

ARTH 4929/002 Topical Studies in Art History
Art in China

Classes: Tues/Thursday 12:30-1:45

Instructor: J.P. Park (jp.park@colorado.edu)

Office: 418 Fleming Building

Office Hours: 11:00 – 12:00 Wednesday (or by appointment)

Course Description

This course is designed not only to present an introductory survey of Chinese art but also to provide students with a chance to learn how to read social programs of Chinese history represented in visual language. In order to do this, the course asks students to think of questions, such as “Why does a particular artifact look the way it does?” “Who made it and who obtained it?” “Where was it displayed and for what purpose?” “Who decided what was acceptable and who, if anyone, challenged established styles of production?” The issues of power, class, taste, gender, political debate, social criticism, and public opinions throughout Chinese history will be discussed in the class in order to let students understand that art and society are not two separate entities, but they are related to each other in many ways.

The knowledge obtained through addressing these questions will then lead students to a better understanding of Chinese art and society where art functioned as a site for social and political negotiation. In short, this course will teach students how to read social history from art works. The primary materials of investigation in the class will be paintings, but other visual media such as sculpture, crafts, and book illustrations will also be incorporated into the discussion. A range of scholarly studies will be introduced, which are built upon different academic methodologies and perspectives. In addition, while the focus will be the art production in China, some readings in European art history will be assigned for a comparative perspective. No previous knowledge of Chinese Art History or History is necessary.

Grading

- Two short response paper 20% (10% each)
- Midterm / Final Exam 55% (25% / 30% respectively)
- Attendance and Discussion Participation 25%

For this class, participation means the followings:

1. Attending class and arriving on time. I will take attendance at the beginning of each session. Unexcused absences will significantly lower your grade. Each unexcused absence beyond 2 will lower your participation grade by one third of a letter grade. (e.g., from a B to a B-) If you miss more than 8 lectures, you will fail the class. If you will miss class for religious observance, please notify me in advance. Absence due to illness is excused only with a doctor’s note.
2. Engaging critically with the issues addressed in the readings and being attentive to the demands of the material.
3. Contributing to class discussions in a thoughtful manner. In addition, beverages are fine, but do not bring food of any sort to class.
4. Submitting your response papers on time, at the beginning of class. Late work will be penalized one-third of a grade for each day it is late.

Short Response Papers

You are expected to prepare for each class by completing the assigned readings before each class. The case study readings provide students with the opportunity to respond to the larger implications of the survey information and comment on scholarly and critical interpretations of the art. Among these case study readings, you are supposed to choose two and write a two or three-page essay (Times-Roman, 12-font, double space) in response to a question found on this syllabus. In completing the assignments, you will demonstrate that you prepared for the discussion/ case study portion of the class. The assignments will also allow you to reflect critically on the readings. This method will promote stimulating and lively discussion in the class. Students are not expected to definitively or correctly answer the question, but rather to demonstrate that they have engaged with the material.

Please note: The short response papers will be graded in a check, check plus, and check minus system. A check means that you displayed reasonable effort in answering the question. The mark of a check plus indicates that I think you successfully answered the question and/or demonstrated superlative effort. A check minus indicates that I think your essay does not display an acceptable level of rigor. As the answers to the essays will emerge from the class lectures, I do not intend to engage with the content, but will address mechanical and grammatical issues. Each paper should be submitted before the assigned readings are discussed in the class.

Midterm/ Final Exams

There will be a midterm and a final examination. They will involve identifying images viewed in class and writing short essays in which you compare pairs of images. The final will cover primarily, but not exclusively, materials from the second half of the semester. Unlike other Art History survey courses, the midterm/final exam of this class will not ask students to memorize a large body of images. Instead, students are supposed to understand (and memorize) the “arguments” of the weekly reading assignments and incorporate them into the discussion of the images provided at the final exam. A list of images will be distributed a week before the exams (40-45 images.) Slide identification is important, however, equal emphasis will be placed on students’ ability to unpack the artistic and cultural information encoded in the visual art.

Required Texts

Robert Thorp and Richard Vinograd, *Chinese Art and Culture*. New York: Abrams, 2001.

Supplementary Textbook

1. Craig Clunas, *Art in China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. (hereafter, will be referred to as Clunas.)
2. Michael Sullivan, *The Arts of China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. (hereafter, will be referred to as Sullivan.)
3. Sherman Lee, *History of Far Eastern Art*. Fifth edition, New York: Harry and Abrams, Inc., 1995. (hereafter, will be referred to as Lee)

Course Schedule

1st Week: Aug. 25 and 27

Course Introduction

Geography and Prehistory

The Neolithic to the Shang Dynasty

Reading Assignment: Thorp and Vinograd, 14-64.

Supplementary Reading: Sullivan, 1-32; Lee, 22-41.

2nd Week: Sep. 1 and 3

Ceremonial Arts from the Zhou Dynasty

Reading Assignment: Thorp and Vinograd, 65-117.

Supplementary Reading: Sullivan, 33-59; Clunas, 15-29; Lee, 41-60.

3rd Week: Sep. 8 and 10

Qin and Han Art

Reading Assignment: Thorp and Vinograd: 119-149

Supplementary Reading: Sullivan, 60-91; Clunas, 29-35; Lee, 57-72; Michael Loewe, "The painting from tombs no. 1 Ma-wang-tui," in *Ways to Paradise: the Chinese Quest for Immortality* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979), 17-59.

Comparative Case Study 1 (Paper due by Sep.10 Friday)

• Martin J. Powers "Pictorial Art and Its Public in Early Imperial China," *Art History* 7, no.2 (1984): 135-158.

• Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 167-186.

→ Both Martin Powers and Wu Hung provide path-breaking interpretations of Han Dynasty funerary stone engravings. However, their hypotheses, approaches, and conclusions are quite different.

Summarize each opinion and, if you can, investigate their methodologies in detail. You are not supposed to agree with one opinion to criticize the other, but you can provide critical analysis on certain issues, which you don't agree with in their arguments.

4th Week: Sep. 15 and 17

The Three Kingdoms and the Six Dynasties

Reading Assignment: Vinograd and Thorp, 151-183; Audrey Spiro, *Contemplating the Ancients: Aesthetic and Social Issues in Early Chinese Portraits* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 1-13; 91-104.

Supplementary Reading: Lee 156-163, 286-296; Sullivan, 92-121; Clunas, 35-53, 92-97.

5th Week: Sep. 22 and 24

Art for Aristocrats: The Sui and Tang Dynasties

Reading Assignment: Thorp and Vinograd, 185-223; McNair "Early Tang Imperial Patronage at Longmen," *Ars Orientalis* 24 (1994): 65-81.

Supplementary Reading: Lee, 286-313; Sullivan, 122-151; Clunas, 97-112; Amy

6th Week: Sep. 29 and Oct. 1

The Emergence of Literati Artists: Five Dynasties and the Song

Reading Assignment: Thorp and Vinograd, 225-277.

Supplementary Reading: Lee, 358-384; Sullivan 152-193; Clunas 53-63, 113-121, 141-149, 173-175.

Case Study 2: Alfreda Murck, *Poetry and Painting in Song China: The Subtle Art of Dissent* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), 28-50. (due by Oct. 1)

→ Summarize Alfreda Murck's argument on the uses of paintings and poetry, which express both political success and dissent in visual format and paraphrase her argument using contemporary case, which parallels rhetorical structure of the Northern Song paintings. (You can think of various examples, such as TV commercials, novels, films, and even newspapers cartoons.)

7th Week: Oct. 6 and 8

Of the Literati, By the Literati, For the Literati: Yuan Dynasty Painting

Reading Assignment: Sullivan, 194-213; James Cahill, *Three Alternative Histories of Chinese Painting* (Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1988), 12-36.

Supplementary Reading: Lee, 455-467; Clunas, 63-66, 121-123, 150-153.

8th Week: Oct. 13 and 15

Mid-term Exam: Oct. 15

9th Week: Oct. 20 and 22

The Arts of Zen (Chan)

Reading Assignment: Jan Fontein and Money L. Hickman, *Zen: Painting & Calligraphy* (Boston: MFA, 1970), Introduction

10th Week: Oct. 27 and 29

The Resurgence of Court Taste: The Early and Mid-Ming Dynasty

Reading Assignment: Thorp and Vinograd, 279-315.

Supplementary Reading: Lee, 468-486; Sullivan, 214-227, Clunas, 66-72, 123-131, 153-160.

Case Study 3: Kathlyn Maureen Liscomb, "Social Status and Art Collecting: The Collection of Shen Zhou and Wang Zhen," *Art Bulletin* 78 (1996): 111-136. (due Oct. 24th)

→ In this article, Kathlyn Liscomb re-examines the cultural distinction of the mid-Ming society. What is the academic prejudice she is challenging in her article? Analyze her argument and evaluate the structural criteria she applied to the study of class (or cultural) distinction.

11th Week: Nov. 3 and 5

The Late Ming to the Middle Qing

Reading Assignment: Thorp and Vinograd, 317-365.

Supplementary Reading: Sullivan, 227-273, Clunas, 72-87, 160-171, 187-201, 175-186; Lee, 487-506.

12th Week: Nov. 10 and 12

Toward Modernity: The Early 20th Century

Reading Assignment: Thorp and Vinograd, 367-390.

13th Week: Nov. 17 and 19

Communization and the Cultural Revolution

Reading Assignment: Thorp and Vinograd, 390-414; Patricia Powell and Joseph Wong, "Propaganda Posters from the Chinese Cultural Revolution," *Historian* 59, no.4 (Summer 1997): 779-794.

Supplementary Reading: Selected Pages from Stefan Landsberger's Website (<http://www.iisg.nl/~landsberger/>), Robert Benewick, "Icons of Power: Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution," in *Picturing Power in the People's Republic of China: Posters of the Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 123-137,

Nov. 19: Deadline for late submission of assignment (They won't be accepted after this date in any circumstances.)

14th Week: No Class! Fall Break.

15th Week: Dec. 1 and 3

Contemporary Chinese Art

Reading Assignment: Britta Erickson, *On the Edge: Contemporary Chinese Artists Encounter the West* (Hong Kong: Timezone 8, 2005), 15-43.

16th Week: Dec. 8 and 10

Last Week of Class, Review and Evaluation.

Final Exam: Dec. 10

(Remember! There won't be any make-up exam.)