



AH 340 ART, GENDER, SEXUALITY IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY AMSTERDAM

IES Abroad Amsterdam

DESCRIPTION:

This course challenges students to think about issues of gender and sexuality in painting. Its focus is Amsterdam in the Golden Age, a particularly fascinating episode in the social and art historical history of the Netherlands. The course offers an introduction to art and history of the Dutch Golden Age, as well as a general overview of art, gender, and sexuality in 17th-century Amsterdam. Students learn how to look at representations of gender and sexuality in the work of Rembrandt and his contemporaries. The intensive field trips to art museums and historical sites expand on materials discussed in the lectures, while students learn how to look at and think about the visual arts made in Amsterdam, their summer host.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: You will be able to use your museum card for the visits to most museums. Two of the field trips take us outside of Amsterdam. You will therefore incur additional travel expenses (about 10 euros).

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

Lectures are used to introduce students to new subjects in the fields of art history, gender studies, and sociology. The field trips are organized in such a way that students acquire new skills, such as looking at art and expressing one's opinion about art in a substantial way. Students are expected to engage in discussions, make small assignments, and present on works of art during these meetings on site. The group discussions actively engage students with the materials and help to process new concepts and information.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

Students present in front of art works during the field trips to the Rijksmuseum. Second, students write a paper on an individual work of art in the collection of the Rijksmuseum that they would add to Westermann's overview of Dutch Art of the Golden Age. Students complete the course with an exam on the literature, lectures, and field trips. Finally, class participation is based on attendance and participation during field trips, this includes giving presentations.

- Course Participation - 10%
- Presentation – 20%
- Assignments – 30%
- Exam 40%

Writing Assignment: Three Museum Labels

You will do a short, informal presentation on three artworks: two one in the Rijksmuseum, one at the Frans Hals Museum and one in the Mauritshuis.

These presentations are an opportunity to develop art historical skills such as visual analysis and research, and to get feedback from your peers. You will then use this to help you write a museum label for each work you have presented on.

Your labels should help viewers see the work in a new light, paying special attention to themes surrounding gender and sexuality. Each text should be 100 words long. Texts that are too long, or too short will be penalized. This is done to reflect industry practices. When writing a museum text, editing is an important element. Texts must contain all the necessary information while being clear, concise, accurate, and appealing to a wide audience.

Exam

You will be tested on your knowledge of the lectures, PowerPoint presentations, and the lectures. The questions consist of:



- Three essay questions, where you will be asked to engage the literature, you have read for this class (see bibliography). Make sure to memorize specifics about the arguments of individual authors (and remember and properly spell their names).
- Ten short questions, such as a definition of a key concept to understand Dutch seventeenth-century art and issues of gender and sexuality.

Color Reproductions will be provided.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Students will have gained a general understanding of the social, political, and economic characteristics of seventeenth-century Amsterdam.
- Students will be acquainted with Amsterdam art of the Golden Age.
- Students have gained a thorough understanding of the gendered dynamics at play in Amsterdam art of the Golden Age.
- Students will be able to analyze and discuss visual works of arts.
- Students will have gained confidence in public speaking through their own presentations.
- Students will have gained confidence in articulating thoughts and opinions about art through group discussions.
- Students will have gained insight in the collections of the visited museums.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Class Attendance

Since IES Abroad courses are designed to take advantage of the unique contribution of the instructor and the lecture/discussion format is regarded as the primary mode of instruction, class attendance is mandatory and will be taken for every class. In addition, students are expected to be on time for classes, course-related excursions, and tests. Some courses include mandatory trips outside of regular class hours, i.e. on weekends. Students will be made aware of the specific dates of such trips well in advance and are required to attend.

Irregular attendance may result in a lower grade in the course, and/or disciplinary action. If a student misses a class without an excuse, this will lead to a deduction of their final grade of one-third of a letter grade for every additional unexcused absence (for example, A- to B+).

Absences will be authorized for the following reasons:

- Health issues (including a doctor's note);



- A recognized religious holiday traditionally observed by the particular student;
- A grave incident affecting family members;
- Conflicting academic commitments, only when communicated well in advance;

Any other absences (such as missing an alarm or missing a flight) are unexcused. Additionally, arriving more than 10 minutes late to class may count as an unauthorized absence.

What to do if you are going to be absent

In any case where you are not going to attend class or are expecting to be late, you must notify your professor. Please note, it is not sufficient to send a message with a friend or notify your professor after the class has started.

Please keep in mind that IES courses meet only once a week rendering your attendance at each lesson even more important.

IES Amsterdam COVID-19 Absence Policy

In the event that a student tests positive for COVID-19 and is required to self-isolate, students will be instructed as follows:

Isolating students will be assigned one of two options:

- Students will be required to join synchronous online classes
- OR students will be provided with a form of alternative assignment/assessment by the professor.

It is the professor's discretion to decide whether the student will join virtually or whether they will be assigned an alternative assignment/assessment. If your professor decided on an alternative assignment/assessment, your absence from class will be authorized.

For our policy regarding synchronous online classes, please see below:

- The Academics Team will send you links and instructions via email, for all the classes that occur during the length of your isolation
- If you require any assistance with joining virtually you can contact Cathleen (cowens@iesabroad.org) or Diana (dkaekebeke@iesabroad.org)
- You must be on time for each online class, and you must stay for the entire length of the class to be counted as present.
- As a courtesy to your professor and other students, please try to join the session five minutes before the start of class so that no class time is wasted in resolving technical issues
- If you are too ill to attend an online class, the absence must be reported in the same manner as any other absence.

In the case of a large-scale outbreak among students, it is at the discretion of IES to decide to conduct classes online temporarily. Additionally, if a faculty member is required to self-isolate and is non-symptomatic, the class will be conducted virtually. In the case that the professor is too ill to teach, the class will be rescheduled.

Please note that online classes will be offered ONLY for students who are isolating due to COVID-19. Any other reasons will not be considered.

IES will be carefully monitoring any updates to the government guidance on close contacts and quarantines for the fully vaccinated and will update the COVID-19 attendance policy accordingly.

CONTENT:

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 1 Introduction to the Golden Age, part one	This lecture explains the rise of Amsterdam as the economic and artistic center of seventeenth-century Europe, introducing a wide range of subjects, including the city's canals, global trade, and local politics.	Reading: Westermann 1996, introduction and chapter one.
Session 2 Field trip: Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, part one	This lecture explains the rise of Amsterdam as the economic and artistic center of seventeenth-century Europe, introducing a wide range of subjects, including the city's canals, global trade, and local politics.	- Reading: Westermann 1996, chapters two and three. - Also consult: <i>How to do things with pictures. A guide to writing in art history</i>, Department of History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University 2008.
Session 3 Gender and sexuality in art	This lecture maps out gendered issues at play in Amsterdam painting of the Golden Age. We look at portraiture, nudes by Rembrandt, mythological love stories of Ferdinand Bol, Govaert Flinck, and their contemporaries, and the private interiors of Gabriel Metsu and Pieter de Hooch.	Reading: Westermann 1996, chapter four.
Session 4 Field trip: Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, part two	We continue our discussion in front of actual works of art. We consider issues of gender and sexuality in our analyses of some of the Rijksmuseum's masterpieces. Students prepare a brief presentation on a work of art.	Reading: Westermann 1996, chapter five
Session 5 Field trip: Six Collection & Hermitage Museum	We visit the Six Collection and <i>Panorama Amsterdam</i> at the Hermitage Museum.	Reading: Westermann 1996, chapter six
Session 6 Field trip to the Mauritshuis in The Hague.	In The Hague, students discuss and present in front of works of art. We discuss the possible interpretation of a wide variety of scenes of everyday life in the Dutch Republic.	- Consult: <i>How to do things with pictures. A guide to writing in art history</i>, Department of History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University 2008. - Focus on the section on writing

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 7 Lecture on sex and humor in art.	This lecture explains how Dutch art has been interpreted over the years, particularly comic and erotic painting.	Reading: De Jongh 2000
Session 8 Field trip to Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem	In Haarlem, we examine the works by woman artist Judith Leyster, and the comical genre paintings by a wide variety of Haarlem artists.	
Session 9 Women artists	This lecture introduces female artists of the Dutch Golden Age. The first part of the lecture discusses working women in the Dutch Republic. The second part concentrates on the work of individual artists, such as Judith Leyster, a contemporary of Frans Hals. Deadline assignment: end of day (hand in by email).	Reading: Nochlin 1971; Kloek 1993.
Session 10 Field trip to the Rembrandt House Museum	We visit the Rembrandt House Museum in Amsterdam, where Rembrandt lived between 1639 and circa 1658.	Reading: Noorman 2016.
Session 11 Lecture on nude models in Dutch art	Since Rembrandt's Danae of 1636, the female nude reemerged on the Amsterdam art market. Its rise coincided with the emergence of drawing sessions in which prostitutes were hired as nude models. The nudes by Rembrandt, Bartholomeus van de Helst, Jan Lievens, Willem Drost, Jacob van Loo, and many others are discussed in terms of meaning, nudity and sexuality, and the academic practice that preceded their creation.	Reading: Dickey 2006

Session	Content	Assignments
Session 12 City Tour	Final exam Followed by a city tour. On this city tour, we visit, amongst others, Our Lord in the Attic, a clandestine Catholic church built in the Protestant Republic.	No Reading. Students prepare for the final exam.

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

- Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
- The Mauritshuis, The Hague
- The Six Collection
- Amsterdam Museum at the Hermitage, Amsterdam
- Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem
- Museum het Rembrandthuis
- Our Lord in the Attic

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Mariët Westermann, *A Worldly Art: The Dutch Republic, 1585-1718*, New York 1996
- How to Do Things with Pictures. A Guide to Writing in Art History*, Department of History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University 2008
- Stephanie Dickey, 'Damsels in Distress,' in: Amy Golhany, *In His Milieu. Essays on Netherlandish Art in Memory of J.M. Montias*, Amsterdam 2006
- Elizabeth Honig, 'The Space of Gender in 17th-Century Dutch Painting,' in Wayne Franits (ed.), *Looking at Dutch Art*, Cambridge 1997, pp. 187-201
- Eddy de Jongh, 'A Birds-Eye View of Erotica: Double Entendre in a Series of Seventeenth-Century Genre Scenes', in: Eddy de Jongh, *Questions of Meaning: Theme and Motif in Dutch Seventeenth-Century Painting*, Leiden 2000, pp. 22-58
- Els Kloek, 'The Case of Judith Leyster: Exception or Paradigm?', in: Pieter Biesboer (et al.), *Judith Leyster. A Dutch master and her World*, exhibition catalogue, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem 1993, pp. 55-68
- L. Nochlin, 'Why have there been no great women artists?', in: *Art and Sexual Politics*, 1971, pp. 1-41
- J. Noorman, 'On Truth and Beauty,' in: J Noorman, D. De Witt (eds.), *Rembrandt's Naked Truth*, Amsterdam 2016, pp. 11-43