

ARH 2531: Introduction to Asian Art
University of Florida | School of Art + Art History | Spring 2026

General Information

Main Instructor

- Professor Douglas Gabriel
- Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:55–3:50 PM, FAC #119-B
- Phone: (352) 392-0201
- douglasgabriel@ufl.edu

Course Description

This course provides a survey of the art and architecture of Asia from the earliest times to the present, focusing primarily on China, India, Japan, and Korea. Students will investigate how art objects have functioned within a wide range of social, political, and religious contexts. As an introductory art history course, emphasis will be placed on developing the skills of formal analysis and critical interpretation of art objects.

Course Objectives

- To identify the major forms, actors, and episodes of Asian art and architecture
- To describe works of art both formally and historically
- To comprehend different approaches to and definitions of art across time
- To understand artworks as objects that not only reflect but also produce history
- To develop skills of close reading, visual analysis, active listening and engaged discussion

Required Readings and Other Materials

All readings will be made available as PDF files.

Graded Work:

- Attendance: 15%

Attendance is required for this class, and students are expected to come to class having completed all required readings and prepared to participate in engaged discussions.

- Discussion Posts: 10%

Whenever a required reading or viewing is due, please use the Discussion page on Canvas to post 3–5 bullet points indicating your initial thoughts on the material or questions you are left with. These will provide a foundation for our in-class conversation.

- 4 Quizzes: 20% (5% each)

Short quizzes will be given in weeks 3, 5, 7, and 13 for the purpose of ensuring students are keeping up to speed with vocabulary and iconography essential to the study of Asian art. The content that will appear on these quizzes will be clearly flagged in the lectures.

- Midterm: 20%

The midterm will have two components: an in-class portion that will be take place during our normal class period on Tuesday, March 10. A second, take-home portion involving more open-ended and creative prompts will be distributed the same week and students will have until Sunday, March 15 to complete and submit it via Canvas.

- Final Exam: 15%

The final exam will be in-person in format. The date, time, and placed will be announced in class.

- Exhibition Design: 20%

The final project requires students to conceptualize a fictional exhibition incorporating art objects from different times and places covered in the course under a unifying theme. Details will be provided in class.

Important Dates:

- January 29: Quiz #1
- February 10: Quiz #2
- February 12: Class visit to Tu Vien A Nan Buddhist Temple and Statue Park
- February 24: Quiz #3
- February 26: Class visit to the Harn Museum of Art
- March 10: In-class midterm
- March 15: Take-home component of midterm due
- April 7: Quiz #4
- May 1: Exhibition Design project due
- TBD: Final Exam

Grading Scale

Form more information on how UF assigns grade points, visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-%20regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	94 – 100%		C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%		C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%		D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

Schedule

Week 1

January 13: Syllabus + Preview of the Course

January 15: Asia in Theory + Bronze Ritual Vessels of the Shang and Zhou Dynasties

Week 2

January 20: Artifacts from Below: Qin and Han Tomb Art

January 22: Cyclical Architecture: The Ise Shrine + The Three Kingdoms Period in Korea

Week 3

January 27: The Great Departure: The Origins of Buddhist Art in the Maurya and Kushan Dynasties of India

- **Quiz #1 will be given at the start of class.**

January 29: The Transmission of Buddhist Art Across China, Korea, and Japan + From Hinduism to Buddhism: The Case of Angkor Wat

Week 4

February 3: Chinese Landscape Painting, Pt. 1: From the Six Dynasties to the Tang Dynasty

February 5: Chinese Landscape Painting, Pt. 2: The Northern and Southern Song Dynasties + “True-View” Painting in Korea

Week 5

February 10: Edification and Expression: Yuan Literati Painting

- **Quiz #2 will be given at the start of class.**

February 12: ****Class visit to Tu Vien A Nan Buddhist Temple and Statue Park****

Week 6

February 17: The Ming and Qing Dynasties

February 19: The Great Wall, the Forbidden City, and Garden Design

Week 7

February 24: Picturing a Floating World in the Edo Period + Japanese Tea Ceremonies

- **Quiz #3 will be given at the start of class.**

February 26: ****Class Visit to the Harn Museum of Art****

Week 8

March 3: Kings Become Modern: Royal Portraiture

March 5: Encounters with the West + Asia on View at World Expositions

Week 9

March 10: **In-Class Portion of Midterm**

March 12: **No Class (Take-Home Portion of Midterm Due by Sunday, March 15 at 11:59 PM via Canvas)**

Week 10

March 17: **No Class: Spring Break**

March 19: **No Class: Spring Break**

Week 11

March 24: Art for and under Japanese Imperialism

March 26: Socialist Realism in China and North Korea

Week 12

March 31: Post-War Experiments in Korea and Japan

April 2: Art in Response to the Vietnam War and Genocide in Cambodia

Week 13

April 7: Grassroots Art of the South Korean *Minjung* (People's) Movement

- **Quiz #4 to be given at the start of class.**

April 9: The Chinese Avant-Gardes + The Impact of the Asian Financial Crisis in the 1990s

Week 14

April 14: Censorship and Celebrity: The Case of Ai Weiwei + The Asian Biennale Boom + K-Pop Art

April 16: Asian American Art + Chinatown, Koreatown, and Little Tokyo

Week 15

April 22: Review for Final Exam

Additional Information and Resources:

For the latest UF academic policies and resources, as well as campus health and wellness resources, please visit <http://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>.

This syllabus is subject to change with advance notice.