History of Art
1st Semester: The World of Ancient Art (3000 BCE – 400 CE)

Thematic Units:

* Prehistoric art in Europe: cave paintings, megalithic monuments
* Art of the Minoan and Mycenaean cultures
* Greek art: Geometric, Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic periods
* Etruscan art
* Roman art: portraiture, wall painting, mosaic, architecture (e.g., Colosseum, Pantheon)

Highlighted Works:
*Laocoön Group*, *Parthenon*, Portrait of Augustus, *Column of Trajan*, Pompeian frescoes

Weekly Breakdown (14 weeks)

Week 1: Introduction to the History of Ancient Art

* Definition and methodology of art history
* The meaning of “antiquity”
* Sources: archaeology, iconography, stylistic analysis
* Issues of chronology and dating systems
* Reading and interpreting art historical sources

Week 2: Prehistoric Art in Europe

* Cave paintings of Altamira and Lascaux
* Sculptures: Venus figurines
* Megalithic structures (Stonehenge, Carnac)
* Interpretation of cave paintings: art or magic?

Week 3: Aegean Cultures – Minoan and Mycenaean Art

* Palaces of Crete (Knossos)
* Frescoes and ceramics
* Mycenae: fortress architecture, gold masks
* The role of female representation in Minoan culture

Week 4: Geometric and Archaic Greek Art

* Geometric vase painting
* Archaic sculpture: kouroi and korai
* Beginnings of temple architecture
* Iconography and function of kouros statues

Week 5: Classical Greek Art I – Architecture and Sculpture

* Doric and Ionic styles
* Parthenon and Acropolis
* Phidias and the idealized body
* The Parthenon’s program: religion, politics, beauty

Week 6: Classical Greek Art II – Painting and Ceramics

* Black-figure and red-figure vase painting
* Painting and optical illusion (Zeuxis, Apelles)
* Symposion and visual culture
* The Greek vase as a narrative medium

Week 7: Hellenistic Art

* Realism and emotional expression
* Monumentality and theatricality
* Famous works: *Laocoön Group*, *Winged Victory of Samothrace*
* The aesthetics of expressivity in Hellenism

Week 8: Etruscan Art

* Necropolises and tomb painting
* Bronze sculpture, Etruscan temple architecture
* Etruscan Burial Customs and Art

Week 9: Early Roman Art

* Characteristics of Republican art
* Portraiture and realism
* Beginnings of Roman architecture
* The Roman portrait and social representation

Week 10: Imperial Roman Architecture

* Technical innovations: concrete, vault, dome
* Forums, basilicas, baths
* Colosseum, Pantheon, Forum of Trajan
* The city as a work of art: Roman urban planning

Week 11: Imperial Roman Sculpture and Painting

* Historical reliefs: Column of Trajan
* Funerary sculpture, imperial portraits
* Styles of wall painting (Pompeii)
* The Pompeian house as a space of visual culture

Week 12: Mosaic and Decorative Arts in Antiquity

* Mosaic techniques and themes
* Villa decorations: Southern Italy and North Africa
* Floor mosaics and early Christian precedents
* On the borders of genre: the place of mosaics in art

Week 13: Beginnings of Christian Art (1st–4th centuries CE)

* Development of Christian iconography
* Catacomb painting and symbols
* The first basilicas
* The visual language of Christianity in a pagan world

Week 14: Summary and Closing

* Stylistic overview
* Survival of the classical tradition

**Suggested Readings:**

* Gombrich: *The Story of Art* (relevant chapters)
* Boardman: *Greek Art*
* Kleiner: *Roman Art*
* D. Strong: *Art of Rome*

**Exam Questions (20)**

**Prehistory and ancient civilizations**

**1. Prehistoric art in Europe – Cave painting, stone sculptures, megalithic structures (e.g. Lascaux, Venus of Willendorf, Stonehenge)**

**2. Minoan and Mycenaean art – Palace architecture, wall painting, goldsmithing (Knossos, Lion's Gate, Mask of Agamemnon)**

**Greek art**

**3. Characteristics of geometric and archaic Greek art – Vase painting, kouros and kore, archaic smile**

**4. Classical Greek temple architecture – Doric and Ionic style, Parthenon and Acropolis**

**5. Classical Greek sculpture – Pheidias, Polycleitus, proportions of the human body**

**6. Classical and Hellenistic Greek painting and mosaic – Vases, painting styles, mosaic examples (can also be interpreted based on Pompeii)**

**7. Main characteristics of Hellenistic art – Drama, realism, famous works (Laokoon group, Nike of Samothrace)**

**Etruscan art**

**8. Characteristics of Etruscan art – Tomb painting, sculptures, architecture, relationship with Rome (e.g. Cerveteri, Tarquinia)**

**Roman art**

**9. Development of Roman portraiture – Realism, idealization, imperial portraits (Augustus, Hadrian)**

**10. Innovations in Roman architecture – Arch, dome, concrete, important buildings (Colosseum, Pantheon, baths)**

**11. Roman wall painting and mosaic – Pompeian styles, decoration of residential buildings, themes and techniques**

**12. Roman Reliefs and Historical Depictions** – Column of Trajan, Arch of Titus, victory monuments

**13. Roman Urban Planning and Public Buildings** – Forum, basilica, amphitheatre, roads, and aqueducts

**Christianity and Late Antique Art**

**14. Development of Christian Iconography in Late Antiquity** – Symbols, depictions of Christ, catacomb art

**15. Early Christian Basilica Architecture** – Structure, function, examples (e.g., Lateran Basilica, St Peter’s Basilica)

**16. Birth of Christian Mosaic Art** – Mosaics of Ravenna, iconographic innovations

**17. Comparison of Antique and Christian Aesthetics** – Depiction of nature, representation of the body, abstraction

**Complex and Comparative Topics**

**18. Development of the Human Figure in Ancient Art** – From prehistory to Hellenistic sculpture

**19. Changes in Spatial Representation in Ancient Wall Painting** – From Egypt to Rome

**20. Forms and Functions of Ancient Religious Art** – Pagan cults, Etruscan and Roman temples, visual systems of Christian liturgy