

2026 fall methods

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Fall 2026 Methodologies in Art History and Visual Culture – 4800.001 and 5800.001

- Instructor: Professor Way - jennifer.way@unt.edu
- Office hours f2f ART 312 - 1:00-2:15 Wednesdays
- Office hours zoom - please schedule a zoom meeting jennifer.way@unt.edu

UNT CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

Methodologies of Art History and Visual Culture. 3 hours. Examination of methodologies associated with art history and visual culture studies. Taught as a seminar, with emphasis on readings, oral presentations, and written assignments.

Course description and learning objectives

A method is a way of doing something. In this course, we will examine some of the major ways that art historians formulate questions about art and shape and conduct research to answer them. In this context, a method is a way of wondering, asking, behaving, learning, knowing, and telling.

We won't cover everything. Instead, this course invites you to notice and understand methods you're already using and begin to explore new ones. The emphasis here is on begin: engaging deeply with methods, applying and critiquing them, and developing new approaches is often a lifelong journey. Many of us are just starting out—and that's a meaningful place to be.

Each week, we examine what counts as a method or a set of methods and discuss and practice how art historians use them. As we go forward, you are asked to reflect on your experiences in past and current art history courses and with works of art and scholarship. In this class, you will also complete these goals as part of your learning.

- Prepare for each class by completing assigned readings and activities so you can fully participate in individual and collaborative learning.
- Investigate and report on a work of art—or a topic related to a work of art—that you select at the beginning of the semester and study throughout the semester.
- Formulate research questions by applying one or more art historical methods to your chosen object.
- Understand similarities and distinctions between major methods used in art history.

- Construct a historiography of scholarship related to your research project and position your own research in relation to existing arguments and methodological approaches.
- Experiment with and assess the relevance of different methods through homework assignments connected to your research project.
- Examine contemporary peer-reviewed art history scholarship to identify the methods authors employ and evaluate how those methods shape their arguments.
- Critique classmates' work by providing constructive feedback that strengthens their research and methodological practice.

Class meetings, topics, and assignment topics

For class you will need a laptop connected to the internet. If you would like to borrow a laptop, please let me know several days prior to class. Also, for most classes you will want to have access to images of your object at hand. You may also want to bring paper and pencil/pen as a way to write and create images for class tasks.

Keep in mind that homework assignments may require you upload something on Canvas AND bring a hard copy printout to class.

Course structure

Module 1 Elements of the profession

Module 2 Looking, being, knowing

Module 3 Things and the world

Module 4 Self and subjectivity for makers and users of art

Module 5 Context

Assignments

August

- **8/24:** Select Object + Read Syllabus (-5 points for missing deadline)

September

- Weekly: Attendance/Homework/Participation; Methods Labs
- **9/21:** Methods Prospectus Paper (20 pts)

October

- Weekly: Attendance/Homework/Participation; Methods Lab
- **10/19:** 1 page research outline (10 pts)

November

- Weekly: Attendance/Homework/Participation; Methods Lab
- **11/13:** Methods Analysis Paper (30 pts)

December

- **12/4:** Attendance/Homework/Participation Reflection (15 pts)
- **12/7:** Final Research Project (Paper or Video) (25 pts)

AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	
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Object/syllabus	Prospectus	Meeting	Analysis	Attendance	
reflection/	Final project				
8/24	9/21	10/19	11/13	12/2	12/7

Overview of assignments

Select an object to study for the semester and submit it for approval (-5 points for not completing)

By 8/24 Monday, select the object you will study during the semester to develop a written paper or final video presentation. If possible, select an object you can see in person and study also through images. You may select an object to which you do not have first person access; however, this option is less ideal than selecting an object you can visit in person and the professor may reject it due to your lack of access to a physical thing. Depending on what you are interested in, you may want to select an object for which images of other similar objects are also accessible to you. By "object," we mean anything the art world would recognize as a work of art, craft, decorative arts, photography, built environment, two or three dimensional. To complete the assignment, on Canvas submit at least one excellent image of the object along with a name or title for the object, a maker, year, medium, size, and location. Do not provide only a url. Even if in your homework and research project for the semester you plan to focus on something related to the object and not the object per se, you must select an object and upload an image for this assignment.

Read the syllabus online (-5 points for not completing)

By 8/24 Monday, to complete this assignment by reading the online course syllabus, which you can find on Canvas under "home" or "syllabus." Then, on Canvas, paste and add your name to the statement confirming that you read the syllabus. See the assignment for the statement.

Attendance, Homework, and Participation (15 points)

Attendance matters and it is part of your grade (see the attendance policy below in this document). Homework is expected for every class meeting and consists of you either completing assigned reading in preparation for the next class or working on some aspect of your research project, which we may discuss in the next class. Homework will be checked periodically and you may be asked to refer to it in class by using it in the Methods Lab (see below in this section). Participation includes your engagement in class discussions and activities as well as your contributions to group work during Methods Labs. At the end of the semester, you will submit a brief reflective statement explaining what you did and how effectively you met expectations in these three areas of attendance, homework, and participation. Due December 4 (Wednesday).

Methods Labs

Each class includes at least one Methods Lab for which you work individually or in small groups to develop questions, solve problems, complete activities, and apply course methods to research situations. You may be asked to share your homework or draw from it in this activity. These labs are designed to help you think through and practice some of our methods content. Methods Lab activity is part of our class time. It does not generate homework or assignments. There is no grade for this work, although you can discuss it by way of reflecting on your **Attendance, Homework, and Participation** grade (see above).

Research Project Papers

During the semester, you will select a work of art and develop a research question or questions about it and research these questions by using at least two methods - one from classes scheduled 8/26-10/7, and one from classes scheduled 10/14-12/2. You are responsible for working on this project during the entirety of the semester. In addition, there are four assignments that aim to keep you on track:

- **Methods Prospectus Paper (20 points)** Due September 21 (Monday). Introduce your object of study, identify a preliminary research question relating to your object, provide a brief historiography showing what 2 or 3 bibliographic sources contribute to your project, and discuss at least one of the methods you plan to use in researching your object by naming and defining the method and explaining how you plan to use it for research.
- **Research Project Outline (10 points)** Due October 19.
- **Methods Analysis Paper (30 points)** Due November 13 (Friday). Identify your chosen methods, explain their key features, describe how you are using them to study something about your object, show how you are using them for example by providing

examples of using the methods, and discuss what your approach may reveal and obscure about your research topic.

- **Research Project Paper (25 points)** Due December 7 (Monday). This is where parts of your project that you worked on in previous assignments, come together with your semester-long study of your object. You have the option of presenting your research as a written paper or as a video. For both, state directly and clearly state what you learned from your research. Briefly identify the methods you used to pursue your research and tell how you used them. Share your argument by discussing its components and support your assertions with clearly stated evidence that persuades a reader or viewer to agree with your ideas, thoughts, and arguments. Briefly reflect on the significance of your findings, for example, in the context of historiography. Conclude by considering how you might expand on your project given additional time and your access to resources.

Resources

Your professor is your best resource for this course. Go to office hours! Chat online! Ask for help and suggestions! Get to know your professor and the art history professors in your program. These are the people whose experience you can tap to think about how you will shape your career, and for the letters of recommendation that invariably accompany applications for internships, fellowships, scholarships, and study opportunities.

Online sources for definitions of keywords, artists, art periods, styles, and theories

- CREDO - resource on UNT Libraries
- <https://search.credoreference.com/?aid=107761> Links to an external site.
- Links to an external site.
- Oxford Reference Online - resource on UNT Libraries - <https://www-oxfordreference-com.libproxy.library.unt.edu/> Links to an external site.
- Links to an external site.
- Grove Art Online - resource on UNT Libraries - <https://www-oxfordartonline-com.libproxy.library.unt.edu/groveart> Links to an external site.
- Links to an external site.
- The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism - <https://litguide-press-jhu-edu.libproxy.library.unt.edu/> Links to an external site.
- Links to an external site.

Research Help with the UNT Libraries

- Your UNT Art Reference Librarian is Rebecca Barham: [\(940\) 565-4405](tel:9405654405), Barham@unt.edu. Make an appointment to talk Rebecca about your project for this

class and your other art history courses. Ask for guidance in identifying image and text-based resources.

- The Art Collection [of books] is now located on the 3rd floor of the Willis Library. All art books of all art disciplines are together with the rest of the humanities in one library that is open 24/7.

Course Policies

There is no extra credit work and no makeup work.

What happens if I miss submitting assignments?

When you miss submitting any assignment--or any part of an assignment--, for any reason, you will automatically receive a 0 grade, no discussion. In order to change the 0 to a higher grade, you may submit late work. Your late work will be graded without penalty if submitted within 2 weeks of when an assignment was due. You may submit late work for 1 time during the semester except for the final paper and video assignment, for which no late work is accepted.

When you submit work to make up for missing assignments, upload your work on Canvas and tell the professor by sending her a Canvas email, stating that you have submitted your work on Canvas. The exception to all of this is the final research paper and the video assignment-- no late work accepted.

Academic integrity expectations and consequences (UNT Policy

06.003) <http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003.pdf> (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)

[Links to an external site.](#)

ADA accommodation statement (UNT Policy 16.001)

“UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one’s specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.”

American Disabilities Act

The College of Visual Arts and Design is committed to full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. In keeping with this commitment and in order to facilitate equality of educational access, faculty members in the College will make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with a disability, such as appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methods when doing so does not fundamentally alter the course. If you have a disability, it is your responsibility to obtain verifying information from the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) and to inform your professor of your need for an accommodation. Requests for accommodation must be given to the professor no later than the first week of classes for students registered with the ODA as of the beginning of the current semester. If you register with the ODA after the first week of classes, your accommodation requests will be considered after this deadline. Grades assigned before an accommodation is provided will not be changed.

Information about how to obtain academic accommodations can be found in UNT Policy 18.1.14, at www.unt.edu/oda, and by visiting the ODA in Room 321 of the University Union. You also may call the ODA at 940.565.4323. **Please email documentation to Apply.ODA@unt.edu or upload documentation via [AIM Student Portal \(Links to an external site.\)](#)**

[Links to an external site..](#)

AI Policy

You may not use AI programs e.g. ChatGPT in this course for research or written assignments or for any assignment or activity in class. Why not? The material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic, including bibliographic references. Please realize also that the use of AI may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity. Therefore, for this course, you may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. All assignments should be fully prepared by you or by groups, based on the assignment or activity. Developing strong competencies in the skills associated with this course, from student-based brainstorming to project development, will prepare you for success in your degree pathway and, ultimately, a competitive career in highly competitive fields. Therefore, the use of generative AI tools for any aspect of assignments for this course is not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism. If you have questions about what constitutes a violation of this statement, please contact me.

Assignment policy

For all assignments, instructions are distributed prior to the due date either orally in class or with written instructions on Canvas. It is up to you to understand the assignment fully and seek assistance as needed before the assignment is due. Please speak to the professor if you are unclear about an assignment, or if you miss a deadline. If you miss submitting work by deadline, also see above in this document, *What happens if I miss submitting assignments?*

Attendance (UNT Policy 06.039)

Students are required to attend every class meeting and abide by the attendance policy established for the course: **two absences are permitted for undergraduates and one absence is permitted for graduate students, with the likelihood that you will receive a reduced final course grade from additional absences and from repeatedly arriving at class late or leaving early.**

What happens if I miss class? If possible, tell the professor and reach out to fellow students to borrow excellent notes from anything you missed. If you are experiencing illness, please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

Campus Health and Safety

Emergency: Dial 911

UNT Police: 940-565-3000

Denton Police: 940-349-8181 (non-emergency)

Denton County Sheriff's Office: 940-349-1600 (non-emergency)

Student Health and Wellness Center: 940-565-2333

Counseling and Testing Services: 940-565-2741

Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities

The following statement reminds students of their rights and responsibilities within the academic community – “*Each University of North Texas student is entitled to certain rights associated with higher education institutions. See www.unt.edu/csrr (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)*

[Links to an external site.](#) for further information.”

Class materials for remote instruction

This course is taught in person. Occasionally, we may meet on Zoom instead of f2f. For any classes held on Zoom, students must access a webcam and microphone to participate in the class, and students are expected to be present, on camera, during the duration of the class.

Class recordings

No student is permitted to record the class unless the professor receives an accommodation from the UNT Office of Disability Access and presented to the

instructor <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access/index.html>Links to an external site.

[Links to an external site.](#).. Class recordings are the intellectual property of the university and professor, and they are reserved for use only by students in this class and only for educational purposes. Students may not post or otherwise share the recordings outside the class, or outside the Canvas Learning Management System, in any form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and will lead to disciplinary action. Students may not record class without the permission of the instructor.

Contesting a grade

If you are not happy with your grade, or if you feel there has been an error or oversight, write a clear, full explanation of what you feel is wrong. Also, provide clear, full evidence supporting your suggestion for a change of grade. This material is due no later than three days after you received the grade. Email your explanation and evidence to the professor. **Before proceeding along this pathway, you are strongly encouraged to share your concerns or questions with the professor.**

Course Risk Factor

According to University Policy, this course is classified as a category one course. Students enrolled in this course will not be exposed to any significant hazards and are not likely to suffer any bodily injury. Students will be informed of any potential health hazards or potential bodily injury connected with the use of any materials and/or processes and will be instructed how to proceed without danger to themselves or others.

Evaluation for Assignments:

100 Point Scale Grade	Letter Grade
97-100	A+
93-96	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
53-59	F

Evaluation range for course grade

100-91	A
90-81	B
80-70	C
69-60	D
59-0	F Fail

Letters of recommendation

To request a letter of recommendation, please contact the professor with a description of the opportunity, a current version of your resume including a list of art history courses with the grades you earned, your UNT GPA and your art history program GPA. Plan to schedule an appointment with the professor to discuss the opportunity. To write and submit a letter of recommendation for you, **at least 30 days** are required before the letter is due.

NOTE: Professor Way retains the right to change the syllabus with or without notice