Early Modern and Modern Decorative Arts

UNC at Chapel Hill  
Art Department  
ARTH 473 Section 001  
Fall 2018  
9:05-9:55 MWF  
218 Hanes Art Center

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Office Hours: 3:00-4:00 MW and by appointment

Course Description

This course traces major historical developments in the decorative and applied arts and material culture of Western society from the Renaissance to the present. Individual lectures familiarize students with significant forms, materials, sites, styles, designers, and craftspeople, while introducing a variety of scholarly approaches to recovering meaning from material artifacts through a study of function, technology, iconography, patronage and cultural and social history. At the end of the course, students will have a working visual and historical vocabulary of significant designed and manufactured objects and spaces from a wide range of periods. In addition, students will be expected to begin to develop research skills through an original investigation into a particular aspect of modern decorative arts.

Readings

Required readings (some to be assigned in class) are on the course Sakai site and are accessible with your onyen and password at http://sakai.unc.edu. All readings should be done prior to the class for which they are assigned on the calendar and you should be able to summarize the contents in a paragraph if requested.

Course Grade

Your course grade will be calculated in the following manner:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Paper Topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper Outline</td>
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<td>Paper Draft</td>
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<td>Paper Final</td>
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* Email is generally the best method of contact during non-office hours. Please allow 48 hours for an email response.
In-Class Presentation 15%
Class Participation 10%
Curation Project 15%
Final: Lightning Presentation 10%

Grade Scale: A = 100-93; A- = 92-90; B+ = 89-87; B = 86-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-73; C- = 72-70; D+ = 69-67; D = 66-63; F = 62-0. A final course grade that is on the cusp of a higher grade level (a numerical percentage that is .5 or higher) will be rounded up to the higher grade (for example an 82.6/B- will be rounded up to an 83/B).

See below for more details about student responsibilities and the paper, project and presentation assignments.

Course Calendar

8/22 (W) Introduction to Course
8/24 (F) Venice and the Islamic World
Reading assignment: Richard Goldthwaite, “The Empire of Things: Consumer Demand in Renaissance Italy,” *Patronage, Art and Society in Renaissance Italy*, eds. F. W. Kent and Patricia Simons, Oxford University Press (Oxford), 1987, pp.153-175
8/27 (M) Arts of Love and Marriage in the Renaissance
8/29 (W) Northern European Interiors, 1550-1680
8/31 (F) Handing out of presentation allotments, material culture exercises. [Chosen paper topic due.]

9/3 (M) Labor Day Holiday, no class
9/5 (W) Collecting and Collections in the Early Modern Era
9/7 (F) Curation Project Instruction Day
9/10 (M) Origins of Commercial Society in 17th Century Holland and 18th Century Britain (Asian Import Porcelain)
9/12 (W) Mode and Manners in the 18th Century
9/14 (F) Discussion
9/17 (M) Mode and Manners in the 18th Century II  

9/19 (W) American and English Silver  
Reading assignment: the following (short) articles from the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History  
1. English Silver, 1600-1800: [https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/esilv/hd_esilv.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/esilv/hd_esilv.htm)  

9/21 (F) Discussion  
9/24 (M) Wedgwood and Chippendale  

9/26 (W) Revivalism in the 18th and 19th Centuries  

9/28 (F) Discussion. Paper outline due.

10/1 (M) Domesticity, House and Home in 19th Century America  

10/3 (W) Quiltmaking from Folk Art to High Art  

10/5 (F) The Material Culture of Childhood  

10/8 (M) The Department Store  

10/10 (W) Discussion  
Reading assignments (short):  

10/12 (F) **University Day, no class**

10/15 (M) The Arts and Crafts Movement in Europe and America

10/17 (W) Orientalism: Meeting of East and West in the Colonial Period

10/19 (F) **Fall Break Holiday, no class**

10/22 (M) Politics, Industry and the Design of World’s Fairs

10/24 (W) The Aesthetic Movement and Art Nouveau

10/26 (F) Discussion. **Paper draft and bibliography due**

10/29 (M) Gender, Primitivism and the Idea of Ornament

10/31 (W) Bauhaus

11/2 (F) Discussion

11/5 (M) The Frankfurt Kitchen
Reading Assignments:

11/7 (W) Swedish Modernism

11/9 (F) Discussion

11/12 (M) The Automobile

11/14 (W) 20th Century Fashion

11/16 (F) Discussion

11/19 (M) Charles and Ray Eames and Mid-Century Modern Design

11/20 (T) **Final paper due.**

11/21 (W) Thanksgiving Recess, no class

11/23 (F) Thanksgiving Recess, no class

11/26 (M) Plastic

11/28 (W) Industrial Design: Objectified

11/30 (F) Presentations/Discussion

12/3 (M) Presentations/Discussion

12/5 (W) Presentations/Discussion. **Curation project completion due.**

12/8 (S) Final Exam Period: Lightning Presentations, 8:00 a.m.

**Student Responsibilities**

Regular class attendance is expected and is a necessity for a proper understanding of the course material. Should it be necessary to miss class for a compelling reason, it is your responsibility to borrow notes for that day from a fellow student in the class. Students arriving late to class or leaving early are disruptive. Common courtesy is expected. Cell phones must be turned off during class.

Along with writing the term paper, doing the curation project, and giving the presentations, you should keep up with the assigned readings as the material is covered in class. Students will be asked in advance to lead a particular discussion day and should be prepared with three questions for group discussion about the previously assigned lecture readings and/or special readings assigned for that discussion. The class participation portion of your grade is based on class attendance as well as active discussion in groups and of presentations. Lecture PowerPoints will be posted to Sakai for each lecture session.

A term paper assignment portion may be handed in late without penalty for a legitimate personal reason. Dr. Bauer will be the judge of what is legitimate, such as a serious illness or a family emergency. An unexcused late term paper will be penalized one full letter grade.

**Graduate Student Responsibilities**

In addition to the aforementioned student responsibilities, graduate students will meet with the instructor as a group every other week to discuss additional assigned readings. At each meeting, the student will hand in a one-page synopsis of the reading that states the author’s major argument and succinctly evaluates it. What does the reading tell you about material culture and
how does it relate to the lectures or other reading assignments? These synopses will be applied to the participation portion of your grade.

As part of their term paper assignment, Graduate students will also write an annotated bibliography on a particular area or period within the decorative arts. This bibliography should be written in coordination with the chosen term paper topic: for example, if the paper topic is on the Utensilo plastic organizer then the bibliography can cover plastic in mid-century modern design or concepts of efficiency and organization in the home and office, i.e. a broader look at the historical context within which the object appeared. All bibliography due dates are the same as for the term paper assignment. The annotated bibliography should be five to ten pages in length, formatted as specified for the term paper below.

**Term Paper Assignment and In-Class Presentation**

You will write a critical essay along the lines of a designed/manufactured object of personal significance to you. One specific type of object—cell phones/computers—is verboten, because you need to think a little harder about the object you are going to choose and I don’t want to read a dozen papers on the wonders of the iPhone, even though I have an iPhone and can go on forever about its wonders myself. The object can be something from fashion/jewelry, a household object, a childhood toy, a form of transportation, a piece of furniture, or the like, that has been a part of your own life. So it cannot be 1) a painting/photograph/film/sculpture/building because those are outside the realm of the subject of this class or 2) an object you saw in a magazine/museum/on TV that you admire/desire but have not personally owned or used. You must have your choice of topic approved by Dr. Bauer before 8/31. An outline of the paper is due on or before 9/28. A draft of the paper and bibliography is due on or before 10/26. The final term paper is due on or before 11/22. All assignments should be submitted electronically through the Sakai dropbox by 5 pm on the date due.

The paper should be conceived in three parts:

1) **What is your personal history of the object?** How did it come into your life? How have you used it and how did it become important to your life, to your identity and sense of yourself? This part should include a thorough description of the object and can include interviews/oral histories related to the object, especially if it is something that has been handed down in your family over time.

2) **What is the design/manufacture history of the object?** Does it have a known designer and what is their (brief) biography as a designer and specific design concept for this object? If there is no known designer, what is the manufacturing company and how did they go about designing and then marketing this object? What do you perceive to be the most important concerns of the designer in creating this object? What other objects can be compared to this object in its shape and form? How effective is the object at serving its function? This part should include a more detailed formal analysis of the object.

3) **What is the cultural history of the object?** What styles, ideas, movements, and/or trends influenced the design? How did your designer handle the following concerns in designing the object: materials, patronage, technology, aesthetics, ornament, and symbolism? How does your object relate to its historical context? Does your object
reflected any aspirations, ideals, or dreams of the designer and/or client or consumer?

This part should place the object into the broader context of design history.

Depending on your object, relevant sources for research might include books on the designer or period, museum collection and auction house catalogs, and articles in periodicals, newspapers, and on the internet. The point of this paper is not to produce a digest of what others have written, but to write a critical analysis of your own from an informed perspective.

The length of the paper should be 10-15 pages of text (15-20 for graduate students), double-spaced, size 12 Times New Roman font with one-inch margins all around. Neither images nor bibliography should be included in the 10-15 pages of text total (i.e., you must actually write 10-15 pages worth of text for your essay). Assignments must be uploaded to Sakai dropbox and should be titled with the course and section name, your last name, and submission title in the filename. Doc files should also have your name and course section in the header on every page. For example, ARTH473-001_Bauer_outline.docx. **Any improperly submitted/named file will be docked 5 points automatically.** Pages must all be numbered. Images must be numbered, captioned and referred to in the text. You must acknowledge the sources of your images (in the captions). Any information derived from research must be properly documented with footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography in a standard format. Internet research must also be documented and should constitute less than 1/3 of your source materials. **All citations must be in the Chicago Style for Notes and Bibliography (not Author-Date).** The library weblink to the full text of the CMS can be found on the course Sakai site. One highly recommended manual is Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.*

Plagiarism will not be tolerated, per the UNC Honor Code: **It shall be the responsibility of every student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University students or academic personnel acting in an official capacity. An especially serious Honor Code violation is plagiarism. If you are uncertain about this, please talk to the course instructor and T.A. See also the UNC-CH student guide titled "Plagiarism."**

At the end of the semester, class time will be set aside for you to give presentations related to your paper topics. Days for presentations will be assigned during an earlier class session (probably via a sign-up sheet). Your presentation should be 15 minutes long at a maximum and utilize some formal type of presentation tool or format (PowerPoint, Google Slides, Prezi). You should also submit your final presentation via the Sakai dropbox to be reviewed for grading. Your presentation should be a summary of each of the three parts of your final paper, and each section should have visual examples that illuminate your points or that you analyze in relation to your central object. You should aim your content at an audience that has no prior knowledge of your object or your research into it (think of it as a gallery talk to a general audience). You should also be prepared to answer questions from your audience.

**Curation Project and Lightning Presentation**

The curation project is related to your chosen paper topic but will have both a public and a shared/group aspect to its execution. As a class, we will be creating a virtual exhibition using a
Pinterest board. Each class member will have a subfolder within the board to which they will have to add 8 pins of objects or items (photos, videos, articles) related to their chosen object for their paper. To each pin should be added explanatory text similar to a descriptive wall board for a museum exhibition—this text should identify the item in the pin (creator, title, date, etc.) as well as give some additional description about how this item relates to the chosen object and the rationale for its inclusion in the subfolder group (how it fits the theme of your section of the virtual exhibition). There will also be a shared subfolder to which everyone will add 2 of their pins and, for each of those pins, a related pin from one of the other individual subfolders, with added text to the pins pointing out what that connection might be (how to connect each of our subthemes from section to section of the virtual exhibition). This will be challenging, as you will have to figure out how to conceptually, historically, geographically, or stylistically link disparate object types. Students are encouraged to work on this project over the whole course of the semester (think one pinned object every two weeks) so that other students, the instructor, and the public can comment on and interact with the pins. An instruction day has been built into the syllabus so everyone can learn how to use Pinterest as well as how to think about types of resources to be used (evaluate strengths and weaknesses, value to your project, etc.) and appropriate public use of visual resources (copyright, fair use, attribution, etc.). You curation project participation should be completed by 5 pm on 12/5.

During the final exam period, in lieu of a sit-down formal exam, students will give a 5-minute lightning presentation on their subfolder and their choices for making thematic connections across the virtual exhibition. You can use the virtual exhibition to illustrate your presentation (so no formal presentation tool required). You should think of this as a meeting of the curatorial staff where you have been asked to make the case for your objects and ideas being included in the final exhibition—this time you are speaking to a knowledgeable group (who have already heard your longer presentation on your primary object) and you should think about how your thematic connections relate to the other thematic connections that were offered by your peers with the goal of demonstrating a greater conceptual through line for the exhibition as a whole. This is not a competition (my theme is better than your theme) but a collaboration (my theme would work great with your theme). The peer to whom you made a connection or connections will then be allowed to respond with their thoughts on the strength or relevance of that theme to their objects.