This course offers a panoramic introduction to the greatest artists and masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance from its beginnings in Florence through its triumph in Rome and Venice. After setting the stage with a brief overview of the art of the Late Gothic period in Italy, lectures will trace the nature of the revolutionary changes that transformed painting and sculpture in the 15th century and 16th centuries. One major purpose of the course will be to clarify the special characteristics of Renaissance art that continue to have their place with art and artists even today.
IMPRESSIONISM, THEN and NOW

Professor Andrew Shelton

This course offers a historical and critical exploration of one of the most beloved movements in the entire history of Western art: French Impressionism. In addition to considering the major artists of this movement and the social, political, and cultural contexts in which they lived and worked, this course will also critically examine the enduring fascination with Impressionism throughout the past hundred years. Among the questions we will ask: Is the current popularity of Impressionism based on a misunderstanding of the radical nature of what was originally a profoundly revolutionary style, or, alternatively, is its current stature based on the legitimate appreciation of what was and remains a quintessentially “easy,” escapist, “viewer-friendly” form of artistic expression? How is it that the precedent of French Impressionism continues to inform popular notions about art today? To what extent has the general popularity of Impressionism produced a backlash among academics and connoisseurs?

Although centered on a precise historical period, this course is designed specifically to give non-specialists a basic grounding in the understanding and analysis of works of visual art; an introduction to the fundamental methods and techniques of art historical analysis; and a critical appreciation of the impact and basic operations of visual culture in contemporary society.
This course will survey the best of world cinema within the past decade or two, including representative examples of national cinemas, such as (potentially, since the selections would change) Iranian, Chinese, Taiwanese, and Indian; ethnic cinemas, such as (potentially) Kurdish, Jewish diaspora, and Quebecois; regional cinemas, such as (potentially) Eastern European and Middle Eastern cinemas; continental cinemas, such as African and South American; global cinema, such as Euro-American, Hong Kong, and Dogme 95; and the cinemas of civilizations, such as Islamic, Judeo-Christian, and Confucian. Not all these categories, or others that are possible, are represented in any given quarter.
This course introduces students to the major media and techniques used in Asia throughout history. We will examine the process and techniques involved in the production of Bamboo, Ceramics, Drawing, Epigraphy, Ivory, Lacquer, Mandalas, Metals, Painting, Paper, Prints, Silk, Stone, Textiles, and Wood. Lectures and coursework will center around understanding the media and techniques of these art forms and analyzing the relationship between materials and meaning. The course will also involve the study of the limitations of some of these media and the approaches to conservation.
This course explores the art of 18th-century Europe, with an emphasis on developments in painting in the artistic hubs of Paris, London, Venice and Rome. Artists whose careers will be studied in detail include Antoine Watteau, François Boucher, Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin and Jean-Baptiste Greuze in Paris; William Hogarth, Thomas Gainsborough and Sir Joshua Reynolds in London; Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, Canaletto and Francesco Guardi in Venice. The last weeks of the course will be devoted to charting the emergence of neo-classicism in Rome and its subsequent spread throughout the continent in the years leading up to the French Revolution.
ARTS of JAPAN: From MODERNISM to MANGA

Professor Namiko Kunimoto

Students will explore the arts of Japan from 1868-present, covering a wide range of materials, including sculpture, performance art, photography, contemporary painting, and manga. We will discuss historical and social contexts, including the American Occupation, Japan’s Cold War era, and the burst of the economic bubble in the 1990s. We will address issues such as gender and representations of the body, the cult of cuteness, and the dynamics of nationalism since 1945. The class will follow a rough chronological order while allowing the linkages between past and present to be examined, rather than obscured.

No past experience in Japanese studies or art history required.