

ARTH 406
THE CULTURES OF COLLECTING



Honoré Daumier, *The connoisseur*, c.1864, crayon and gouache
(New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art)

ART HISTORY
SCHOOL OF ART HISTORY, CLASSICS AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Trimester 1 and 2
1 March – 13 November
2010

ARTH 406 THE CULTURES OF COLLECTING

COURSE OUTLINE

Course co-ordinator: Roger Blackley, OK 308, phone 463 5802
Time: Tuesdays, 3-5 pm, or as scheduled
Place: Easterfield EA012
Information: Any additional information will be posted on the
 Art History noticeboard adjacent to Pippa
 Wisheart's office, OK 306.

ARTH 406 explores the history of collecting – private and institutional – from antiquity to the present. The course encourages a critical reading of texts dealing with collecting and collections, crossing disciplinary boundaries to incorporate historical, psychological, anthropological and literary perspectives. Students compile case studies on individual collectors and collections and address theoretical issues raised by the phenomenon of collecting.

400-level studies are shaped by you, the students. There are no formal lectures, although specialists from within and outside VUW will participate in some of the seminar programme. The format comprises discussion leading from set readings for each session; ideally you will have followed your own path of additional reading and be able to contribute to these discussions from your particular field of interest.

The first assignment is a book review, asking you to characterise the publication(s), assessing them both in relation to other works in a similar genre and in relation to the collecting themes we consider in the early seminars (worth 15%). The topic for the research essay – your main written contribution – should develop from your own interests and individual reading for the course. A number of possible subjects and areas are suggested, but try to come up with a topic of your own. The essay (worth 35%) is developed through the course, with specific set deadlines for a proposal (worth 10%) and subsequent seminar presentation (also worth 10%). The remaining assessment is comprised by the examination (30%).

In line with Art History's teaching objectives, ARTH 406 will:

- encourage you to apply your skills of analysis to a critical examination of the phenomenon of collecting, from a range of perspectives
- develop your capacity for independent study and learning
- encourage you to think and write critically
- ensure you exploit the full range of available library resources in addition to available primary research resources
- refine your skills in seminar presentation and oral debate
- prepare you for further post-graduate research
- introduce you to the standards required of scholarly articles and papers and the application of your skills in research and writing

Workload:

The University recommends that in order to maintain satisfactory progress approximately 12 hours per week, inclusive of seminar sessions, be given to a 30-point 400-level course spread over one year. Please ensure that you can set aside at least this amount of time throughout the course – it is not worth taking on a greater workload than you can manage.

Mandatory course requirements:

You will have met the mandatory course requirements for ARTH 406 with satisfactory seminar attendance (no fewer than **10** out of the **13** discussion sessions, and at least **2** of the student seminar sessions) and by completing all required assignments.

All requirements must be met by **15 October 2010**, unless alternative arrangements have been made. You must also sit a final 3-hour examination, at a time yet to be advised by the university, in the examination period, **22 October - Saturday 13 November 2010**.

SEMINAR PROGRAMME

COURSE DELIVERY

This course is taught as a series of 13 2-hour seminars and three student presentation sessions. Students are expected to prepare for each seminar by doing the reading, and to participate in the seminar discussion.

All set readings are reprinted in the ARTH 406 Course Handbook. Please purchase your copy from VicBooks: volume I, \$23.20; volume II, \$33.40.

9 March

- 1** **Introductory meeting: 'Noah was the first collector'**
Discussion of the course, its structure, scope and potential.

16 March

- 2** **Theorising collecting**
The first of two sessions considering theoretical approaches to collecting:

23 March

- 3** **The academic pursuit of collecting**
Two 'professors' of collecting argue their case.

30 March

- 4** **The psychology of collecting**
What are the motives, drives or compulsions that underlie collecting?

5-18 April

MID-TRIMESTER BREAK

Note: **Book review due Monday 19 April.**

4 May

- 5** **Collecting in the ancient world**

11 May

6 Curiosity cabinets

Often considered the forerunners of museums, *wunderkammern* and cabinets of curiosity raise fascinating questions concerning taxonomy and interpretation.

18 May

7 The emergence of the public art museum

The 18th-century invention of the art gallery spawned a highly successful museum type, yoking nationalism to a new conception of art.

25 May

8 Between science and art

We consider the methodological, ideological and political distinctions underlying the specialist collection of art, ethnography and the natural sciences.

1 June

9 Destruction, theft and the rise of 'heritage'

We investigate pathological collecting, especially iconoclasm (destruction of art) and its association with the notion of patrimony. We also consider the perennial problem of art theft and problems of unauthorised interactions with works of art.

Note: Essay proposal due Friday 4 June

7 June—11 July **MID-YEAR BREAK**

13 July

10 Cultural property and ownership

We consider international claims on cultural property, especially the case of looted antiquities. St Clair places the celebrated call for the restitution to Greece of the 'Elgin Marbles' into historical perspective.

20 July

No class

27 July

Seminar presentations (I)

3 August

Seminar presentations (II)

10 August

Seminar presentations (III)

The seminars will be grouped into three sessions, each with four presentations, which ideally will have some kind of thematic relationships (but which messy reality might deliver as highly assorted). Keep them to 12-20 minutes, to allow time for discussion.

17 August

11 Body-snatching

The collection of human remains is one of the most radioactive issues in current museology. This session considers the historical context of such collecting and examines two case studies, one Australian and one from New Zealand.

23 August—5 September

MID-TRIMESTER BREAK

7 September

No class

14 September

12 Taonga tuku iho: Collecting in the Maori world

21 September — 28 September

No class (essay writing a priority)

Note: Research essay due Friday 1 October

12 October

13 The futures of collecting

Our final session consider a range of perspectives on collecting institutions and practices, including the tensions between private and public rights and responsibilities in the ownership and conservation of material culture. Is there any firm distinction that can be drawn between 'public' and 'private' collecting?

ASSESSMENT

ARTH 406 is assessed by means of:

- **one book review** (worth 15%) due Monday 19 April
- **one essay proposal** (10%), due Friday 4 June
- **one seminar presentation** (10%) during July and August
- **one research essay** (35%) due Friday 1 October
- **three-hour final examination** (30%), to be set by VUW Registry

All work must be submitted by 15 October 2010, and extensions will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

PENALTIES: If you require an extension you must contact the course coordinator before the due date. Late assignments may be penalized by 2% per day. All work must be submitted before October 15, 2010.

The assessment is designed to develop your research skills as well as your skills in writing and verbal presentation. While you are expected to make a contribution to all the seminar sessions and will take responsibility for introducing one of the main readings, your own presentation will build confidence in your presentation skills as well as introduce fellow students to a range of in-depth insights into aspects of collections and collecting. By leading the discussion following your presentation, you will be developing your skills in group discussion and enabling fellow students to assist the development of your research. Your research essay, for which the proposal and seminar presentation are milestones, shapes the personal perspective you bring to the group.

The assessment relates closely to Art History's teaching objectives. Specifically, the exhibition review encourages critical analysis of how collecting is characterised in theoretical texts as well in an actual exhibition context, and the research essay applies and extends your skills of critical analysis and capacity for independent study, encouraging you to exploit library and other resources and equipping you for further post-graduate research.

In all written work, please pay attention to setting out, correct spelling and grammar. Refer to the departmental handbook, *Researching and writing art history essays*, for guidance. Typed copy is essential. Use one side of the paper only, leaving a generous margin on the left-hand side.

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work. Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification. The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material
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Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

BOOK REVIEW

Your task is to write a **1500-word review** of ONE of the following books, or sets of books.

The assignment asks you to take a critical stance towards the publication(s), analysing their theoretical positions as well as placing them in the context of other examples of the relevant genre (anthology, cultural and material history).

Use the theoretical perspectives we explore during our four seminars in March to assist in analysing your chosen work.

Frame it as an *academic* book review, intended for a journal that addresses a readership familiar with your topic (and which uses footnotes to reference other literature). Remember that writing for publication means thinking about how you can engage the reader. As part of your preparation you might look at a range of published reviews in journals such as *Art Bulletin*, *Art History* or the *Oxford Journal of the History of Collections* (latter with good reviews but no footnotes):

[\(http://jhc.oxfordjournals.org.helicon.vuw.ac.nz/\)](http://jhc.oxfordjournals.org.helicon.vuw.ac.nz/)

Avoid reading any reviews of your selected work, however, until you have developed your own stance towards it.

IMPORTANT NOTE

In all written work, please pay attention to setting out, correct spelling and grammar. Refer to the departmental handbook, *Researching and writing art history essays*, for guidance. Typed copy is essential. Use one side of the paper only, leaving a generous margin on the left-hand side.

ESSAY

You are required to submit a **4500-word research essay** (due Friday 1 October as partial requirement for this course (35% of the total grade)). The **essay proposal** (due Friday 4 June) is worth 10% and your **seminar presentation** on the topic and its potential (to be scheduled in July and August) is worth a further 10%. This means that the research essay and its development represents 55% of the overall assessment.

The topic is open and should relate to your own interests, particularly as they develop in relation to your reading for the course. You should discuss your choice of topic with Roger Blackley, who may have suggestions for further reading. Note that your chosen topic must be distinct from the work you produce for other papers.

Ensure that your chosen topic allows you to develop an argument, and that you have located the resources you need to sustain it. The essay should be carefully planned, with care taken to ensure that your argument is clear to the reader.

Essays should be typed on one side of the paper only, leaving a left-hand margin for comments. Do not use single spacing.

Essay proposals should be around 1000 words and will include a working bibliography, annotated to signal the usefulness of key sources. This material can be adapted for your seminar handout.

Seminar presentations should be timed for 15 minutes (including relevant visual materials) and supported by a handout listing main points and sources. There will be a period of discussion allotted to each presentation. You need to hand in a typescript of the presentation for assessment purposes.

Assessment will be based on your ability to:

- identify the (historical, theoretical and practical) requirements of, and possibilities inherent in your argument
- formulate and develop a coherent argument
- accurately present an appropriate range of evidence
- demonstrate originality and independence of thought
- display a fluent style and accuracy in spelling and punctuation

EXAMINATION

The exam will relate to the entire year's course. Keeping abreast of the readings and contributing to the discussion are the most effective preparation for the exam. Exam question areas will be discussed at the end of the course, enabling you to focus your additional reading on relevant areas.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

The AVC(Academic) website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates. This website can be accessed at:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx

Withdrawal dates

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

Class Representative

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students. Contact details for the class representative will be available from Pippa in the ARTH office.

THE CHARTWELL TRUST STUDENT ART WRITING PRIZE 2010

The Adam Art Gallery invites students to participate in the Chartwell Trust Student Art Writing Prize, an annual writing initiative focusing on visual art and culture.

ELIGIBILITY

The prize is open to **all** VUW students studying Art History, Classics, Religious Studies, Museum and Heritage Studies, English, Film, Theatre, and Media Studies.

PRIZE

The winning entry will receive the cash prize of **\$500** and have their essay published on the Adam Art Gallery website **www.adamartgallery.org.nz**.

The 2010 winner will be announced at the Adam Art Gallery exhibition opening on **15 October 2010**.

GUIDELINES/CRITERIA

- Entries should be in the form of a review or essay addressing an exhibition at the Adam Art Gallery or a work from the Victoria University of Wellington Art Collection
- Check **www.adamartgallery.org.nz/learning-opportunities/chartwell-trust-student-writing-prize** for previous winning entries
- Submissions should be no more than 1,500 words
- Texts should be clearly labelled with author's name, contact details, course of study and student ID
- Texts must be submitted in both hard copy form and in Microsoft Word format (A4, single sided and 1.5 spaced).

DEADLINE

Entries are **now open** and will be accepted up until the closing date.

The closing date for submissions is **1 October 2010**.

Entries should be sent to:

The Chartwell Trust Student Art Writing Prize
c/- Adam Art Gallery
Victoria University of Wellington
PO Box 600
Wellington 6140
or via email adamartgallery@vuw.ac.nz