

ART 325 • HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN ART

COURSE SYLLABUS • FALL 2015

MWF 12:00 – 12:50 p.m.
Don Morris 141 (Whitefield Lecture Hall)
Credit Hours: 3

INSTRUCTOR:	Dan McGregor, Professor www.behance.net/danmcgregor
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ACU MISSION STATEMENT

To educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES MISSION STATEMENT

The College of Arts and Sciences at Abilene Christian University educates students for worldwide Christian service and leadership through programs of study and other learning experiences that blend a liberal arts education with professional and career education.

ART AND DESIGN DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

We believe that art has a unique power to change our world, to make it a more beautiful, generous, rich, and open place. We are convinced that the world needs not only artists, but Christian artists who in their talent and power of creative expression proclaim the glory of the Creator.

PRAYERS

God be in my head, and in my understanding;

God be in my eyes, and in my looking;

God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;

God be in my heart, and in my thinking;

God be at my end, and at my departing.

Pynson's *Horae* (Book of Hours), 1514

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at the carpenter's bench didst manifest the dignity of honest labor, and dost give to each of us our tasks to perform, help us to do our weekday work with readiness of mind and singleness of heart, not...as men-pleasers, but as thy servants, labouring heartily as unto Thee and not unto men, so that whatever we do, great or small, may be to the glory of Thy Holy Name.

John Stott

THEME SCRIPTURE

The Son is the image (eikon) of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:15-17

SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY (INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND LEARNING)

I approach this course as a committed (though very imperfect) believer in Jesus Christ. I believe that He was physically born to a virgin, was literally God Incarnate, walked this earth at a specific time and place in history, was killed, and rose again from the dead, according to the scriptures. I believe that he will come again one day to judge the living and the dead.

These orthodox ideas form the story that the Christian Art History class flows out of, the narrative it is designed around. The content of this class assumes that the story of Jesus is true, historical, and relevant. I realize that you, the student, may or may not share this belief. You might be a committed atheist, an agnostic, a nominal cultural Christian, a doubting Christian, or a sold-out Jesus Freak. I want you to know that wherever you locate yourself on the spectrum of belief, you are welcome in this class, and your voice is valued. I believe that you are worthy of love because you were made in the image of the Creator of the universe (whether you believe in Him or not). I pray that my actions and words in this class will reflect your infinite worth.

This class contains an occasional devotional component (prayer, singing, chanting, etc.). You are welcome and invited to participate in this component even if you do not identify as a Christian, or are unsure what you believe (no survey will be taken!). You are not, however, required to participate, and your grade is certainly not dependent on your level of belief or participation in the devotional life of the course.

One last thing: this course is a "spiritually safe place." This means you are free to question, probe, doubt, test, and explore Christianity. If you have any questions about Christianity or how to become a Christian (or any other spiritual question that may not relate to the course content), you are more than welcome to come ask me. I will do my best to walk beside you in these questions, or direct you to someone who is wiser than I.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Christian art from the first century to the present.

COURSE DESCRIPTION (DETAILED)

The only really effective apologia for Christianity comes down to two arguments, namely, the saints the Church has produced and the art which has grown in her womb.

Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI)

This course is designed to immerse upper-level art and design students in the rich history and theology of Christian art. Topics of examination will include the Jewish aesthetic tradition, early Christian art, recurring biblical themes in Christian art, Catholic and Eastern Orthodox theology and how it influences artwork, saints, and contemporary art with Christian and spiritual themes.

Through lectures, discussions, written reflections, field trips, etc. students will explore the intertwining of Judeo-Christian belief and physical artifacts. Students will also be challenged to examine issues critical to the believing artist, such as the morality of created matter, stewardship, propaganda, offensive content, and the role of the arts in worship. Finally, students will be invited on a path of spiritual shaping, or formation, via the arts.

COURSE COMPETENCIES

1. The student will gain familiarity with the greatest works of Christian art and architecture.
Measurement: Image identification on quizzes and exams; saint research project.
2. The student will explore and understand Biblical perspectives on the nature of aesthetics and created matter.
Measurement: Reflective questions on quizzes and exams.
3. The student will understand how Christian theology has affected art creation over the centuries.
Measurement: Mastery of questions related to theology on quizzes and exams; saint research project.
4. The student will learn to think "Christianly" about contemporary art that uses spiritual or Christian imagery.
Measurement: In-class discussion; reflective questions on quizzes and exams.

REQUIRED TEXTS

These texts are to be procured from the bookstore or online during the first week of school. They are not optional and must be brought to class every day.

1. Brand, Hilary and Chaplin, Adrienne. *Art & Soul*.
2. Schaeffer, Francis. *Art and the Bible*.
3. Ferguson, George. *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*.
4. Farmer, David. *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints, Fifth Edition*.
5. (optional for enriching readings): Bustard, Ned. *It was Good: Making Art to the Glory of God*.

GRADING EVENTS AND CRITERIA

FINAL GRADE BREAKDOWN

Your final grade will be comprised of the elements listed below.

60% - QUIZZES (9)

Quizzes will be administered at the end of every week (approximately) to cover readings and course content. These will typically be multiple-choice, administered on Scantron forms. No make-up opportunities will be given for these quizzes, **so be sure that you don't miss Fridays!**

25% - MAJOR EXAMS (2)

A mid-term and final exam will be administered.

15% - SAINT PRESENTATION

You will present research on the life of a Christian saint and his/her appearance in visual art.

GRADING SCALE

100-90:	A
89-80:	B
79-70:	C
69-60:	D
59-0:	F

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

SPECIAL NEEDS/ADA POLICY

ACU complies with the provisions set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act, offering accommodations for any student with a documented disability. The Student Disability Services Office is located in Alpha Academic Services.

ACU ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

<http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/studentlife/studenthandbook/#1>

COURSE POLICIES

COURSE COST

The cost of this class, at \$950 per semester hour, is approximately \$2850. We have approximately 45 scheduled meetings, which means that the market value of this class is about \$63 per 50-minute "hour" (or \$1.26 per minute). If you choose not to attend class it is like throwing away \$63 each time you miss (and I would rather you just give me the \$63 to support my family)!

I will do my best to make sure that you get your \$63/hour's worth of content or experience in this course. If class session happens to be canceled, I will do my best to supply remote or digital content to you to give your money's worth.

ATTENDANCE

1. **You get 4 free absences (\$252 worth of class!); any additional absence after that (whether an “actual” absence or a “virtual” one via three or more accumulated tardies) will automatically result in 5 points per absence off your final grade. The absence limit is 10; if you hit that number, you automatically fail (if you haven’t dropped the course yet).**

2. **There are no excused absences** other than official university events accompanied by an official university excuse form delivered 1 week in advance (e.g. athletic events). **Illness, sleeping in, doctor’s visits, funerals, and family emergencies are NOT excused; they count as some of your 4 free absences.**

3. **3 tardies= 1 absence. “Tardy” means you are not in your seat, ready to go, at 12:00 noon.**

4. **If you come in more than 15 minutes late, you will automatically be counted absent, even if you stay for the rest of class. If you leave class early, you will be counted absent.**

5. Upon incurring a tenth absence for whatever reason, you must drop the course. ***You must initiate a course drop (get a form from your advisor).*** If this tenth absence is incurred after the deadline to drop a class, you will automatically receive an “F” for the course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The overwhelming majority of students are totally honest and don’t cheat or plagiarize. However, occasionally a few students do. This breaks my heart; I take it personally (and more importantly, God sees it)! Any form of cheating—cheat sheets, looking at someone else’s paper, helping someone else cheat, turning in someone else’s work as your own, plagiarizing, etc., will result in an automatic 0 on that assignment. It will also result in notification at the departmental, college, and Student Life levels, and permanent-record documentation with the university for all perpetrators. Cheating is a sin that harms your soul—please don’t do it. ACU’s full academic integrity policy may be found at:

<http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/studentlife/studenthandbook/#1>

If you would like to appeal a decision related to academic integrity, you will need to file a written appeal with the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences within five business days of receiving written notification of the infraction and consequence from your professor. Further information and additional steps for appealing a decision may be found under the Academic Integrity Policy link at:

<http://www.acu.edu/academics/provost/policies/index.html>

LATE WORK

Important! The deadline for any given assignments is the beginning of class on the assignment’s due date. Your assignment, be it a podcast, artwork, or a paper, should be ready to turn in when you walk in the door. ***This is regardless of whether you are present in class on the due date or not.*** If you know that you will be gone on the day an assignment is due, please make arrangements to send your project or paper with a friend or make arrangements with me to leave it somewhere in the room; otherwise, it will be counted late.

FOOD

I realize that this class falls at a less-than-ideal time when it comes to lunch. Please eat lunch either before or after coming to class. The consumption of food isn’t permitted during class—not because I want you to starve, but because a roomful of students crushing chip bags and crunching food doesn’t make for a good discussion environment. Drinks are, however, permitted in class.

CELL PHONES, LAPTOPS AND MOBILE LEARNING DEVICES

Laptops, iPads, smart phones, etc. are not permitted in this class, even for taking notes. I realize that this may deviate from many or most of your classes, in which the use of technology is encouraged. Please understand that this policy doesn’t derive from an anti-technology bias. There is nothing wrong or evil about such devices. Rather, I am hoping to cultivate an atmosphere conducive to devotional practices and meditative thinking; glowing screens—large or small—can detract from this environment.

Please use good old paper and pen/pencil for note-taking. Think of it as awesomely analog, like a single-speed bike or a pinball machine. If you have a learning disability that would, for some reason, require the use of an electronic device, please bring me official paperwork from Alpha Academic services to that effect.

OFFENSIVE CONTENT

Some of the images that will be shown in this class may contain content that is offensive to you (in fact, it may be offensive to me, too!). This might include images of nudity, blasphemous content, or shocking violence.

Please know that just because I show something doesn't mean that I endorse it or approve of its content. I believe that there are certain things that need to be shown in order for this course to provide a full educational experience. If you anticipate that the content of this class might be disruptive or spiritually harmful to you, you might consider dropping the course; your spiritual life is the #1 priority.

NOTEWORTHY CALENDAR EVENTS

9/21-24:	Summit
10/10-11:	Homecoming weekend
10/17:	Fall Break (no class Friday)
11/14:	Last day to drop a class
11/26-28:	Thanksgiving Holiday (no class Wed. or Fri.)
12/5:	Last day of class
12/8:	Dead Day (make-up exams given)
12/11:	(Thurs.) Final: noon-1:45 p.m.

Please note that the university does not allow me to give early finals.