**AHIS 488**

**Topics in Art Conservation:**

**Renaissance Materiality**

**May 17 – June 15, 2023**

**Professor Lisa Pon,** [lisapon@usc.edu](mailto:lisapon@usc.edu)

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**Course Description**

This course explores the production, functions, and survival of works of art made in Europe between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, with brief forays into the preceding and succeeding centuries. How were works of painting and sculpture made? How did access to materials such as pigments, paper, linen, and metals affect what could be made? What techniques were developed, revived, or invented in the Renaissance? More expansively, how did Renaissance modes of image-making shape the period’s expanding worldview? Finally, how were/are Renaissance things preserved for future generations, and how should we responsibly display and preserve centuries-old objects now?

After two weeks of intensive reading and local field trips in Los Angeles, we will head to the Boston area via Providence, Rhode Island to make use of the Renaissance objects displayed in the RISD Museum, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Harvard Collection of Scientific Instruments, and the Harvard Art Museums. We will also be guests in Andrew Raftery's printmaking studio at RISD, the Harvard Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Analysis, and the MFA’s Morse Study Room and new conservation labs.

This class fulfills the core competency in literary, philosophical and theoretical perspectives for the Law, History, and Culture program, and in 2023, can substitute for AHIS 494 in the AHIS major.

**Learning objectives**

1. Analysis: Increase the student’s ability to analyze creative endeavors, including describing them with appropriate vocabulary, examining their formal elements, and engaging in research to understand their contexts.

2. Making: Expand the student’s knowledge about the creative process, as exemplified by specific works of art and also by engaging in lucid, and deeply researched writing about art objects, their making and survival, and their care and display.

3. Connectivity: Deepen the student’s appreciation of the connections between creative endeavors and contemporaneous and current political, religious, and social conditions; show how these endeavors fulfill cultural functions or fill cultural needs.

4. Context: Enrich the student’s discernment of creative production (in art and writing about it) by increasing knowledge of its theoretical, historical, and aesthetic bases. Class readings and meetings with art professionals are means to this end.

5. Engagement: Increase the student’s understanding of becoming a lifelong supporter or participant in the arts by exposure to historical creative production as it exists in the contemporary environment.

**Course requirements**

Readings and attendance (with assumed participation, including peer editing) in seminars and on related excursions are mandatory. READINGS MUST BE COMPLETED IN ADVANCE OF CLASS. The seriousness with which each member of the class engages the written work of her peers will determine the viability of the workshop model; grades will reflect each student’s commitment to the intellectual life of the group. As well, professional conduct and composure will be noted. NO TEXTING or other use of ELECTRONIC DEVICES except for note-taking during class, though posting on social media WITH THE PERMISSION OF OUR SPEAKERS before and after they speak is encouraged, and will be logged in your journal.

1. Meaningful participation (10% of your grade);
   1. Are you prepared/familiar with the material under discussion in today’s class?
   2. Do you have your texts and/or text notes with you for reference/annotation?
   3. Are you taking notes of the day’s discussion?
   4. Do you have questions, observations, issues about the material ready for the in-class discussion?
   5. Are you vocal in class in a way that moves the discussion/class forward and enhances our overall exchange?
   6. Are you respectful of the material, your classmates and the professor?
   7. Do you respond to new ideas from classmates and/or professor?
   8. Are you synthesizing previous discussions and material into each new meeting?
   9. Are you physically as well as verbally “present”: focused on the material, responding productively to professor and classmates, physically engaged and awake/aware?
   10. Have you participated actively, thoughtfully, and courteously in the social readings on Perusall.com?
   11. Are you a diligent peer reviewer who makes specific and productive comments and suggestions? Do you respond to your reviewers comments and suggestions thoughtfully?
   12. Have you prepared well for your class presentations? Are you attentive during other students’ class presentations?
2. Portfolio: Essay draft review/peer editing (15% of your grade);
3. Journal keeping track of the course experiences, with an entry for each day we have a site-visit or meeting, and a visual record posted on social media and/or a video uploaded to Blackboard (15% of your grade);

• Your journal entries need not be polished prose, and may best be handwritten. The point is for you to keep track of things as we go and ultimately to have a record of people, places, and content, so as to help you remember the details of all of the above after the class. The entries should additionally provide annotated information regarding the resources that you consulted regarding any assigned objects in advance of each visit (a minimum of 3 per object is required; we will go over criteria for useful and reliable resources).

* Your journal should also include a list of links where you have posted on social media about our class, and/or a brief video record of highlights from our travels

1. You will write the following throughout the semester (the sum total of which will constitute 60% of your grade in their final, revised form after receiving peer edits and feedback from Professor Pon):

• Essay #1 (750 words, first draft due on Blackboard May 30): This assignment offers a preview in two senses. First, it asks you to use images available online to study and describe works that we will be seeing onsite, before you will have seen them. Second, it focuses on Baroque art, that is made in the seventeenth century, well after most definitions of the High Renaissance. Using the images you find online related to the 2012 “Bernini: Sculpting in Clay” exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art/Kimbell Art Museum, study the clay models that Baroque artist Gianlorenzo Bernini made for the kneeling angels for the altar of the Holy Sacrament at New St. Peter’s (Vatican). Focus on one model and ask how was it made? What tools do you see the sculptor using in it, and how, and to do what? How were these clay models used to make the final bronze sculptures? You will be able to revise this essay after seeing these models in person after we start meeting in Cambridge.

• Essay #2 (750 words, first draft due on Blackboard June 12): This essay addresses the issues raised by changes made to an art work/cult object at a time close to its making. Read the classic article by Carmen Gomez-Moreno, Arthur Wheelock, Elizabeth Jones, and Millard Meiss, “A Sienese *St. Dominic* Modernized Twice in the Thirteenth Century,” *Art Bulletin,* 51(1969):363-66. Then take time to look closely in person at the painting of Saint Dominic (acc. No. 1920.20) discussed in that article, on display in the Harvard Art Museums Level 2, Room 2500. Describe as fully as you can the two different heads of St. Dominic still visible in the painting, and what you can deduce about evolving attitudes as to how to worship that saint in the thirteenth century.

• Essay #3 (750 words, final draft due on Blackboard June 15): You are the curator! Read the fundamental essay on cultural heritage first published in 1903 by Alois Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Origins,” trans. K. Forster and D. Ghirardo, *Oppositions* 25(1982):20-51. Then take time to look closely in person at Botticelli’s *Mystic Nativity* (acc. no. 1924.27) on view in the Harvard Art Museums, Level 2, Room 2500. Using the terms laid out by Riegl, argue whether or not the Botticelli painting should or should be acquired and hung in its current condition/after conservation (to do what, visually?) in the sadly fictitious “Pon Picture Gallery” which looks remarkably similar to the Getty Museum in its holdings of Renaissance paintings (use the Getty’s online objects search engine to see what the “Pon Picture Gallery” has). Where would you hang it, amongst which of the Getty’s other fifteenth century paintings, and under what conditions? This essay will not be given formal peer reviews during our class—but feel free to informally swap drafts for review on your own and make all changes/revisions before the due date.

Grades will be given at the end of the semester based on a **revised portfolio of work completed** until that time; for each piece, you will turn in the original draft, peer edits, your edits, and the “final” version. Instructions for file organization and delivery will be circulated in advance, but please know that all will be handed over electronically **on June 15**.

**Absenteeism/Withdrawal/Cancellation**

Students are obliged to attend all classes (in this case, visits) and to consider their academic obligations as comparable to what they are accustomed to on the main campus in Los Angeles. Students will be allowed absence in case of illness or for any medical purposes. The faculty director will also excuse other certified emergencies or case-specific conflicts.

Any unexcused absence is considered excessive and will be reflected in a student’s grade. A percentage of the grade is based on participation and attendance will be noted. Therefore, final grades will reflect excessive absences. Each student, upon acceptance to the program, will have consented to this agreement and will be expected to abide by its stipulations.

If a student has medical/compassionate needs documented with their USC advisor, they will be allowed to withdraw with program fees/tuition pro-rated as per USC policy.

The cancellation policy are dependent upon the final lodging and appointments, and will be provided once they have been confirmed.

**Behavior in the Museum**

We will be allowed to see many wonderful things in various collections and laboratories, so let us be gracious and attentive to our hosts! Museums have general expectations about their visitors’ behavior. The overview from the MFA in Boston should be reviewed at <https://www.mfa.org/visit/plan-your-visit/tips-visitors>. Specific museums/collections may have special instructions (eg. pencil only in the study room) that will be given by museum/collections staff at the beginning of our visits

**Lodging**

Specific rules for behavior in your lodging will be given when you check in, but these general guidelines should be reviewed: https://hihostels.ca/en/magazine/10-basic-rules- of-hostel-etiquette , http://morrisburnerhostel.com/morris-burner-hotel-resident-and-member- rules-and-guidelines/ .

**Course Notes:**

This course will use the Blackboard system to post announcements, all lecture handouts, some class readings (as noted), and send emails. You will be responsible for any information communicated through Blackboard. Please make sure that the email address that is listed for you on the system is one you check regularly. You may log into the system at https://blackboard.usc.edu/.

**Grading Scale**

I use the following scale for numerical grades and your course grade:

A 95-100

A- 90-94

B+ 87-89

B 83-86

B- 80-82

C+ 77-79

C 73-76

C- 70-72

D+ 67-69

D 63-66

D- 60-62

F 59 and below

Readings all provisional at this time; all dates, venue, and times tbc

**2023 DRAFT Schedule (subject to change: all times and venues to be confirmed)**

*Readings are noted on the date by which they should be completed.*

**WEEK 1: Wednesday and Thursday in Los Angeles**

**Wed May 17, THH 308, 10:00am-12:00: Introductions / What’s the Matter?**

**1-3pm CAMPUS FIELD TRIP: USC LIBRARIES SPECIAL COLLECTIONS: Renaissance Books**

* Michael Cole, “The Technical Turn,” in *Florence and its Painters: from Giotto to Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. Andreas Schumacher (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2018) [Perusall.com]
* [Beginners' Guide to the Renaissance Book](https://blogs.getty.edu/iris/a-beginners-guide-to-the-renaissance-book/)
* [As Energy Costs Bite, Museums Rethink a Conservation Credo](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/www.nytimes.com/2023/02/01/arts/design/museums-energy-climate-control.html?referringSource=articleShare__;!!LIr3w8kk_Xxm!s5IScM-I77BlNlaSHEAcDS3olgYExbjW-RgufjzIH2QzILd411LGLPPv570KUKWjcoMq-dLi-bbHuKnyx9khZcSGxw$)

**Thu May 18, THH 308, 10:00am-12:00: Paper and Textiles**

*\* Journal Check 1*

* Joshua Calhoun, *The Nature of the Page: Poetry, Papermaking, and the Ecology of Texts in Renaissance England,* pp. 19-44 [Perusall.com]
* Ann Rosalind Jones, "[Labor and Lace: The Crafts of Giacomo Franco’s *Habiti delle donne venetiane*](https://www-journals-uchicago-edu.libproxy1.usc.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/678268)," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 17:2(2014): 399-425 [Access thru USC Library catalogue, https://libraries.usc.edu/]
* Sara Jayne Steen, "Reading Beyond the Words: Material Letters and the Process of Interpretation," *Quidditas*, 22 (2001): Article 5, available [here](https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1237&context=rmmra)

**WEEK 2: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday in Los Angeles**

**Tues May 23, THH 308, 10:00am-12:00: Two-Dimensions and Three-Dimensions**

* Bewer and McNamara, "The Portrait Busts of Cosimo I & Bindo Altoviti from the Inside Out," pp. 66-81 in Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, [*Marks of Identity*](https://issuu.com/gardnermuseum/docs/marks_of_idenity_web)*,* 2015.
* David Bardeen, "Grains, Worms and Stains: Designing from Wood in Early Modern Italy, 1450-1530," [2023 Getty Grad Symposium](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqKnmMBZJqk), 0:02-0:20"
* William Wallace, “Michelangelo's O," *Source* 40:4 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1086/716329>

**Wed May 24, FIELD TRIP to HUNTINGTON LIBRARY Leave USC 9:15am - depart HEH 3pm**

**Oops! Canceling and Erasing on Paper**

* Michael Waters, “Reviving Antiquity with Granite: Spolia and the Development of Roman Renaissance Architecture,” *Architectural History* 59 (2016): 149-79 [Access thru USC Library catalogue, https://libraries.usc.edu/]
* Silvia Sumira, "The Making of Globes," pp. 33-9 in *Globes: 400 Years of Exploration, Navigation, and Power* (Chicago, 2014) [Perusall.com]
* Bridwell Library, "[Censorship: The Shape of Content in Christian Books, Broadsides, and Prints](https://bridwell.omeka.net/exhibits/show/shapeofcontent)," 2015

**Thur May 25 FIELD TRIP to NORTON SIMON MUSEUM, Leave USC 10:15am - depart NSM 3pm**

*\*Student Presentations, 5" on an assigned work of art; Journal Check 2*

* Research your assigned art work [here](https://www.nortonsimon.org/art/search-the-collection/)

**WEEK 3: TUESDAY LA; WEDNESDAY Travel Day; THURSDAY-FRIDAY Providence, RI**

**Tue May 30, FIELD TRIP TO THE GETTY CENTER, Leave USC 9:15am - depart Getty 3pm**

am: Getty Manuscript Study Room. pm Getty Museum galleries

*\*Essay I Draft DUE on Blackboard and hard copy, revision partners assigned*

* Yvonne Szafran, "Carpaccio's 'Hunting on the lagoon': a new perspective," *Burlington Magazine* 137, no. 1104 (March 1995), pp. 148-58

**Wed May 31. TRAVEL TO PROVIDENCE on your own**

**Thur June 1: Arrive 4pm June 1 at Michie House in College Hill. Details to follow**

\**Essay I Revision Comments DUE*

RISD Museum open until 7pm.

**Fri June 2: RISD Engraving Studio and Museum,** *exact schedule tbc with Andrew Raftery*

RISD Museum open until 7pm.

*\* Journal Check 3*

* https://risdmuseum.org/manual/63\_copying\_an\_old\_master\_drawing
* Engraving: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fQvghHs15hA
* [A History of Color: An Audio Tour of the Forbes Pigment Collection](https://harvardartmuseums.org/tour/a-history-of-color-an-audio-tour-of-the-forbes-pigment-collection)

**Sat June 3: GROUP TRAVEL TO BOSTON**

**Sun June 4: Welcome to Boston Brunch and Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum**

Meet outside the [Cafe G](https://www.gardnermuseum.org/visit/cafe) at 10:45am; museum visit to follow

*Journal notes should include a discussion of Cellini's* Bindo Altoviti *that we read about earlier.*

**WEEK 3:  Cambridge, Massachusetts**

**Mon June 5:** meet outside Harvard's Science Center

               10am noon: group visit Harvard Collection of Historic Scientific Instruments

lunch on your own

1- 3pm tbc: visit Harvard Art Museum, Straus Center to see works on paper (Penley Knipe)

**Tues June 6:**  Harvard Art Museums

               10am-noon: visit study center to see works on paper (Marjorie Cohn)

Noon-1pm: lunch (provided) with Marjorie Cohn, HAM Naumberg Room

                1- 3 pm visit Straus Center to see paintings (Kate Smith) and 3D objects (Angela Chang)

**Wed June 7:** Harvard Art Museums

\**Journal Check 4*

                10am noon visit to Straus Center/Forbes Pigment Collection (Narayan Khandekar)

                lunch on your own

pm visit galleries (free observation time for essay #2)

**Thur June 8:** Harvard Art Museums

\**Essay 2 Draft DUE on Blackboard at 9am*

10am - noon visit study center to see textiles --or pm

lunch on your own

pm student peer essay revisions -- or am

**Fri June 9:**  visit galleries (observation time for essay #3, revisions for essay #2)

**WEEK 4: Cambridge/Boston**

**Mon June 12: Harvard Collection of Historic Scientific Instruments**

10 am -noon visit with Sara Schechner

\**Essay 2 Draft DUE on Blackboard at 9am*

**Tue June 13 - Wed June 14:** **MFA Boston: times tbc**

**\*** *Journal Check 5*

Morse Study Room (Andreani chiaroscuro woodcuts etc) (Patrick Murphy)

Conservation Center: textile, furniture and frame, scientific research centers (Yuqi Chock)

**Thur June 15: DEPART FROM BOSTON**

*\*Complete Portfolio, including FINAL draft of Essay 3 and completed journal entry for June 14 MFA Boston visit, DUE on Blackboard by midnight.*

**Statement for Students with Disabilities:**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to your Professor **asap,** as accommodations cannot be offered without it.

Please visit https://osas.usc.edu, or call/email **(213) 740-0776 or**[**osasfrontdesk@usc.edu**](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu)**.**

**Statement on Academic Integrity:**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook (http://scampus.usc.edu), contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

**Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university’s site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness (http://preparedness.usc.edu).

**Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

**Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

**Support Systems:**

*Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: http://sarc.usc.edu/

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class.

https://equity.usc.edu/

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations.

http://dsp.usc.edu

*Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/

*USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, http://emergency.usc.edu

*USC Department of Public Safety – 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime*.  
Provides overall safety to USC community. http://dps.usc.edu

*Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. https://diversity.usc.edu/