

ARH 407/507 - ART HISTORY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00-4:50 p.m.

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Office hours: Mondays, 11 a.m. to noon drop in; Wednesdays 11 a.m. to noon and 1 to 2 p.m. by appointment. Please call the art office at (503) 725-3515 to schedule an appointment.

SYLLABUS

Since Sigmund Freud's first fascinating but flawed attempt in 1910 to analyze the case of Leonardo da Vinci, art history has maintained a productive albeit conflicted relationship with psychoanalysis. In this seminar, we will review the contributions of Freudian analysis with regard to the visual arts and popular culture and also consider psychoanalysis itself as an historically specific interpretive model. Three areas of inquiry will also be explored: 1) the work of art as an expression of the artist's inner needs or conflicts; 2) the object itself, an "authorless text," as a site of psychoanalytic investigation; and 3) the meaning of the aesthetic experience of the object for the perceiving subject or viewer. Students may choose to adopt any one of these approaches for seminar projects focusing on individual artists or works of art.

Requirements

1. Class attendance is crucial and no one with more than three absences will receive a passing grade. Punctuality is also an important requirement, and three times tardy will count as one absence.
2. Class discussion of the course readings is our primary form of inquiry. For each text, one or more students will be assigned to lead the discussion. Class participation will represent 30% of course grade. Failure to attend class—or to come prepared—on a day you are responsible for leading the group discussion will result in an F for class participation, regardless of the excuse.
3. Short quizzes on material covered in class will constitute 10% of course grade.
4. Each student will present to the class a carefully researched, formal Powerpoint presentation (30% of grade) on a topic to be determined in consultation with the instructor.
3. An 8-10 page research paper (30% of grade) devoted to the same topic as the oral presentation. Papers will be posted on D2L for peer review, then revised, submitted to the instructor, returned for corrections and revisions, then resubmitted for final grading.

Required Texts

Please purchase from the PSU Bookstore: Sigmund Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*. Other readings will be posted on D2L or will be provided in a course packet.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1 – Introduction to Psychoanalysis

Read: Freud, excerpt from *The Interpretation of Dreams*; “Creative Writers and Daydreaming”

Week 2 – Pathography and the Scientific Method

Read: Freud, “The Moses of Michelangelo” and *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*; Meyer Schapiro, “Leonardo and Freud”

Week 3 – Psychoanalysis and Aesthetic Experience; Psychoanalysis in Its Historical Context

Readings: Jane Gallop, “Psychoanalytic Criticism: Some Intimate Questions”; Carlo Ginzburg, “Morelli, Freud, and Sherlock Holmes”

Tuesday, January 22, paper topics due

Week 4 – Insights for Modern Art

Read: Freud, “Fetishism,” “Medusa’s Head,” “The ‘Uncanny’”; Donald Kuspit, “The Modern Fetish”

Week 5 - Psychoanalysis and Film Theory

Read: Jacques Lacan, “The Mirror Stage”; Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”;
Screening: Alfred Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*

Week 6 – Independent research, no class.

Week 7 - Psychoanalysis and the Autonomous Text

Read: Freud, “A Special Type of Object Choice Made by Men”; Jean Fisher, “Chasing Dreams”;
Tania Modleski, “Femininity by Design”; Harry Trosman, “Vertigo and the Enabling Fantasy”

Week 8 - Further Explanatory Possibilities

Read: Freud, excerpt from “Beyond the Pleasure Principle”; Hanna Segal, “Art and the Inner World”;
Kuspit, “A Freudian Note on Abstract Art”

Thursday, February 28, research papers posted on D2L for peer review

Week 9 - Student reports begin

Monday, March 4, peer responses posted on D2L

Thursday, March 7, 3 p.m. Hard copy of papers due to instructor. *Late papers will not be accepted.*

Week 10 – Student reports continue; papers returned for revisions

Week 11 – Finals week

Monday, March 18, revised papers resubmitted for final grade. Final papers must be accompanied by marked up original copy. *Late papers will not be accepted.*

SUGGESTED PAPER TOPICS

There is a rich literature on certain artists whose work has invited psychoanalytic interpretation. Any of the following would make good subjects for your research, but you are also welcome to propose a topic of your own.

Giovanni Bellini
Hans Bellmer
Louise Bourgeois
Caravaggio
Paul Cézanne
Salvador Dalí
Thomas Eakins
Max Ernst
Antoni Gaudí
Paul Gauguin
Alberto Giacometti
Vincent van Gogh
Francisco Goya
Eva Hesse
Frida Kahlo
René Magritte
Edouard Manet
Louise Nevelson
Georgia O'Keeffe
Pablo Picasso
Jackson Pollock
Grant Wood

Other possibilities include the relationship of a particular movement—Surrealism, for example—or motif to psychoanalysis, or reviews of books by analysts such as Ernst Kris, Marion Milner, or Richard Wollheim.