

College of Visual Arts and Design, University of North Texas



Spring 2019  
AEAH 4824: Topics in Asian Art

Art of Ancient India  
T/Th 2-3:20pm

Dr. Lisa N. Owen  
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Office Hours: Th 1-2pm by appt.



**Course Description:** This course explores a selection of Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu artistic expressions from ancient and medieval India. We will focus on particular issues such as the early production of imagery and its role in the development of sacred architecture. We will also consider the ways in which art functions in terms of ritual and how it expresses certain religious values and goals. Special attention will be paid to iconography, creation of sacred space, patronage, and how art shapes (and is shaped by) devotional practices.

**Course Content & Objectives:** This course is designed to familiarize students with the arts of ancient and medieval India. By the end of this course the student will be able to identify selected works of art through their religious, regional and/or socio-political affiliations and be able to associate these works within their larger historical contexts. In addition, the student will be able to accurately describe the function and/or meaning of these artworks given the time and place of their creation. By engaging in the visual cultures of India, students can cultivate a thorough knowledge of this important specialization within the discipline of art history, and, at the same time, foster the essential skills of critical looking, reading, and writing about art.

Goals of the course include:

- (1) to enhance critical reading skills
- (2) to refine writing skills
- (3) to recognize a variety of approaches and paradigms employed in the study of art

**Required Textbook (available at most bookstores, Amazon.com, and on reserve at Willis Library):**  
Vidya Dehejia. *Indian Art*. London: Phaidon Press, 1997

**Required Readings on Canvas:**

- Richard H. Davis, "A Brief History of Religions in India," in Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., *Religions of India in Practice*, Princeton University Press, 1995, 3-52.
- "Edicts of the Indian Mauryan Emperor Ashoka," in R. Brown and D. Hutton, eds. *Asian Art*. Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2006, 13-20.
- Susan Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism," *Art Journal* 49 (1990): 401-8.
- Vidya Dehejia, "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems," *Ars Orientalis* XXI (1992): 45-66.
- Gregory Schopen. "On Monks, Nuns and 'Vulgar' Practices: The Introduction of the Image Cult into Indian Buddhism," *Artibus Asiae* 49 (1989): 153-68.
- Lisa N. Owen, "Sculpture," in Brill's *Encyclopedia of Jainism*, forthcoming.
- Janice Leoshko, "Reviewing Early Jaina Art," in N.K. Wagle and Olle Qvarnström, eds., *Symposium Proceedings: Approaches to Jaina Studies*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1999, 324-41.

- Lisa N. Owen, "Constructing Another Perspective for Ajanta's Fifth-Century Excavations," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 24.1 (2001): 27-59.
- Lisa N. Owen, "Absence and Presence: Worshipping the Jina at Ellora," in Himanshu Prabha Ray, ed., *Archaeology and Text: The Temple in South Asia*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010, 96-123.
- George Michell, "The Temple as a Link between Gods and Man," in George Michell, *The Hindu Temple: An Introduction to its Meaning and Forms*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977, 61-76.
- Walter Smith, "The Viṣṇu Image in the Shore Temple at Māmallapuram," *Artibus Asiae* 56, no. 1/2 (1996): 19-32.

**Course Structure:** This is a lecture course that meets twice a week for an hour and twenty minutes. Reading assignments for the course are listed below in the lecture schedule. In order to fully prepare for lecture, the student should complete the reading assignment *before* the scheduled class.

**Course Requirements and Grading Criteria:**

Exams (2 in-class; 1 take-home; @ 25% each).....	75%
Writing Assignment.....	15%
Attendance.....	10%

**Description of In-Class Exams 1 and 2:** There will be a total of 2 in-class essay exams. Dates for these exams are highlighted in bold in the lecture schedule. At least one week prior to each in-class exam, 20-25 images will be available on Canvas for review. For the in-class exam, I will select 6-8 images. On the exam, I will provide the relevant information of each artwork (title, location, date), but you will need to answer specific questions relating to the images (either as a pair or individually). You will have approximately 15 minutes to write a response to each of the questions. It is imperative that you arrive to class on time, as I will not re-show the images once the exam is in progress.

In addition, ***there will be no make-ups for the in-class exams***. If you miss an exam, you will receive a ***zero*** on that test unless you provide proper documentation for a University-sanctioned absence (e.g., documented illness, team event, family emergency, etc.). You must contact me within 24 hours of the missed exam. If, after reviewing your documentation, I agree to schedule a make-up exam with you, it must be taken within one week of the missed test.

**Description of Take-Home Exam 3:** The third exam (Exam 3) will be distributed as a take-home exam and due on the last day of regular classes. The dates for distribution and submission are highlighted in bold in the lecture schedule. You will be able to access your textbook, assigned essays, and notes for this exam that will require computer-generated essay responses. The take-home exam (and the Writing Assignment) will be graded on content *and* the quality of writing.

**Description of Writing Assignment:** During the semester, students are to turn in a short paper that assesses one of the assigned readings. The assigned reading and date of discussion are highlighted in bold in the lecture schedule. Specific content guidelines will be distributed at the appropriate time. Check the lecture schedule for discussion and due date and read over the Grading Criteria on the last page of this syllabus. *The paper must be turned in at the beginning of class* and the student must stay for the lecture. In other words, do not simply drop off your paper and leave. If you do so, I will not accept the paper. In addition, ***emailed submissions are not accepted under any circumstances***.

Late work is also not accepted unless there is a documented emergency. As with the exams, the student must notify me about the emergency within 24 hours of the due date of the assignment. If I agree to accept a late assignment, it will be marked down 10 points per *day* (not class) that it is late.

**Posting of Grades:** Grades will be posted on Canvas approximately one day after exams or assignments are handed back. It is your responsibility to verify that the posted grade corresponds with the grade recorded on the assignment/exam. If you are not satisfied with the grade you earned, you can come and see me for a re-grading. However, you must realize that a re-grading can either raise or lower your original score. Once the assignment or exam is passed back, you have a window of two weeks to talk to me about your grade. In other words, at the end of the semester, I will not look over past material for you. I would also suggest that you hold onto all of your graded work until you receive the final grade for the class.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance will be taken via a sign-up sheet that is passed around during each class. It is up to you to make sure that you have signed the roster. You are allowed two absences without penalty. After that, your attendance grade (which is initially recorded as 100% A) will be lowered by half a letter grade for each absence over the allotted two. It is also important for you to attend class as the exams are based on lectures and the visual material presented. In many cases, I do not completely agree with the information provided in the readings and so I will offer alternative interpretations of selected artworks and include supplemental visual comparisons during lecture. Since you will be responsible for this material when preparing for and taking exams, it is imperative that you come to class and participate fully if you wish to do well. Should you miss a class lecture, it is up to you to get notes from a classmate. I do not respond to emails asking "what did I miss" nor do I repeat entire lectures during my office hours.

**Student Behavior in the Classroom:** Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct](http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct)

**Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences:** According to UNT Policy 18.1.16, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism necessitates that I file an incident report to the appropriate authorities and this may result in your failing the assignment, failing the course, or being expelled from the University. Please consult the University's Code of Student Conduct or ask me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism and how you should give proper acknowledgement to your sources in your written work.

**Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, and Assault:** UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these

acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

**ADA Accommodation Statement:** 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](http://disability.unt.edu)

**Course Risk Factor:** According to University Policy, this course is classified as a category 1 course. Students enrolled in this course will not be exposed to any significant hazards and are not likely to suffer any bodily injury. Students in this class 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.

**Emergency Notification and Procedures:** UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

### Schedule

Please note: The professor reserves the right to alter this syllabus if necessary. © 2019 Lisa N. Owen

### Section One: Archaeology of Religion

Jan 15 (T): Introduction to the course; why study ancient art?

Jan 17 (Th): Indus Valley civilization: *Indian Art*, Chapter 2, 25-36

Jan 22 (T): Indus Valley civilization

Jan 24 (Th): Introduction to the Vedas and Upanishads: *Indian Art*, Chapter 2, 36-39  
and Davis essay 1-14

Jan 29 (T): Introduction to Jainism and Buddhism: *Indian Art*, Chapter 2, 39-42 and Davis essay 14-21

Jan 31 (Th): Jainism and Buddhism

**Feb 05 (T): Buddhism and Ashoka: *Indian Art*, Chapter 2, 42-48 and Edicts essay  
Writing Assignment distributed and discussed in class**

Feb 07 (Th): Buddhism and Ashoka

**Feb 12 (T):** The Buddhist *stupa* and issues of aniconism: *Indian Art*, Chapter 3, 51-69  
**Writing Assignment due at the beginning of class**

Feb 14 (Th): The Buddhist *stupa* and issues of aniconism: Huntington and Dehejia essays

Feb 19 (T): Early Jain and Buddhist monastic architecture: *Indian Art*, Chapter 5, 103-113

Feb 21 (Th): Early Jain and Buddhist monastic architecture

**Feb 26 (T): In-Class Exam 1**

### **Section Two: Carving the Divine**

Feb 28 (Th): Jina images and Jain sculpture: Owen essay (Sculpture)

Mar 05 (T): Jina images and Jain sculpture: Leoshko essay

Mar 07 (Th): Origins of Buddha images: *Indian Art*, Chapter 4, 79-100

**Spring Break—No classes March 11-15**

Mar 19 (T): Origins of Buddha images: Schopen essay

Mar 21 (Th): Developments in Buddhist rock-cut architecture: *Indian Art*, Chapter 5, 112-124 and Owen essay (Ajanta)

Mar 26 (T): Developments in Buddhist rock-cut architecture

Mar 28 (Th): Origins of Hindu images — Shiva, Vishnu, and Devi: *Indian Art*, Chapter 6, 137-140 and Davis essay 21-27

Apr 02 (T): Developments in Hindu rock-cut architecture: *Indian Art*, Chapter 5, 129-134

Apr 04 (Th): Hindu and Jain rock-cut architecture: Owen essay (Ellora)

Apr 09 (T): Hindu and Jain rock-cut architecture

**Apr 11 (Th): In-Class Exam 2**

### **Section Three: Housing the Divine**

Apr 16 (T): Structural temple architecture — Northern India: *Indian Art*, Chapter 6, 141-152 and Michell essay

Apr 18 (Th): Structural temple architecture — Northern India: *Indian Art*, Chapter 7, 155-170

**Apr 23 (T):** Structural temple architecture — Southern India: *Indian Art*, Chapter 8, 185-204  
**Take-Home Exam 3 distributed and discussed**

Apr 25 (Th): Structural temple architecture — Southern India: Smith essay

Apr 30 (T): Structural temple architecture — Southern India

**May 02 (Th): Gods beyond Temples**

**Last Class Day; Take-Home Exam 3 due at the beginning of class**

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### **Grading Criteria for Written Work:**

**A** = Such a grade indicates that the student assessed the reading(s) and did so with rigor and clarity of thought. An 'A' paper means that there were little to no errors in grammar/spelling and that the introduction and conclusion were clear as was the development of the body of the paper. An 'A' paper also demonstrates that the student not only carefully read the *entire* assignment, but thought about the larger issues and considered the author's use of evidence.

**B** = Such a grade indicates that the student was able to execute the assignment with diligence and forethought, though some main issues in the reading(s) were not addressed fully by the student. A grade of 'B' also usually indicates that there were limited structural, spelling, or grammatical problems.

**C** = This is similar to the 'B' description, but the number of problems is more extensive. These may include significant grammatical or structural problems, adding irrelevant material or new material inappropriately, too many generalities, and/or not addressing the main issue(s) in the assigned reading(s). 'C' papers often contain too many quoted passages.

**D** = A grade of 'D' indicates that the student did a poor job in demonstrating that s/he read the assignment. Further, grammatical/structural problems make a 'D' essay quite difficult to follow. There are usually far too many generalities and a lack of analysis.

**F** = This either indicates that the assignment was not done or what was done was simply unacceptable for any number of reasons. This includes any indication of plagiarism, which may entail further academic penalty. See the section on plagiarism in this syllabus.