

Greetings from the Department of Art History  
at Barnard College 2020-2021

I hope you are all safe and healthy. This term, in lieu of a traditional program planning meeting, the department has put together an informal newsletter to remind you of some features of the program and alert you to course options for the 2020-2021 academic year, something nice that we can all look forward to.

As I am sure you all know the department offers a rich program of classes both in the Visual Arts and in Art History. The Visual Arts Concentration offers students the opportunity for students to approach Art History from the standpoint of studio practice. Here, students have the option of doing a studio thesis instead of a written one. The faculty, who are practicing artists, works closely with Visual Arts Concentrators, assisting them in planning a program that incorporates their artistic interests while meeting departmental requirements.

I encourage you all to visit the department website for major and minor requirements in Art History. Here, faculty will introduce their offerings for the coming year, but remember that in addition there are extensive opportunities across the street to supplement our program.

Keep in mind that all Visual Arts concentrators and all Art History concentrators and Art History minors should plan on both AHIS 1001 and AHIS 1002, our breathtaking introduction to the field of art history and to our department.

For Art History concentrators, it is never too early to start thinking about your senior thesis—classes you choose for next year might provide the spark that will lead you to your project.

Jonathan Reynolds,  
Art History Department Chair

PLEASE CHECK OUT LINKS BELOW TO LEARN MORE

[ART HISTORY DEPARTMENT WEBSITE](#)

[FALL 2020 Art History Program Planning](#)

[Art History Major Requirements: Concentration in Art History](#)

[Art History Written Senior Thesis](#)

[Art History Major Requirements: Concentration in Visual Arts](#)

[Senior Project for Visual Arts](#)

[Art History Minor Requirements](#)

## NOTES FROM FACULTY

### Alexander Alberro

In the Fall, I will be offering a lecture class, "Mid-Twentieth Century Art: In and Around Abstract Expressionism," that explores artistic practices elaborated between the 1920s and the 1960s in a wide range of different geographical locations. The course will first introduce the development of modernism, anti-modernism, and avant-gardism in the period between the two World Wars, exploring the changing relationship between these cultural formations in Europe, the U.S.S.R., and the Americas. The second part of the course will study the difficulties of modernism and avant-gardism during the 1930s and 1940s that led to the formation of Concrete art in Europe, Japan, and South America, and Abstract Expressionism in Europe and North America. The third part of the course will examine the challenges to modernism and the reformulation of avant-gardism posed by the neo-avant-garde in the 1950s and early 1960s around the globe. The course will also address a wide range of historical and methodological questions and problems. These include the challenges to the idea of artistic autonomy, the evolving concept of avant-gardism, the ongoing problematic of abstraction, the formal principles of serialism and the grid, the logic of non-composition, the persistence of figuration, the changing role of cultural institutions, the impact of new technologies on cultural production, and the emergence of new audiences and patrons for art.



*Wifredo Lam, The Jungle, 1943 MoMA*

### Gregory Bryda

#### Intro to Art History I

This course is the first half of a year-long introduction to the study of art history on a global scale. During the fall semester we will consider art and architecture from the Palaeolithic era (ca. 30,000 BCE) to the early European Renaissance (ca. 1500 CE), and in the spring from the Renaissance to the present. The course is designed to introduce you not only to pre-modern artworks produced around the globe but also to numerous theoretical methods and tools employed by art historians to analyze them. Rather than progressing on a strictly linear chronological basis, the course

presents artworks based on themes (e.g. style, power and ideology, sexuality and gender) to highlight shared and contrasting artistic practices across geographies and cultures. While the fall and spring versions of the course are meant to constitute a sequence, each can be taken independently of the other. Museum visits are a required component to the course.

#### Mystics: Medieval and Modern [First Year Seminar - Open to First Year Students Only]

This course will compare and contrast medieval and modern mysticism, or aspirations toward the sublime. Through careful examination of literature, art, and music, we will explore how peoples from distinct cultures and time periods, such as Hildegard of Bingen, a twelfth-century German nun, and Rebecca Cox Jackson, a formerly enslaved person in antebellum Philadelphia, engaged in similar and divergent rhetorical strategies to express their union with God. We will discuss how mystics from all stripes, from Saint Francis of Assisi to Hugo Ball, the founder of Dadaism, enlisted the written word, bodily gesture, vocalized song, and painted form in their attempts to convey the transcendent. By the end of the semester, after establishing the core elements of mystical language from Plato through the Middle Ages, we will identify how modern artists, like Kazimir Malevich or Hilma af Klint, who questioned the existence of God altogether, employed similar modes of mystical expression to approximate the ineffable. Visits to the Metropolitan Museum, MoMA, and The Cloisters are a required component to the course.

#### Rosalyn Detusche

##### Art of Witness

This seminar examines contemporary works of art that construct memory and knowledge of human-inflicted, politically motivated catastrophes: slavery, the Holocaust, the AIDS epidemic, massive denials of rights, the bombing of Hiroshima, homelessness, the destruction of Palestinian villages, and so on. Places these mnemonic works within debates about memory, history, trauma, monumentality, and aesthetic representation. Questions dominant assumptions about works of memory, for example, the idea that a memorial is a supposedly solid, permanent, monumental structure. Explores mnemonic works that take non-monumental forms, such as those of Christian Boltanski, Gregg Bordowitz, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Hans Haacke, Emily Jacir, Mary Kelly, Teresa Margolles, Gerhard Richter, Art Spiegelman, Kara Walker, Rachel Whiteread, Krzysztof Wodiczko, and others. Discusses the complexities of bearing witness—what Giorgio Agamben calls “impossible witnessing.” We also watch and discuss the films of Claude Lanzmann (Shoah) and Alain Resnais (Night and Fog, Hiroshima mon amour). Students write papers and give presentations on individual artworks.

##### Senior Research Seminar

The Senior Research Seminar is a two-semester course designed to help you write your senior thesis. In conjunction with Methods and Theories of Art History it will guide you through the process of selecting and researching a topic and organizing and writing the thesis. You will present your work to and receive feedback from other students and from faculty. The full-year senior thesis is a substantial piece of critical writing. The process of writing the thesis has several steps. In the fall semester, you will (1) choose a topic, (2) select a faculty adviser, (3) decide what

questions you want to ask about your topic, (4) decide what you want to argue about your topic (5) read and evaluate the literature on the topic and related issues, (6) write a proposal, which, among other things, outlines the organization of the sections, or chapters, of the thesis, and (7) write a draft of a chapter of the thesis. The Senior Research Seminar offers guidance and sets deadlines for these steps.

Anne Higonnet

## CLOTHING

This new course began when a Spectator reporter asked me why there were no courses on clothing at Barnard or Columbia. Why not, I wondered?

The answer is probably that clothing is such an interdisciplinary subject. So "Clothing" takes the leap, and studies the universal human habit of dressing from anthropology, art, economic, history, psychology, semiotic, and sociology points of view. The course begins with these essential analytical tools. The course then considers the value of textiles around the world, and surveys different garment traditions, starting with our earliest civilizations. How can we understand the European outlier that is Haute Couture Fashion? Has Fashion become the way most people on our planet dress? If so, what are the environmental consequences, and how can we imagine new, sustainable styles?

Throughout the course, we will discuss options and debate possibilities. Lectures begin and end with questions; you will lead discussion sections around topics you select. I hope one of you will choose political T-Shirts, for instance. The only prerequisite for this course is to have worn clothes. Tell friends in other majors they are very welcome here.



The Buaiso indigo collective, 2019: "Farm to Closet."



Balenciaga, 1950, worn by Fonssagrives, photographed by Penn, for *Vogue*.





Creole invention of cotton style, Guadeloupe, 1770.



Qianlong Emperor in full court dress, 1736.



Isadora Duncan coordinates in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC



Acropolis.

Alexander McQueen, 2018



## COLLECTING

Do you collect anything? You probably do, because collecting is a widespread human phenomenon. Children collect. Nations collect. Museums were invented to display collections. This course studies collecting in its basic as well as its most high-end forms, from jeans to multi-million-dollar masterpiece paintings. Once again, I will be teaching "Collecting" as a bridge level course open to undergraduates and graduate students. The syllabus includes two tracks for reading and paper assignments, one specially designed for undergraduates. Every class begins with a 15-20-minute discussion of a single work of art about collecting. Graduate students and undergraduate students learn so much from each other's contributions during these conversations. Discussion sections will be held for undergraduates to work through readings and prepare paper assignments.

Along the way, we visit five museums or exhibitions in New York. Which ones depends on what will be happening in fall of 2020. The excursions take a bit more time than an ordinary discussion section, but the syllabus adjusts for that. They end up being a lot of fun, as well as a way to get to know the City better.



Yugi Agematsu collects New York City detritus, every day.



A collection of his collections, on display

It is helpful to have taken "Introduction to Art History" before Collecting, but not required. Sophomores have been known to feel perfectly comfortable in the course. A sense of humor, however, is a necessary asset. People have the strangest reasons for collecting weird stuff!



Every day, he turns what he has collected into a little environment.

### John Miller

#### Art Criticism

This class is a seminar on contemporary art criticism written by artists. Such criticism differs from academic criticism because it construes art production less as a discrete object of study than as a point of engagement. It also differs from journalistic criticism because it is less obliged to report art market activity and more concerned with positions defined by social, political and esthetic concerns.

During the 1950s in the United States, the existential theatricality of Action Painting triggered a reconsideration of sites of art production and display as well as the configuration of the artwork itself. Artist writers rigorously and explicitly interrogated these terms, moving from an excavation of the white cube to a global critique of visual culture per se. For them, artworks and critique might trade places, merge, sometimes displace each other or - at the very least - offset each other. Ultimately, the efforts of artist critics of this and succeeding generations challenged the presumed universality of the modernist subject and brought the specific identities and histories of artists and audiences increasingly to bear on contemporary art.

We will trace the course of these developments by examining the art and writing of one artist each week. These will include Brian O'Doherty/Patrick Ireland, Allan Kaprow, Robert Morris, Yvonne Rainer, Robert Smithson, Dan Graham, Adrian Piper, Mary Kelly, Martha Rosler, Andrea Fraser, Walead Beshty and Hito Steyerl. We will consider theoretical and practical implications of each artist's oeuvre. I will present an overview of the artwork. One of you, in turn, will lead a discussion about the corresponding texts.



## Supervised Projects in Photography

In this course, you will conduct independent projects in photography in a structured setting under faculty supervision. It will afford you the opportunity to intensively develop a coherent body of photographic work, to critique this work with your classmates and to correlate your goals with recent issues in contemporary photography. You are responsible for arranging for your photographic equipment in consultation with the instructor. Priority for enrollment to the class will be Barnard students who are enrolling in classes at ICP (International Center of Photography). The cost of ICP will be covered by Barnard College.

### Jonathan Reynolds

In the fall, both Professor Alberro and I will be offering Methods and Theories of Art History, a class that is required of all senior Art History majors (Note: this class is only available in the fall semester). This class introduces some of the major methodological approaches that have characterized our discipline since the beginning, such as connoisseurship and iconography, but also explores museum studies and Marxist, feminist and postcolonial critiques of the field. The class is designed to prepare seniors for their thesis projects, and although the class is challenging, it is one of the classes that many students look back on as among the most valuable in their major.



*Yasumasa Morimura, In praise of Velázquez*

In the Spring, I will be offering a lecture class on Japanese photography from the introduction of the medium in the 1850s up to the present.

## FALL 2020 ART HISTORY COURSES

[Download at a glance course list pdf](#)

**SPECIAL NOTE ON APPLYING FOR FALL 2020 BC ART HISTORY SEMINARS.** There will not be a hand in application process this year. To be considered for enrollment in a seminar course, you are required to attend the first class meeting in September. Professors will decide on their roster the first day the class meets. **NOTE:** BC AH seminar courses are limited to 15 students with preference to senior majors.



## UNDERGRADUATE LECTURES

### AHIS-BC1001 INTRODUCTION TO ART HISTORY I

Attempting to offer an introduction to artistic creation on a global scale, this course is team-taught by specialists in a number of different cultural and historical traditions. In the fall semester we will discuss the art of Europe, the Middle East, India, Japan, and China, in periods ranging from the Paleolithic to the Renaissance. Museum trips are an integral part of the course.

Gregory Bryda 4pts M/W 2:40 3:55 Note: weekly discussion groups to be arranged. Discussion Section Required.

### AHIS-BC3626 IN AND AROUND ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

This course focuses on the history of modern art in the mid-twentieth century. To place mid-twentieth century modernism within its proper historical context, we will explore artistic practices elaborated between the 1920s and the 1960s in a wide range of different locations. We will also survey the major critical and historical accounts of modernism in the arts during these years.

The course will first introduce the development of modernism, anti-modernism and avant-gardism in the period between the two World Wars, exploring the changing relationship between these cultural formations in Europe, the U.S.S.R., Mexico, and North America. The second part of the course will study the vicissitudes of modernism and avant-gardism in Europe, Latin America, and the U.S. during the 1930s and 1940s that led to the formation of Concrete art in Europe and Abstract Expressionism and the New York School in the United States. The third part of the course will examine the challenges to modernism and the reformulation of avant-gardism posed by the neo-avant-garde in North America, South America, Europe and Japan in the 1950s and early 1960s. The course will address a wide range of historical and methodological questions and problems. These include: the challenges to the idea of artistic autonomy, the evolving concept of avant-gardism, the ongoing problematic of abstraction, the formal principles of serialism and the grid, the logic of non-composition, the persistence of figuration, the changing role of cultural institutions, the impact of new technologies on cultural production, and the emergence of new audiences and patrons for art.

Alexander Alberro T/TH 4:10-5:25 Note: weekly discussion groups to be arranged. Discussion Section Required.

### AHIS-BC3667 CLOTHING

Human beings create second, social, skins for themselves. Across history and around the world, everyone designs interfaces between their bodies and the world around them. From pre-historic ornaments to global industry, clothing has been a crucial feature of people's survival, desires, and identity. This course studies theories of clothing from the perspectives of art history, anthropology, psychology, economics, sociology, design, and sustainability. Issues to be studied include gender roles, craft traditions, global textile trade, royal sumptuary law, the history of European fashion, dissident or disruptive styles, blockbuster museum costume exhibitions, and the environmental consequences of what we wear today.

Anne Higonnet 4pts T/TH 2:40- 3:55 Note: weekly discussion groups to be arranged. Discussion Section Required.

## UNDERGRADUATE BRIDGE LECTURES

### AHIS G4045 COLLECTING

Collecting is among the most universal of human social phenomena. The course begins by studying the universality of collecting, exploring its range and hierarchies. Following a study of social, psychological, and anthropological theories of collecting, the course traces the history of collecting at its highest levels, from Renaissance princely collections to modern public art museums. The course is mostly about European and American collecting, but includes discussion of how art from all over the world has been collected. Special attention will be paid to preserved collections and art about collecting.

Anne Higonnet 4pts T/TH 10:10-11:25 Note: weekly discussion groups to be arranged. Discussion Section Required for Undergraduates.

## UNDERGRADUATE SEMINARS

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### AHIS-BC3840 DESIGNING DESIGN

Everything we contact has been designed. Design makes and unmakes desires on a global scale. It organizes our lives—from the way we move to the interface that tracks our movements. We've trained for the end for a while now, apocalypse is announced on every image channel. In a world, soon impossible to physically inhabit, the things we consume now consume us. The stakes have never been higher. To make a new world, we must use design.

Our planet need not be disposed. It is an infrastructure for another one. To make contact with it we need to understand design as a value system for propelling possibility, not possession. The designed world requires new relation to things and fullness of use. As we read, write, experience and make our own projects, Designing Design helps us: acquire intimate knowledge of how we got here, recognize our historical allies and foes, and foster imagination and intelligence to live and make responsibly. This course requires no prior design experience.

Irena Haiduk 4 pts. Tuesday 2:10- 4:00 + 1 hour Visual Arts lab

### AHIS-BC3910 CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY AND MEDIA POLITICS

An introductory survey of contemporary photography and related media through the framework of current exhibitions in New York City. Exhibitions of photography and video play a particular role in mirroring the present moment, which finds political themes front and center. Prevalent are exhibitions that redress (art) historical erasure, present counter histories, or take direct aim at specific governmental policies. Through group outings to NYC galleries and museums (approximately 8 trips) we will take stock of which artists are showing, in what contexts, and unpack both artistic and curatorial strategies. In addition to class discussion of what we've seen, during our time in the classroom we will look back at the select landmark photography exhibitions, to chart evolutions in the medium and their interrelation with politics.

Joanna Lehan 4pts Thursday 2:10-4:00

### AHIS-BC3968 ART CRITICISM I

This course is a seminar on contemporary art criticism written by artists in the post war period. Such criticism differs from academic criticism because it construes art production less as a discrete object of study than as a point of engagement. It also differs from journalistic criticism because it is less obliged to report art market activity and more concerned with polemics. Art /Criticism I will trace the course of these developments by examining the art and writing of one artist each week. These will include Brian O'Doherty/Patrick Ireland, Allan Kaprow, Robert Morris, Yvonne Rainer, Robert Smithson, Art & Language,

Dan Graham, Adrian Piper, Mary Kelly, Martha Rosler, Judith Barry and Andrea Fraser. We will consider theoretical and practical implications of each artist's oeuvre.

John Miller 4pts Tuesday 11:00- 12:50

#### AHIS-BC3949 THE ART OF WITNESS Memorials

An introductory survey of contemporary photography and related media through the framework of current exhibitions in New York City. Exhibitions of photography and video play a particular role in mirroring the present moment, which finds political themes front and center. Prevalent are exhibitions that redress (art) historical erasure, present counter histories, or take direct aim at specific governmental policies. Through group outings to NYC galleries and museums (approximately 8 trips) we will take stock of which artists are showing, in what contexts, and unpack both artistic and curatorial strategies. In addition to class discussion of what we've seen, during our time in the classroom we will look back at the select landmark photography exhibitions, to chart evolutions in the medium and their interrelation with politics.

Rosalyn Deutsche 4pts Wednesday 11:00-12:50 Limited to Juniors, Seniors and Graduate students)

### ART HISTORY MAJOR REQUIRED COURSES

#### AHIS-BC3970-01 METHODS & THEORIES OF ART HISTORY

Jonathan Reynolds 4pts Wednesday 2:10-4:00

#### AHIS-BC3970-02 METHODS & THEORIES OF ART HISTORY

Alexander Alberro 4pts Tuesday 2:10-4:00

Introduction to critical writings that have shaped histories of art, including texts on iconography and iconology, the psychology of perception, psychoanalysis, social history, feminism and gender studies, structuralism, semiotics, and post-structuralism. Enrollment limited only to Barnard Art History majors.

#### AHIS-BC3959 SENIOR RESEARCH SEMINAR

Independent research for the senior thesis. Students develop and write their senior thesis in consultation with an individual faculty adviser in art history and participate in group meetings scheduled throughout the senior year. Enrollment limited to Barnard Art History Majors

Rosalyn Deutsche 3pts Tuesday 6:10-8:00

#### AHIS-BC3530 ADVANCED SENIOR STUDIO

The Fall Advanced Senior Studio serves as a forum for senior Visual Arts majors to develop their studio theses. The priorities are producing a coherent body of studio work and understanding this work in terms of critical discourse. The class is comprised of group critiques and small group meetings with the instructor. Visiting lecturers and professional workshops will also be scheduled and required. Each student will develop an independent body of visual work that is both personal, original and also speaks to the social conditions of our time. Each student will be able to articulate, verbally and in writing, their creative process. Each student will acquire professional skill that will support their artistic practice in the future. Each student will learn how to present and speak about their work publicly. Enrollment limited to Barnard Visual Arts Majors

Irena Haiduk 4pts Monday 2:10- 6:00

### VISUAL ARTS COURSES

Students must attend first class for instructor's permission

#### AHIS-BC2005 AHIS BC2007 PAINTING I and PAINTING III

This course will focus on individual and collaborative projects designed to explore the fundamental principles of image making. Students acquire a working knowledge of concepts in contemporary art through class critiques, discussion, and individual meetings with the professor. Reading materials will provide historical and philosophical background to the class assignments. Class projects will range from traditional to experimental and multi-media. Image collections will be discussed in class with an awareness of contemporary image production.

Joan Snitzer 3pts Wednesday 2:10-6:00

#### AHIS-BC3003 SUPERVISED PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECTS

Designed for students to conduct independent projects in photography. Priority for enrollment to the class will be Barnard College students who are enrolling in classes at ICP (International Center of Photography). The cost of ICP will be covered by Barnard College. All of the other students enrolling in the course (CC, GS SOA) will be responsible for their own ICP course expenses.

John Miller 3pts Monday 11:00-12:50

#### Cross Listed Courses Counting for Art History Major Credit

#### ARCH-BC2505 LIFE BEYOND EMERGENCY: ARCHTECTURE HISTORY COLONIALISM HUMANITARIANISM

How do people live beyond emergency? What places and architectures do they make, and what are their poetics and politics? This course examines the connected histories of colonialism and humanitarianism through architecture in / beyond emergency. We will study iconic forms: refugee camps and detainment centers, colonial expositions and museums, UN headquarters and NGO field sites, and territories of consequence to colonial and national powers. We will study humanitarianism, an ideological manifestation of modernity and liberal thought, which is governed by the terms of urgency and rarely considered historically or in relation to colonial structures. We will study colonialism, which is usually understood as a historical period, rather than a condition enacted by architectural forms, spaces, and practices that extend into postcolonial and emergency contexts. This course introduces students to themes and cases through lectures, discussions of shared readings, and presentations of independent work by participants. No experience is required, and students with an interest in global histories are welcome.

Anooradha Siddiqi Lecture 3pts T/TH 1:10-2:25

#### ARCH-BC3901 HISTORIES OF ARCHITECTURE AND FEMINISM (SENIORS ONLY)

What does it mean to write histories of architecture and feminism? Which stories are included and which excluded? How are race, sexuality, class, colonialism, ethnicity, and nation bound up with architecture in these histories? How are questions of domesticity linked with those of power? What is an architect? This seminar will examine these questions and others through historiographical practice and theory. Building upon recent interventions by scholars examining architecture, art, urbanism, geography, territory, ecology, technology, and material culture, we will examine how histories of architecture and feminism have been narrated and shaped. In our class discussions, we will examine the objects and methods of histories that concern themselves with architecture—defined broadly as well as narrowly—and study how scholars using feminist approaches have attempted to write those histories. Syllabus Available Upon Request. Contact the AH office for further info.

Anooradha Siddiqi seminar 4pts Wednesday 4:10-6:00 Instructor's permission required. Attend first class to apply.