

## Birkbeck History of Art Short Courses 2021-22

You can email us directly with questions about these or any of our other art history programmes. [art-history@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:art-history@bbk.ac.uk)

Enrolment on all courses does not open until July 2021. Once enrolment opens, you can enrol by finding the course, by title, on our website and using the 'Enrol' button for that course page. Prices for courses will be advertised once the 2021-22 programme goes live online in the next few weeks.

### 2021-22 term dates

- Autumn term: Monday 4 October 2021 to Friday 17 December 2021
- Spring term: Monday 10 January 2022 to Friday 25 March 2022
- Summer term: Mon 25 April 2022 to Friday 8 July 2022

#### **Doing Art History (30-credits 22 weeks) Wednesdays, Autumn & Spring Terms, 18:00-19:30 (£1380)**

(This covers the same ground as the previous Foundation course)

This dynamic and interactive module is taught on Wednesdays 18:00-19:30 through the Autumn and Spring terms. It engages students in the wide variety of ways in which it is possible to 'do art history'. It is designed to work in conjunction with other first-year/ level 4 modules, providing you with the core study, visual and textual analysis skills necessary for thinking about, analysing, discussing and writing about art and its histories.

We will focus initially on developing your visual analysis skills, as this is a core skill of the history of art. This means close looking at art works and discussing the choices an artist or designer has made and the many ways a work affects those who encounter it. In addition to this will be exploring how we use visual material to create arguments, share ideas and make connections between art works. In the second half of the course will focus more on reading and writing of art history. As well as helping you to identify and engage with academic texts, we will think about how you can communicate the new understanding you have gained. Looking at how to frame arguments and structure ideas in written or oral presentation will support all your coursework across the other courses you study, as well as being a widely transferable skill.

This course gives you a chance to reflect on what it means to become an art historian, what you want to get to from your studies with us. Greater understanding of how you learn, what your objectives are and what it takes to improve will help ensure you get the best out of the studies you are investing in. On this module, you will work both independently and with others in a creative and supportive environment.

The module aims to:

- contribute to a sound training in the discipline of history of art through the amplification of a subject-specific approach to train you in thinking about, analysing and writing art history
- enable you to develop and articulate your knowledge of art, architecture, museums and galleries
- enhance your ability to observe, identify and analyse works of visual culture
- enhance your critical awareness of the social and cultural contexts of the production and reception of art through introducing different forms of writing around art including working with networked and social media.
- enhance your familiarity with current debates and approaches to the discipline
- provide intellectual stimulus and challenges for those studying for personal development.

Assessment is via one essay of 1500 words (50%) and a visual analysis take-home test (50%)

**Art History: A Survey (30-credits 22 weeks) Mondays, Autumn & Spring Terms, 18:00-19:30 + occasional 19:30-21:00 (£1380)**

Our Art History: A Survey short course, taught at first-year undergraduate level, will introduce you to key periods, themes and movements in Western art from antiquity through to the late twentieth century. The module begins by exploring the foundations of European art, before moving on to the art and architecture of the medieval, Renaissance and Baroque periods.

A session on the eighteenth century is followed by a series of classes which follow the European avant-gardes through late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century modernism, concluding with the period of intense artistic activity from Pop Art to Conceptualism.

All these periods and movements are considered in their full historical and theoretical contexts. The module is organised into six blocks, with each block of three lectures and a seminar relating to a particular period. Whilst the lectures will provide you with a broad overview of stylistic developments and art historical approaches, the smaller seminar groups allow for detailed discussion of individual artworks, buildings and texts.

Self-directed gallery and site visits are an integral part of the module as far as can be accommodated given restrictions.

Assessment is via two essays of 1500 words each and a three-hour, take-home examination.

**Material and Process in Art (30-credits 22 weeks) Wednesdays, Autumn & Spring Terms, 19:30-21:00 (£1380)**

Why do art materials matter? The aim of our Material and Process in Art online short course is to find answers to this question developing your understanding of the ways in

which different materials have been used at different periods and how different media have historically acquired specific meanings and connotations.

Starting in the medieval period and working through to the present day, we will address the use and valuation of materials including stone, wood, glass, metal, textiles paint, print, found objects, the artists' body and digital media. The course involves visits to museums, galleries and places of art production, and for your assessment you will research specific objects that are currently on show in a London gallery.

Assessment is via two essays of 1000 words (non-examined) and 2000 words (100%), respectively.

**Debates in Art History (30-credits 22 weeks) Thursdays, Autumn & Spring Terms, 19:30-21:00 (£1380)**

Our Debates in Art History short course will develop your understanding of a range of art historical approaches and methods and how these relate to their historical context. You will learn about the writing of art history and undertake close reading of texts. Some of the ideas involved are challenging, so time for independent thought and critical reflection is built into the course structure. We also recommend that you take part in informal group meetings and/or use the Discussion Area on Moodle.

The course is made up of four parts, each comprising two lectures and one seminar:

- Form and Style
- Gender and Politics
- The Significance of the Artist
- Mechanisms of Meaning

The lectures introduce a selection of approaches and the seminars allow you to explore these approaches in more detail through the discussion of a key text or texts. The summer term is devoted to preparation for the examination.

Assessment is via a learning journal (non-examined) and a take-home exam (100%)

**Art in Britain: 1900-1950 Prasannajit De Silva (15-credits 11 weeks) Tuesdays, Autumn Term, 18:00-19:30 (£690)**

Our online, short course *Art in Britain: 1900-1950* gives you the chance to explore the transformation of British art through the first half of the twentieth century. Over the eleven weeks of the course, which will run on Tuesdays 18:00-19:30 in the Autumn term, you will develop your understanding of the development of art in Britain during this turbulent period and connect this understanding of art to the wider history of the time. The first half of the twentieth century was marked by rapid technological and social change, as well as by two world wars and we will examine how British artists engaged with this context. At the same time, art itself was changing rapidly across Europe and America, and so we will also consider how British artists responded to such developments, whilst often seeking to retain something distinctively British.

*Art in Britain 1900-1950* covers a range of interesting themes including:

- art of the Edwardian era
- the work of war artists
- the influence of modernism
- social reportage in the 1930s

This course is suitable for anyone with an interest in art history. No prior study of art history is expected, though you should be able to write and discuss your ideas in English. The course is assessed by a 2500-word essay at the end. Your tutor will support you through the preparation for this.

**After Caravaggio: Seventeenth-Century Painting in Europe Chris Moock (15-credits 11 weeks) Tuesdays, Spring Term, 18:00-19:30 (£690)**

Our short course *After Caravaggio: Seventeenth-Century Painting in Europe* gives you the chance to explore the exciting variety of directions followed by European painters of the seventeenth century. The course runs over the eleven weeks on Tuesdays 18:00-19:30 in the Spring term.

Coinciding with a new exhibition on Poussin at the National Gallery, this course will explore the work of this important artist and his contemporaries as they engaged with the long tradition of European Classicism in new ways. The course will include a set of notes to support self-guided visits to the exhibition, assuming a group visit will not be possible. TBC near the start of the course.

At the beginning of the century, Caravaggio was widely admired and emulated. We will look at how later artists turned away from his approach towards the works of Raphael and the classical sculpture of antiquity. Nicolas Poussin was among the artists who followed this path. At the same time, we will consider other currents that took artists in a range of new directions.

*After Caravaggio: Seventeenth-Century Painting in Europe* covers a number of interesting themes including:

- The legacy of Caravaggio
- Poussin and the reinvigoration of the European Classical tradition
- The influence of Titian
- Rubens, Rembrandt and Velázquez and new forms of history painting
- Poussin and Claude and landscape painting as a new genre

This course is suitable for anyone with an interest in art history. No prior study of art history is expected, though you should be able to write and discuss your ideas in English. The course is assessed by a 2500-word essay at the end. Your tutor will support you through the preparation for this.

(no essays and cannot be used as credit towards any awards)

**Dürer and the Northern Renaissance Clare Ford Wille (11 weeks) Mondays, Autumn Term, 11:00-12:30 (£395)**

Our online, short course, *Dürer and the Northern Renaissance*, consists of 11 live sessions Mondays 11:00-12:30 through the Autumn term. It focuses on Dürer as a key figure in the transformation of Northern European painting and the graphic arts. It coincides with the long-awaited National Gallery exhibition, "Dürer's Journeys", the first major exhibition of this important artist for some time, which is now due to open in Nov 2021.

On this course you will develop your understanding of the career of this artist and his contemporaries in Northern Europe between the years 1440 and 1540. This was a period of significant social, political and economic change. The Reformation and split between the Protestant and Catholic churches created a new context for religious art. As well as religious subjects, Dürer and his contemporaries met the diverse interests of their patrons with prints and drawings as well as paintings that ranged across portraiture, studies from nature and landscapes. Through his travels back and forth to Italy, Dürer played an important role in bringing ideas from the Italian Renaissance north and adapting them for Northern European audiences.

The course covers a range of interesting topics including:

- Dürer's encounters with the art of renaissance Italy
- The development of his practice across a range of media, particularly print
- Comparative study of his contemporaries, such as Lochner and Cranach
- Reflection on the impact of the Reformation on art practice in Northern Europe
- Reflection on the social, economic and political changes that took place over the period 1440 to 1540 and how this impacted on art practice.

The *Dürer and the Northern Renaissance* short course gives you the opportunity to study the work of this intriguing and versatile artist in depth. We will seek to understand the social, political and artistic context of his work and the role he played in connecting the art traditions of Northern and Southern Europe.

This course is suitable for anyone with an interest in art history. No prior study of art history is expected, though you should be able to read and discuss your ideas in English. The course is non-credit-bearing, which means there is no formal assessment, though your tutor will ask you to be prepared to join in class discussion each week.

**Great Mistresses: Medieval and Renaissance Artists Clare Ford Wille (11 weeks) Mondays, Spring Term, 11:00-12:30 (£395)**

Our online, short course, *Great Mistresses: Medieval and Renaissance Artists*, consists of 11 live sessions on Mondays 11:00-12:30 through the Spring term. The course focusses on a range of artists whose contribution to art history is only now being fully uncovered because they were women. New research has been invaluable, particularly over the last twenty years, in discovering more about the art practice of women and the reattribution

of their work, which for too long has been attributed to male artists or hidden in private collections or the depots of museums.

On this course you will develop your understanding of the careers of a range of medieval and renaissance artists. This will enable you to explore changes in art and art practice over time and also to understand how art histories are subsequently constructed to make sense of these changes. In particular, you will be invited to consider how this process erased the contribution of women, despite the fame many achieved in their own day.

The course covers a range of interesting topics including:

- Art practice within convents and the illumination of manuscripts
- The expansion of women's practice into painting and sculpture
- Sofonisba Anguissola and Catharina van Hemessen and portraiture
- Artemisia Gentileschi and other great mistresses of the Renaissance
- Reflection on the social, economic and political factors that restricted women's art practice and erased their contributions

The *Great Mistresses: Medieval and Renaissance Artists* short course gives you the opportunity to get an overview of European medieval and renaissance art, with a focus on the work of particular artists and how they met needs of their audiences and patrons, whilst negotiating the many barriers that stood in their way.

This course is suitable for anyone with an interest in art history. No prior study of art history is expected, though you should be able to read and discuss your ideas in English. The course is non-credit-bearing, which means there is no formal assessment, though your tutor will ask you to be prepared to join in class discussion each week.

**Study Week: What was the High Renaissance? Michael Douglas Scott (1 week) A week in May/June 2022 TBC (£395)**

This one-week, short course consists of expert lectures and discussions to explore the question: what was the High Renaissance? (Dates TBC) Over the course of the week you will develop your understanding of art of the Renaissance through close analysis and discussion of the work of a range of artists. We will also reflect on the debates and art historical thinking that has shaped 'Renaissance' as a label. We aim to include guided visits around key London museums and galleries if conditions allow; this will be confirmed before the start of the course.

The 'High Renaissance' as a term dates from the nineteenth century but the concept goes back to the sixteenth. At that time, it was claimed that the 30 years around 1500 had witnessed a pinnacle of artistic achievement in Italy represented by Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael. This achievement has never been placed in doubt but its relationship to the rest of the Renaissance has.

We ask:

- Was the High Renaissance the culmination of fifteenth-century artistic developments and how does subsequent 'Mannerism' link to this?

- How 'classical' was it?
- Is it a coherent style category?
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Join us in seeking answers to these questions as we test the concept against concrete historical examples both in lecture and discussion sessions and close examination of a range of paintings and sculptures.

This course is suitable for anyone with an interest in art history. No prior study of art history is expected, though you should be able to read and discuss your ideas in English. The course is non-credit-bearing, which means there is no formal assessment, though your tutor will ask you to be prepared to join in class discussion.

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