

# UCD School of Art History & Cultural Policy

## Scoil Stair na hEalaíne agus an Pholasaí Chultúrtha UCD

### Information for Stage 2 Art History Students

2025/26

[www.ucd.ie/arhistory](http://www.ucd.ie/arhistory) | Facebook: @ucdarhistorycultpolicy | Instagram: @ucd\_ah\_cp



Stage 2 offers eight modules which are designed to expand students' understanding of the various epochs of art making and the key debates and issues that have resonated throughout the history of art from antiquity to the present day. In addition to an increased focus on architecture and modern/ contemporary art, some of these offerings also provide the opportunity to step outside Art History's traditional focus on Western/ European art and its customary methodologies.

**Art History Students** on the **BA Joint Major (DN520)** and **BA Humanities Classics, Art History, Archaeology** programmes take **AH20200 & AH20300** as core modules alongside their other Stage 2 options. Students on the DN520 programme pick at least another three option modules in order to achieve the 25 credits required for a Joint Major in Art History at Stage 2.

## AUTUMN TRIMESTER

### Core module

#### AH20200 The Modern to the Contemporary

Assoc. Prof. Róisín Kennedy

This module provides an introduction to the modernist movement from c.1914 to the emergence of post-modern and contemporary art practice in the 1960s and 1970s. Through consideration of key concepts, critical texts and artworks, the principle characteristics and goals of modernism and contemporary art are explored. These include the importance of innovation and experimentation, the emphasis on media and technique and a new stress on the personality of the artist in modernism and the significance of how modern and contemporary art is curated and displayed. Through lectures and small group seminars students will analyse key themes in modern to contemporary art notably abstract art, the use of readymade materials, chance and automatism, other modernisms, and the role of the gallery space.

### Option modules

#### AH20280 Queer Art Histories

Dr Aleksandra Gajowy

What is queer art and who makes it? Has there always been queerness in art? In this module, we will look at art-historical practices from a variety of historical, geographical, and social contexts, to explore how queerness, same-sex desire, or "homosexuality" have been represented, and how these representations changed over time, at intersections with their sociopolitical contexts. While the module has a predominantly contemporary focus, we will begin with an examination of historical examples of same-sex desire in art before the 19th century. We will then look at the modern developments brought by the Enlightenment and scientific progress which first invented and categorised "homosexuality" as a medical category and deviance, prompting 19th century artists to develop an elaborate language of coded homoeroticism. Following this historical introduction to the module, the focus will shift to a thematic approach: we will cover a broad range of distinct practices and reflect on many different meanings of queerness.

#### AH20250 Early Islamic Art & Architecture

Dr Sean Leatherbury

This module introduces the art and architecture of the Islamic Mediterranean and Middle East, as well as the arts produced by Christians, Jews, and others who were the subjects and neighbours of the early Islamic states. Beginning with the Byzantine and Sasanian Persian Empires, the previous rulers of the Middle East before the rise of Islam, the module will survey the buildings and works of art created within the Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid, Seljuq, Ayyubid, and Mamluk states (c. A.D. 650-1250).

Focusing on art and architecture produced in the service of religion as well as more secular interests, the module will allow students to engage with the major monuments and themes of the period, including the role of ornament, cross-cultural exchange, attitudes towards figural images, and the written word as image, as well as to reflect critically on the ways that Islamic art historically has been described and theorised (e.g. Orientalist stereotypes). When possible, visits to local collections (the Chester Beatty Library, the National Museum of Ireland) will be made.

## SPRING TRIMESTER

### Core module

#### AH20300 Medieval Art & Architecture: characteristics & Influences

Prof. Lynda Mulvin

This course is designed to introduce students to the outstanding record of Medieval art and architecture from 4th to 15th century and to an understanding of the principles, the technological developments and innovations of this period of cultural diversity and assimilation. The lectures examine material histories of objects and works of art which reflect the varied connections of European art of the Middle Ages. Themes to be explored include: heritage of the post Classical world; identity and diversity in the post Roman world; aspects of continuity and transformation in the arts of the Byzantine world in the east and the development of monasticism and the formation of the Early Medieval monastery in the west, with reference to the Carolingian and Ottonian period including the specific contribution of Irish monasticism to Medieval art; and the impact of the pilgrimage tradition on art and architecture during the Romanesque and Gothic periods. The course also examines the Gothic style as it emerges at the end of the 12th century, and the late medieval period is examined through reflections in urban and secular architectural developments. The course concludes with an exploration of the impact of religious reform, as new political centres develop, against a backdrop of complex histories of art production over long distances, to expose the interdisciplinarity of early modern Europe.

### Option modules

#### AH20230 European Architecture

Assoc. Prof. Conor Lucey

This module is designed to provide students with a basic, chronological introduction to the rich architectural heritage of Western Europe, from the Renaissance to the beginning of the modern age. Students will be introduced to key stylistic, historical and theoretical developments in architectural design from a European perspective, and to some of the key buildings that define their respective ages - from the baroque classicism of Versailles to the Gothic revival style of the Houses of Parliament at Westminster. Focusing on questions of style and function, and considering factors such as economics, geography, culture, technology, politics and religion, this course will provide a solid foundation for understanding the origins and evolutions of key building types, as well as a grasp of basic architectural concepts and ways of discussing them.

#### AH20220 History of Photography

Prof. Emily Mark-FitzGerald

This module surveys the history and theory of photography, beginning with its origins in the nineteenth century, and concluding with post-war developments in photographic practice. We will examine the photograph both as a documentation of the world and as a work of art, reflecting on its technological and aesthetic evolution, and how the act of photography was (and is) a scientific, cultural, and aesthetic practice. How has photography revolutionised our ways of seeing? What is the relationship between photography and other forms of visual art and representation? What questions about looking at others, and representing ourselves, does it provoke? Following a roughly chronological structure, we will discuss the contribution of key photographers and important stylistic moments throughout its history. The history of photography in Ireland will also form an important dimension of this module. This module comprises lectures, in-class exercises, and special small-group hands-on tutorials utilising the Kingsley Photographic Teaching Collection of original artefacts from the 19th - 20th century -- from daguerreotypes to Kodachrome colour processes.

#### AH20310 Art History Field Trip

Prof. Kathleen James-Chakraborty

This module involves a field trip over three nights/ four days to Berlin during the study/ fieldwork period in March 2026 (exact dates tbc). We will visit and analyse museums and other sites of art and architectural historical interest in the city, and place these in the context of their urban setting and its history. Although some preliminary classes will take place on campus between January - March 2026, most of the teaching take place on the field trip during full days, with early/ 9am starts each morning at pre-arranged meeting points. Students should be prepared to cover reasonable distances within the city on foot and by public transport and to engage in art historical discussions throughout each day that we are away. Assessment will be geared to the trip, and will consist of presentations to the class delivered in situ while abroad, later written up as essays. NB. students should be prepared to bear the costs of airfare and accommodation themselves (the School of Art History and Cultural Policy expects to give some assistance and advice in alleviating costs - further details will emerge early weeks in the spring trimester).