieth-Century History: Profession and Pastime”

François Brunet: “What is ‘Social’ about Robert Taft’s ‘Social History’ of American Photography?”

Please review the case study: Robert Taft, [Photography and the American Scene](#) (New York: Dover, 1938)

Readings:

1. Peter Geimer, “[Image as Trace: Speculations About an Undead Paradigm](#),” *Differences*, 18: 1 (2007): 7–28
2. Catherine E. Clark, “[Capturing the Moment, Picturing History: Photographs of the Liberation of Paris](#),” *American Historical Review*, 121: 3 (June 2016): 824–60
3. Raphael Samuel, “[The Eye of History](#),” in *Theaters of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London: Verso, 1994), 315–36
4. John Mraz, “[Picturing Mexico’s Past: Photography and ‘Historia Gráfica’](#),” *South Central Review* 21: 3 (February 2004): 24–45
5. Stephen Bann, “[History, Myth and Narrative: A Coda for Roland Barthes and Hayden White](#),” in Ankersmit, Domanska and Kellner (eds.), *Refiguring Hayden White* (Stanford UP, 2009), 144–61
6. François Brunet, “[Robert Taft, Historian of Photography as a Mass Medium](#),” *American Art*, 27: 2 (Summer 2013): 25–32

7–9pm: Special *Visions and Voices* Event on Visual History

Amanda Vickery, “From the Classroom to the BBC”

DML 240, Library Lecture Hall

[RSVP needed](#)

04/09: Serial Visual Histories

3.30–6pm, Workshop Six

Richard Kagan: “Pictorialized History at the Habsburg Spanish Court of Philip IV”

Leonard Folgarait “Series and Narrative in Visual History: Diego Rivera’s National Palace Murals”

Hillary Chute: “History, Witness, Print: Callot, Goya, Spiegelman”

6.30–8.30pm: Discussion of Readings

1. Richard Kagan, "[Pictures, Politics, and Pictorialized History at the Court of Philip IV of Spain](#)," in Markus Volkel and Arno Strohmeyer (eds.), *Historiographie an europäischen Höfen (16.-18. Jahrhundert)* (Berlin: Duncker & Humbolt, 2009): 231–46
2. Leonard Folgarait, "[Revolution as Ritual: Diego Rivera's National Palace Mural](#)," *Oxford Art Journal*, 14:1 (1991): 18–33
3. Hillary L. Chute, *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016)

04/17: No Meeting

Independent Project, Step 7: Submit the text and images of your five-minute oral presentation and an annotated outline of the final paper.

04/23 and 4/24: Concluding Symposium

Sunday 04/23 at the [Velaslavasay Panorama](#)

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| 3pm | Tour of the Panorama |
| 3:45pm | Introduction, Daniela Bleichmar and Vanessa Schwartz |
| 4pm | Felipe Pereda, "Images' Oblivious Memory. Ancient Funerary Lament and its Afterlife" |
| 5pm | Billie Melman, "Ur: Empire, Modernity and the Visualization of Antiquity between the Two World Wars" |

Dinner at the Panorama

Monday 04/24 at Doheny Library

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| 9:30am | Peter Parshall, "Picturing the Present as History: The Problem of Episodic Narration" |
| 11am | Jeremy Melius, "Schlosser's Photographic Histories" |
| 12pm | Lunch |
| 1pm | Allan Doyle, "Lithographic History in the Voyages Pittoresques" |
| 2pm | Randall Meissen and Aaron Rich |
| 3:30pm | Case study presentations by graduate students and general discussion |
| 5.30pm | Conference dinner |

05/10: Final Papers Due at 5pm via email