

ARH 4930: Special Topics: Eastern European Gothic Renaissance

University of Florida, College of the Arts,
School of Art + Art History
Spring 2026

Class #26804

M | Periods 3-4 (9:35 AM - 11:30 AM) FAC 0201

W | Period 3 (9:35 AM - 10:25 AM) FAC 0201

Instructor: Dr. Alice Klima

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Office: Fine Arts C, room 119

Phone: 352-273-3072

Office hours: Tuesdays 1:00 – 2:00 PM and Wednesdays 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

COURSE TOPIC DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the late medieval and early Renaissance built environments in eastern and central Europe from 1300 to 1600. Late Gothic building traditions developed extravagant vaulting and sculpture that could transform church interiors or residences into fantastical geometric or vegetal forms using curved-ribbed and prismatic vault designs. This sculpted sacred space, along with the numerous paintings and liturgical items, created an exuberant setting for devotional practice. At the same time, religious reforms, leading up to the Protestant Reformation, challenged religious authority and redefined religious practice. This clash of worldviews led to civil unrest, iconoclasm, and a redefinition of devotional practice. We will examine the study of reforms and subsequent re-Catholization as we explore the introduction of early Renaissance designs and the accompanying Italian humanist ideals and theories in Eastern and Central Europe. The transition from Gothic to Renaissance was not a sudden shift but a gradual and often coexisting process, led by learned individuals, including women, who created diplomatic and cultural exchange with Italy and France. We will consider and attempt to define this Eastern European Gothic Renaissance, influenced by Italy, but shaped by local traditions.

COURSE GOALS

- Through readings and lectures, this course will equip students with a survey knowledge of the Late Medieval and Early Modern architecture and visual culture in Eastern Europe.
- Students will acquire the necessary vocabulary to discuss architecture and visual culture.
- Through readings, writing, and in-class discussion, students will learn to evaluate scholarly literature on Eastern European architecture and visual culture.
- Students will be introduced to late medieval and Renaissance history and place the art and architecture of these periods within this historical context.

- Through readings, discussions, and writing, this course will encourage students to interpret medieval art and architecture through informed historical contexts.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION SUMMARY

| | | | |
|-----------------|------|-------------------------|------|
| Attendance | 10 % | Office chat and outline | 15 % |
| Participation | 10 % | Abstract/bibliography | 15 % |
| Short test | 10 % | In-class peer review | 15 % |
| Reading journal | 10 % | Research project | 15 % |

REQUIREMENTS

Required Readings and Works

All required readings are available for free on Canvas, through the library's Course Reserves, or on the internet. A reading schedule will be posted in advance. Monday class meetings will include a discussion of reading assignments.

- For help with writing and citing, we recommend Kate Turabian's Student's Guide to Writing College Papers.

Attendance (10%):

Attendance is required. Extreme tardiness (15+ minutes) and early departures will be considered absences. You are allowed 2 unexcused absences during the semester (lectures and/or discussion sections). Additional absences may be excused if they fall under the university's excused absence policy. Please submit documentation for your absence to the teaching assistants.

See additional information on UFL attendance policy:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Participation (10%):

Students are expected to have read the assigned material before coming to class and to remain engaged. Being "engaged" means active participation through questions, comments, and passive participation by taking notes and paying attention. The second-half of the Monday class period will discuss and workshop key readings and course content.

- ***Electronic devices:*** Computers and tablets are permitted ONLY for note-taking. The TA will monitor computer usage from a seat in the back of the classroom. All other electronic devices—*especially cell phones*—should be turned off and packed away for the duration of class. Inappropriate usage of devices will result in a deduction of the participation grade. Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom setting that is conducive to learning. Be aware that you are not the only person who can see your screen. Respect your classmates and the learning environment by not offering a distraction.

Test/in-class essay (10%):

One short paper at the beginning of the semester will practice important methods to Art History. The paper will analyze and interpret one object or image. This is a graded assignment.

Reading Journal (10%):

Students will take notes, write summaries, ask questions, and make connections in their reading and research journal. Journals will be collected 3 times during the semester. We will begin with a two-part format: summaries, notes, and quotes on one side of the journal and questions and connections on the other. This format may change or evolve during the semester. It is recommended that students use journals every time they are engaging with class material outside of the classroom, including assigned readings, review of lectures, and any other websites, images, or readings related to class. The journals can also be used for notetaking during class. The journal will serve as a foundation for all other assignments in this course.

Bibliography/Abstract (15%):

Each student will develop a topic for research using university library sources. The bibliography will list books and articles that illustrate ideas important to the chosen topic. We will have several in-class workshops that will culminate in a bibliography.

Office chat and outline presentation (15% each):

Meeting with instructor to discuss research project. This will include a presentation and outline of proposed project.

In-class peer review (15%):

Students will bring a draft of the research paper (see research project) to class and conduct a peer review. The review grade will be based on the feedback provided to a fellow student.

Research project (15%):

Based on the outline and bibliography, students will write a research paper on their chosen topic. The paper can be argumentative or analytical and will reflect the process of research, present the subject and primary sources as well as critically evaluate scholarly literature. The rough draft will be subjected to a peer review process and will be substantially revised for the final assignment. The final paper will be a well-written, proofread, and substantially revised version of the draft. It will include proper formatting for footnotes, bibliography, and illustrations.

GRADING SCALE

A 100-93

A- 92-90

| | | | |
|----|-------|----|-------|
| B+ | 89-87 | C- | 72-70 |
| B | 86-83 | D+ | 69-67 |
| B- | 82-80 | D | 66-60 |
| C+ | 79-77 | F | 59-0 |
| C | 76-73 | | |

IMPORTANT DATES

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Drop/Add | January 12 – 16 |
| No Class | January 19 (Martin Luther King Jr. Day) |
| In-class test | February 4 |
| No Class | March 16 – 20 (Spring Break) |
| Bibliography/Abstract | April 3 |
| Peer review | April 13 |
| No Class | April 15 |
| Final Paper due | April 29 |

LINKS AND POLICIES

Academic Honesty. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Accommodation. Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Additional information on university-wide policies and resources such as, email, grading policies, online course evaluation policy, health and wellness, and academic resources can be found at:

<https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>

COURSE SCHEDULE*

Week 1:

(January 12 – 16)

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRO TO MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE

Week 2:

(January 19 – 23)

NO CLASS Monday, January 19 MLK DAY

2. INTRO TO MEDIEVAL ART

Week 3:

(January 26 – 30)

3. INTRO TO RENAISSANCE ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Week 4:

(February 2 – 6)

4. LATE MEDIEVAL PRAGUE

Assignment: In-class test, Wednesday, February 4 (Terminology and Comparison)

Week 5:

(February 9 – 13)

5. LATE MEDIEVAL CENTERS: POLAND AND GERMANY

Week 6:

(February 16 – 20)

6. LATE MEDIEVAL CENTERS: HUNGARY AND ITALY

Week 7:

(February 23 – 27)

7. DEVOTION: IMAGE, SPACE, PRACTICE

Week 8:

(March 2 – 6)

8. REFORMS: RELIGION AND WAR

Week 9:

(March 9 – 13)

9. PEACE AND RECONSTRUCTION

Week 10: SPRING BREAK (March 16 – 20)

Week 11:

(March 23 – 27)

RESEARCH WORKSHOP

Week 12:

(March 30 – April 3)

10. ARCHITECTURE AND THEORY

Bibliography/Abstract due Friday, April 3

Week 13:

(April 6 – 10)

INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS and outline due

Week 14:

(April 13 – 17)

Monday, April 13, In-class peer review

NO CLASS WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15

Week 15:

(April 20 – 22)

11. Conclusions

Last day of class, Wednesday, April 22

Final Research Project due Wednesday, April 29

*This is a tentative schedule subject to change