

Prof. Shirin Fozi (sfozi@pitt.edu)
Fall 2019

Cultural Identities in Medieval Europe
Frick 104 (seminar room); Wednesdays, 2:30-5:25

This course is centered on questions of identity in the ‘long Middle Ages’ and considers the role of aesthetic objects as markers of culture that were understood across deep geographic, religious, ethnic, and linguistic divides. We will trace a chronological arc from ca. 300 to 1300 CE, and discussions will include close consideration of specific medieval objects. This approach will be combined with broader investigations of the ways in which modern publications and museum exhibitions have shaped consciousness of our topic among scholars and other audiences.

While the class is centered on the European Middle Ages, the critical and theoretical concepts we explore are intended to be broadly applicable across the history of art and visual culture. Topics will include but are not limited to: the shared legacy of ancient Rome across the Mediterranean, the ancient and medieval Romanization of the North, trade routes that brought luxury materials from Africa and Asia to Europe, the Crusader states as quasi-colonial spaces, and the production and consumption of Jewish and Muslim art in a predominantly Christian era of European history.

The Final Grade will be assessed using the following criteria:

Class participation (20%): This includes not only showing up, but also taking an active role in discussion every week. Every week you will be asked to prepare a short statement reflecting on the readings; these comments (no more than 250 words, written in advance and printed out, to be handed in at the end of class) will count for your participation grade.

Readings and Journal (20%): This is a reading-heavy class, and each week there will be several assigned essays posted on Courseweb. You are expected to *look* at every essay, but you are not expected to give each essay *equal time* when you read. Instead, you should choose the essays that you find most compelling and focus on them; the rest can be skimmed. Reading journals should have an entry for every essay on the syllabus; each entry should include the following, written *in your own words* (not quoted from the essay!): summary of main argument, list of key examples (works of art or written sources), notes on methods/insights, and notes from class discussion. Entries will be graded on quality not quantity, and it is expected that the entries for the essays you *read* will be more polished than the entries for the essays you choose to *skim*.

Final Paper Proposal (10%): This should be a one-page summary of your paper idea, structured with one paragraph to introduce your *topic* (usually a specific example of a work of art that you wish to explore within the framework of the class) and one paragraph to suggest your *idea* (one specific question or methodological intervention that you plan to apply to your case study). The proposal is due in class on **Wednesday, September 25**; everyone should meet in person with Fozi to have their Final Paper topic and bibliography approved before Thanksgiving.

Final Paper (50%): A hard copy of your paper is due in SF’s office by 2pm on **December 9**.

September 4: Race and Medieval Studies

Medieval Studies has been going through a crisis over the past few years – the readings below are drawn from contemporary authors grappling with the ethical problems of the field.

Readings:

- Ahmed, Sara. “Race as Sedimented History.” *postmedieval* 6.1 (2015): 94-97.
- Bartlett, Robert. “Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity.” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31 (2001): 39-55.
- Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome, and Karl Steel. “Race, travel, time, heritage.” *postmedieval* 6.1 (2015): 98-110.
- Fidler, Luke A. “Teaching Medieval Art History in a Time of White Supremacy.” [*Material Collective*](#), 12 August 2017.
- Finke, Laurie and Martin Schichtman. “Exegetical History: Nazis at the Round Table.” *postmedieval* 5.3 (2014): 278-94.
- Jordan, William C. “Why ‘Race’?” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31.1 (2001): 165-73.
- Mittman, Asa Simon. “Are the Monstrous ‘Races’ Races?” *postmedieval* 6.1 (2015): 36-51.
- Perry, David M. “What to do when Nazis are obsessed with your field: How medieval historians can counter white supremacy.” [*Pacific Standard*](#), 6 September 2017.
- *For browsing: Hsy, Jonathan and Julie Orlemanski. “Race and Medieval Studies: A Partial Bibliography.” *postmedieval* 8 (2017), 500-31.

September 11: Race and the History of Art

These are primarily theoretical readings from twentieth-century thinkers who have been influential in defining questions about race, culture, and nationalism. Note that the two contemporary authors, Chris Wood and Robert Nelson, are writing historiographically.

Readings:

- Adorno, Theodor and Max Horkheimer. “The Culture Industry.” (1944)
- Barthes, Roland. “Rhetoric of the Image.” (1964)
- Nelson, Robert. “Living on the Byzantine Borders of Western Art.” (1996)
- Schapiro, Meyer. “On the ‘Aesthetic Attitude’ in Romanesque Art.” (1947)
- Schapiro, Meyer. “Race, Nationality, and Art.” (1936)
- Simmel, Georg. “The Stranger.” (1908)
- Wood, Christopher. “Strzygowski and Riegel in America.” (2004)

September 18: NO CLASS

Use this time to come up with a Final Paper topic – proposals will be due September 24.

September 25: Dura Europos and “Romanitas”

Questions: What is at stake in identifying “Jewish” art in the late Roman Empire? What methods are available towards assessing the wall paintings of the Dura Europos Synagogue?

Readings:

- Assmann, Jan. *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- Elsner, Jaś. “Late Antiquity: A Period of Cultural Interaction.” In *Transition to Christianity: Art of Late Antiquity, 3rd-7th century AD*, ed. Anastasia Lazaridou (2011), pp. 26-31.
- Elsner, Jaś. “‘Pharaoh’s Army Got Drowned’: Some Reflections on Jewish and Roman Genealogies in Early Christian Art.” In *Judaism and Christian Art: Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism*, ed. Herbert L. Kessler and David Nirenberg (Philadelphia, 2011), pp. 10-44.
- Elsner, Jaś. “Cultural Resistance and the Visual Image: The Case of Dura Europos.” *Classical Philology* 93/3 (July 2001): 269-304.
- Kessler, Herbert L. “Judaism and the Development of Byzantine Art.” In *Jews in Byzantium: Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures* (Brill, 2012), pp. 455-500.
- Nirenberg, David. “The Judaism of Christian Art.” In *Judaism and Christian Art: Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism* (2011), pp. 387-427.
- Wharton, Annabel Jane. “Good and bad images from the Synagogue of Dura Europos: Contexts, subtexts, intertexts.” *Art History* 17/1 (March 1994): 1-25.

[**October 2: Medieval Monsters: Terrors, Wonders, Aliens (Cleveland Museum of Art)**]

Exhibition closes Sunday, October 6.

October 9: Visit with Chris Wood

Readings TBA: We will read an unpublished essay by Wood, along with some added material for context, and will meet with him in class to discuss the “adventurer” in early modern Germany.

[**October 16: The Colmar Treasure: A Medieval Jewish Legacy (The Met Cloisters)**]

Exhibition closes in January.

[**Sometime in November: Caravans of Gold: Medieval Saharan Africa (Aga Khan Museum)**]

Exhibition closes in February. Field trip co-sponsored by Identity & Mob/Ex Constellations.

Remaining Classes, TBA

October 23
October 30
November 6
November 13
November 20

November 27: Thanksgiving – NO CLASS
December 4: Final Presentations

TOPIC: The “Multicultural” Treasury

Question: What is the difference between collecting luxury and collecting culture?

Reading:

- Beech, George T. “The Eleanor of Aquitaine Vase, William IX of Aquitaine, and Muslim Spain,” *Gesta* 32/1 (1993): 3-10.
- Cutler, Anthony. “Uses of Luxury: On the Functions of Consumption and Symbolic Capital in Byzantine Culture.” In: *Byzance et les images* (1994), pp. 287-327.
- Cutler, Anthony. “From Loot to Scholarship: Changing Modes in the Italian Response to Byzantine artifacts, ca. 1200-1750.” In: *Symposium on Byzantium and the Italians, 13th-15th centuries* (1995), pp. 237-67.
- Grube, Ernst. “Fatimid or not Fatimid? That is the Question: Some notes on two dishes in the treasury of San Marco in Venice,” *Facts and Artefacts*, 13-19.
- Hoffman, Eva. “Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian interchange from the tenth to the twelfth century.” *Art History* 24/1 (February 2001): 17-50.
- Klein, Holger. “Eastern Objects and Western Desires: Relics and Reliquaries Between Byzantium and the West.” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58.2004 (2005): 283-314.
- Luyster, Amanda. “Cross-cultural Style in the Alhambra: Textiles, Identity and Origins,” *Medieval Encounters* 14.2008, 2/3 (2008): 341-67.
- Rosser-Owen, Mariam. “The Oliphant: A Call for a Shift of Perspective,” in *Romanesque and the Mediterranean: Points of Contact across the Latin, Greek and Islamic Worlds, c. 1000 to c. 1250*, ed. Rosa Maria Bacile and John McNeill (British Archaeological Association, 2015), pp. 15-58.
- Shalem, Avinoam. “Hidden Aesthetics and the Art of Deception: The Object, the Beholder, and the Artisan.” In: *Siculo-Arabic Ivories and Islamic Painting* (Hirmer, 2011), pp. 39-52.
- Shalem, Avinoam. *The Oliphant: Islamic Objects in Historical Context*. (Brill, 2004).
- Walker, Alicia. “Cross-cultural Reception in the Absence of Texts: the Islamic Appropriation of a middle Byzantine rosette casket,” *Gesta* 47.2008.2 (2009), 99-122.

TOPIC: The “Multicultural” Mediterranean

Question: What is at stake in seeing “diversity” in the medieval Mediterranean?

Readings:

- Cutler, Anthony. “Visual Communities in Byzantium and medieval Islam.” In: *Visions of Community in the Pre-Modern World* (2002), pp. 37-73.
- Dodds, Jerrilynn, María Roa Menocal, and Abigail Krasner Balbale. *The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture* (Yale, 2008).
- Eastmond, Antony. “On Diversity in southern Italy.” In *The Salerno Ivories: Objects, Histories, Contexts* (Gebr. Mann, 2016), pp. 97-109. *See also Eastmond’s similarly titled essay in *The Amalfi-Salerno ivories and the medieval Mediterranean* (2011), pp. 105-25.
- Kitziner, Ernst. “Norman Sicily as a source of Byzantine influence on Western art in the twelfth century (1966).” *Studies in late Antique, Byzantine and medieval Western Art*, vol. 2 (2003), pp. 1063-92.
- Klein, Holger. “Byzantium, Amalfi, and the Vexed Question of Artistic Influence.” In *The Amalfi-Salerno ivories and the medieval Mediterranean* (2011), pp. 127-8.
- Tronzo, William. “Regarding Norman Sicily: Art, Identity and Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages.” *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana* 35.2003/04 (2005): 101-14.
- Shalem, Avinoam. “The ‘Golden Age in Al-Andalus as Remembered.’” *CC* (2008), pp. 154-58.

TOPIC: Encountering Islam

- Barlow, Jane. “The Muslim Warrior at the Seder Meal: Dynamics Between Minorities in the Rylands Haggadah.” In: *Postcolonising the Medieval Image* (2017), pp. 218-40.
- Behrens-Abouseif, Doris. “European Arts and Crafts at the Mamluk Court.” *Muqarnas* 21 (2004): 45-54.
- Cutler, Anthony. “Everywhere and Nowhere: The Invisible Muslim and Christian Self-Fashioning in the Culture of Outremer.” In *France and the Holy Land*, ed. Daniel H. Weiss and Lisa Mahoney (Baltimore, 2004), pp. 253-81.
- Dodds, Jerrilyn. “Artistic Ambivalence in the Age of Iberian Crusades.” In *Crusading on the Edge* (Brepols, 2016), pp. 299-332.
- Geörgopulu, Maria. “Orientalism and Crusader Art: Constructing a New Canon.” *Medieval Encounters* 5.1999 (2000): 289-321.
- Hillenbrand, Robert. “The Classical Author Portrait Islamicized,” *Crusades: Medieval Worlds in Conflict* (2010), 47-74.
- Hunt, Lucy-Anne. “Ceiling and Casket at the Cappella Palatina and Christian Arab Art between Sicily and Egypt in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries.” In *Siculo-Arabic Ivories and Islamic Painting* (Hirmer, 2011), 169-98.
- Khanmohamadi, Shirin A. “Durendal, Translated: Islamic Object Genealogies in the *Chansons de Geste*.” *Postmedieval* 8.3 (2017): 321-33.
- Leson, Richard. “Chivalry and Alterity: Saladin and the Remembrance of Crusade in a Walters *Histoire d’Outremer*,” *Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 68/69.2009/11 (2012), 87-96.
- Tohme, Lara. “Spaces of Convergence: Christian Monasteries and Umayyad Architecture in Greater Syria,” *Negotiating Secular and Sacred in Medieval Art* (2009), 129-145.

TOPIC: Encountering Judaism

- Cohen, Évelyne. "The artist of the 'Barcelona Haggadah'." In: *The Late Medieval Hebrew Book in the Western Mediterranean* (2015), pp. 249-65.
- Kog'man-Apel, Katrin. "Hebrew Manuscript Painting in Late Medieval Spain: Signs of a Culture in Transition." *The Art Bulletin* 84 (2002): 246-72.
- Kog'man-Apel, Katrin. "Jewish Art and Cultural Exchange: Theoretical Perspectives." In: *Confronting the Borders of Medieval Art* (2011), pp. 1-26.
- Lipton, Sara. "The Root of all Evil: Jews, money and metaphor in the Bible Moralised," *Medieval Encounters* 1 (1995), 301-322.
- Lipton, Sara. "The Temple is my body: Gender, Carnality, and Synagoga in the Bible Moralised," in: *Imagining the Self, Imagining the Other* (2002), 129-163.
- Nina Rowe. "Pocket Crucifixions: Jesus, Jews, and Ownership in Fourteenth-century Ivories," *Studies in Iconography* 32 (2011), 81-120.
- Rowe, Nina. "Rethinking Ecclesia and Synagoga in the thirteenth century," in: *Gothic art and thought in the later Medieval Period* (2011), 264-291.

Especially influential studies to consider:

- Suzanne Conklin Akbari. *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450*. Cornell University Press, 2009.
- Geraldine Heng. *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- William Chester Jordan. *The Apple of His Eye: Converts from Islam in the Reign of Louis IX*. Princeton University Press, 2019.
- Sharon Kinoshita. *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.
- David Nirenberg. *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, new edition with new preface by the author. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.