Course description

This course aims to raise your awareness and understanding of the role of gender in visual culture throughout society. For many years, women artists were omitted from the history books and their work commonly left out of museums, so we begin our study by considering the social and cultural reasons for the historical treatment of women in art and look at some recent efforts to remedy this situation. In addition, this course will introduce you to the way visual culture serves to represent and shape broader ideas about women and gender identity in society. As we’ll see, this process involves art’s production, distribution, and interpretation in academic disciplines of art and art history, as well as in museums, the art market, and in popular culture. Please note that the study of gender in art is inherently intersectional since many factors including gender, class, race, ability, and sexuality contribute to the way we understand identity, both our own and how we see others. The goal of the course is that, through this material, we might begin to think more critically about how the images we encounter everyday function to construct society’s ideas about gender according to particular attitudes, beliefs, and ideologies. More importantly, it asks us all to compare such ideas to our own understanding, experience, and expectations about gender and identity in the world.

The course includes thirteen units and is taught on the Canvas online platform. All required readings and assignment details are provided online. Each unit requires four hours as class time and students are expected to spend four hours outside of class to work on the required assignments for a total of eight hours per unit. Each lesson needs to be completed before the student may access the next lesson.