

Hist 619: Early Christian Art
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Course Syllabus: Fall 2017

Tuesdays, 2:30-5:30pm
Room 205

Instructors:

Jim Papandrea, M.Div. Ph.D.
Email: jim.papandrea@garrett.edu

Stephanie VanSlyke, M.Div., Ph.D.
Email: stephanie.vanslyke@garrett.edu

Course Description:

This course is a study of Christian visual art and architecture from the first centuries of the Common Era to the Carolingian Age. The emergence of Christian art and architecture is explored in the context of the political and religious transformations taking place during the time period under consideration, beginning with the setting of the Roman Empire and transitioning through the Constantinian Era, the Byzantine period in the Christian East, and Carolingian dynasty in the Christian West. The influence of Jewish art and imagery upon developing Christian art and iconography is explored, as is the influence of the rise of Islam.

Purpose of the Course:

The purpose of this course is to study Christian art, architecture, and material remains as media that teach us about the devotional practices, liturgies, developing doctrines, and scriptural interpretations of early Christians. The study of art and material culture supplements the understanding of the history of Christian thought and practice which can be gained through the consideration of written texts alone.

Course Learning Objectives:

- + Sources: The ability to identify existing sources for the study of Christian art, architecture, and material culture, and to articulate the scope and limits of those sources
- +Methodology: Familiarization with current methods for studying and analyzing early Christian art, architecture, and material culture
- +Chronology and scope: the ability to chart the development of early Christian art and architecture including topics of artistic representation and materials and techniques used
- +Intersection of art and ideas: the ability to articulate how Christian art expresses, responds to, and intersects with developing doctrines, liturgies, and scriptural hermeneutics
- +Context: an understanding of the ways in which Christian art and architecture emerges and evolves in contact with other religious and political cultures including Roman, Jewish, and Muslim

Course Requirements:

Class meetings will consist of lectures including slides of art and architecture, student presentations, and/or group discussion. **Reading assignments listed for each week are to be done before the lectures, and weekly discussion questions should be drawn from weekly reading assignments and materials posted prior to class.**

Weekly Discussion Questions: Each week, students will bring a set of two or three written questions about the week's topic or readings, to be used to generate class discussion. Questions will be shared verbally in class and submitted in hard copy to the instructors at the beginning of class. Weekly Discussion Questions comprise 10% of the course grade.

Mid-Term Essay Exam: The mid-term essay will focus on the transitions in Christian art from the pre-Constantinian era to the post-Constantinian era, when Christian practice is legalized. The precise essay question will be shared in class and posted on Moodle prior to the due date. The essay should be about 5-7 pages in length for master's students and about 10 pages for doctoral students. The mid-term essay will count for 30% of the course grade.

Research Paper and Class Presentation: The research paper will focus on any aspect of early Christian art or architecture that interests you, within the time period studied in this course, and subject to approval by the professors. It is expected that the research paper will be about 12-15 pages in length for master's level students, and 20-25 pages for doctoral students. The paper will be accompanied by a class presentation showing the artistic or architectural examples under consideration, illustrating the questions pursued in the research, and presenting the student's conclusions or points for further research.

Potential topics include: a scriptural story as expressed in art from a variety of time periods; a saint or holy figure as portrayed in a certain time span; a particular architectural feature (baptismal fonts, apse mosaics); doctrine as expressed in art (Christology, Trinity); an inter-religious study (Christian artistic expression of a certain topic as compared to Roman, Jewish, or Muslim).

The research paper and class presentation will count for 60% of the course grade.

Format of Papers: Papers must be created in Microsoft Word, as they will be marked using the 'review' feature. Papers should be double spaced and composed in either Palatino or Times New Roman font. The papers must include a header with the student's name, the date, and include page numbers. No cover pages are needed. All papers for this course and corresponding citations should conform in style to A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations by Kate Turabian, or The Chicago Manual of Style. Create a file name for your paper that has the following format: Your last name, first initial, the paper number (1 or 2), an F (for Fall) and 17 (for the year). So for example if Rory Williams was turning in his second paper, the file name would be: **WilliamsR2F17.doc**.

Online Access: This course requires the following technological capabilities:

- Access to the Moodle course management system
- Ability to download or link to material within the class Moodle site, including pdfs, photographs, and other documents. *Microsoft Power Point software, and Adobe Acrobat PDF reader will be needed. If you do not have these on the computer you are using for class you will need to download up-to-date versions of each.*
- Ability to submit writing assignments through the class Moodle site
- Ability to send and receive email through garrett.edu.

Late Assignments will not be accepted. All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade for the course. The instructors do not grant extensions on course work except in cases of emergency as documented by the Dean of Students Office. *Please note that submitting your paper for proofing by a student editor or for help with writing or English as a Second Language does not grant you a late submission. If you use GETS editing assistance, you must plan your work so that your papers in this class are still submitted by the due dates.*

Grading: This course follows Garrett-Evangelical's grading scale as described in the Academic Handbook

C range grades on papers indicate a partial engagement with the material; lack of accuracy in describing names, dates and terms; sloppiness in grammar, spelling and punctuation; incorrect use of citations and lack of coherence in chronology and expression of ideas.

B range grades on papers indicate an adequate engagement with the material; general accuracy in describing names, dates, and terms; general competency in grammar spelling and punctuation; correct use of citations; and basic coherence in chronology and expression of ideas.

A range grades on papers indicate a *thorough* engagement with the material; *complete accuracy* in describing names, dates, and terms; *precision* in grammar, spelling and punctuation; flawless use of citations **and** a sophistication, elegance and clarity of expression such that the essay shows unique insight into the questions at hand.

There is no A+ on the GETS grading scale.

Academic Ethics: All work for this course must conform to the Seminary's standards of academic ethics, including, but not limited to the understanding that cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable, and will result in an automatic grade of "F" for the assignment in question and a conference with the instructors and/or the Academic Dean per the GETS plagiarism policy, which could result in failure of the course or dismissal from the seminary. Note that your papers will automatically be submitted to plagiarism detection software via Moodle.

Course Accessibility: Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary is committed to providing equal access to its programs of graduate professional education for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. The Seminary aims to provide reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with a disability (based on clinical documentation) to ensure their access and participation in Seminary programs. For details, see "Disabilities Policies and Procedures" in the Student Handbook, or consult the Dean of Students. English as a Second Language is not a reason for accommodation, and therefore assignment extensions cannot be given on the basis of language proficiency. It is assumed that all students admitted to study at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary have sufficient ability with the English language to complete the work. Students must plan ahead for proofreading or grammar coaching, since deadlines cannot be extended for editing. Granting an extension would only consign the student to falling farther behind.

Required Books (prices are given for hardcopy)

Mike Aquilina, *Signs and Mysteries: Revealing Ancient Christian Symbols* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2008) ISBN: 978-1-59276-450-1 \$16.95

Robin Cormack, *Byzantine Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) ISBN: 978-0-19-284211-4 \$15.99

Robin Margaret Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000) ISBN: 978-0-415-20455-0 \$28.73

Robin Margaret Jensen, *Face to Face: Portraits of the Divine in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005) ISBN: 978-0-800-63678-3 \$10.59

John Lowden, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1997) ISBN: 978-0-714-83168-8 \$17.44

Lawrence Nees, *Early Medieval Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) ISBN: 978-0-19-284243-5 \$21.23

Roger Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) ISBN: 978-0-19-284223 \$21.45

Supplemental and recommended reading pertaining to research projects will be posted on Moodle

Course Schedule and Reading/Writing Assignments

Week #1 – September 5

- Review of Syllabus
- Overview: timeline and maps
- Backgrounds of Early Christian Art: Roman and Jewish

Read:

- Jensen, *Face to Face*, Chapters 1-3
- Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art*, Introduction and Chapters 1 & 2
- Lowden, Introduction and Glossary, Emperors' List, Key Dates, and Map (found in appendices)
- Nees, Introduction and Chapter 1

Week #2 – September 12

- The Pre-Constantinian Era in Rome: Catacombs and Funerary Art

Read:

- Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art*, Chapter 3
- Lowden, Chapter 1 through page 31

Week #3- September 19

The Pre-Constantinian Era in the Roman Empire
Worship Spaces and Material Remains

Read:

Nees, Chapter 2

Week #4 – September 26

The Post-Constantinian Turn: Christian public art and architecture in Rome

Read:

Aquilina, Entire book

Lowden, Chapter 1 pp. 32-60

Nees, Chapters 3-5

Week #5– October 3

The Post-Constantinian Turn: Christian public art and architecture in the Roman Empire

Read:

Cormack, Chapter 1

Lowden, Chapters 2 & 3

Stalley, Chapter 1

Week #6- October 10

Depictions of the Divine in early Christian Art (Jesus and the Trinity)

Read:

Jensen, *Face to Face*, chapters 4 & 5

Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art*, chapters 4, 5 & 6

Week #7- October 17

Mary in early Christian Art

Read:

Nees, Chapter 7

Week #8- October 24

Saints, relics, and reliquaries

Read:

Jensen, *Face to Face*, Chapter 6

Nees, Chapter 8

Mid-Term Essay Due by the beginning of class

Week # 9- October 31

Evolving Church Architecture

Read:

Cormack, Chapter 2

Lowden, Chapter 6

Stalley, Chapter 2-Conclusion

Week #10– November 7

The Rise of Islam, Icons and the Iconoclastic Controversy

Read:

Cormack, Chapters 3 & 4

Lowden, Chapters 4 & 5

Week #11 – November 14

Late Medieval and Byzantine Art

Illuminated Manuscripts

Read:

Lowden, Chapter 6

Nees, Chapter 9-Conclusion

Week #12 – November 21

NO CLASS Thanksgiving Break

Week #13 – November 28

Class presentations

Week #14 – December 5

Class presentations

Final research papers due by the beginning of class, December 5