UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Sumptuary Art in the Middle Ages

Code: 100536
ECTS Credits: 6

Degree	Type	Year
Art History	OT	3
Art History	OT	4

Contact

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Teachers

Anna Orriols Alsina

Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the end of this
document.

Prerequisites

- General notion of the historical-artistic period in the context of the history of Western art.

- Sufficient knowledge of English and French (and, if possible, also Italian) that allow the proper use
bibliography and/or electronic resources in these languages.

- The intellectual attitude and level of general culture of a person who, having voluntarily and consciously
enrolled in a university degree, is of course interested in studying and gaining new knowledge.

- It is absolutely essential that both oral and written expression are correct in content and form, as must be
required of anyone who has completed high school and aspires to a university degree, regardless of the
language used.

Objectives and Contextualisation

1- To know and value a chapter frequently excluded from teaching programs and insufficiently highlighted in
some handbooks and studies.

2- To understand and know the relationships between "object arts" and the context in which they have been
created, as well as their different typologies, meanings, functions and readings.

3- To know and learn how to conveniently handle the relevant bibliography and certain electronic resources, insofar as they allow the knowledge provided in the classroom to be expanded and information to be sought when necessary.

4- To consolidate the use of a specific lexicon that allows the correct reading and description of a work, a typology, a technique or an iconographic theme.

Competences

Art History
- Critically analysing from the acquired knowledge a work of art in its many facets: formal values, iconographic significance, artistic techniques and procedures, elaboration process and reception mechanisms.
- Interpreting a work of art in the context in which it was developed and relating it with other forms of cultural expression.
- Recognising the evolution of the artistic imagery from the antiquity to the contemporary visual culture.
- Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.

Learning Outcomes

1. Accurately defining and explaining an artistic object with the specific language of art criticism.
2. Analysing ideas about an artistic phenomenon in a given cultural context.
3. Analysing the creators of an artistic phenomenon in a specific cultural context.
4. Analysing the recipients of an artistic phenomenon in a specific cultural context.
5. Applying the iconographic knowledge to the reading of artistic imagery.
6. Connecting an artistic imagery with other cultural phenomena within its period.
7. Distinguishing the elaboration techniques and processes of an artistic object.
8. Examining an artistic imagery and distinguishing its formal, iconographic and symbolic values.
9. Explaining the reception mechanisms of a work of art.
10. Identifying the artistic imagery, placing it into its cultural context.
11. Reconstructing the artistic outlook of a particular cultural context.

Content

Frequently referred to as "minor arts," sometimes in parallel to a certain contempt that considers them less relevant than other arts, sumptuary arts have exactly the same value as any other artistic manifestation. Beyond their material wealth, most stand out for their formal quality and can offer iconographies as rich and suggestive as any other work in monumental format. Their role in various settings was absolutely relevant in the Middle Ages. Their special nature and mobility have sometimes led them to be protagonists of singular historical and artistic chapters.

The course will deal with the typologies, functions, uses and meanings of the different artistic objects of the medieval world according to chapters specified in the programme. This is not articulated on the basis of types of techniques nor does it attempt to carry out an impossible exhaustive historical or geographical journey through the sumptuous arts of the time. Rather it proposes to delve into the history of medieval art, culture and mentality starting from some of its artefacts, drawing the context in which they arose and were used. In some cases the consideration and vicissitudes of some pieces up to the present (reuse, reinterpretation, remakes...) will also be valued. Both the profane and religious spheres will be taken into account, as well as everyday objects of little material value but of iconographic and symbolic interest. Crowns and sceptres, thrones and chairs, reliquaries, chess sets, liturgical objects, jewellery and amulets... constitute a rare but stimulating way of approaching the intentions, devotions and beliefs of all the strata of the Middle Ages.

PROGRAMME

1.- *Thesaurus*. From medieval treasure to museum. Lives of the sumptuary object.

2.- *Regalia*. The object and the image of lay and ecclesiastical power.

3.- *Loca sancta*. Pilgrimages and relics. From souvenirs to great reliquaries.

4.- *Profana*. Lay objects. Games. Jewels. Textiles.Luxury at the table. Mechanical prodigies.

5.- *Ornamenta ecclesiae*. The object on the liturgical stage. Typologies and functions.

6.- *Marginalia*: amulets, badges and *ex-votos*.

*** The different sections of the programme will not necessarily follow the order in which they appear here, which may vary depending on the argumentative convenience or particular circumstances (possible exhibitions or lectures related to the content of the subject).

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Development of the programme (classroom-based master classes)	50	2	3, 4, 2, 10, 5, 1, 7, 8, 9, 6
Methodology and guidelines for carrying out the classwork	4	0.16	10, 1, 7, 8, 6
Seminar	6	0.24	3, 4, 10, 1
Type: Supervised			
Coursework	45	1.8	5, 1, 7, 8, 6
Type: Autonomous			
Reading of texts indicated by the teacher	15	0.6	
Study (consolidation and expansion of content explained in class through bibliography and other resources)	30	1.2	3, 4, 2, 10, 5, 1, 7, 8, 9, 6

- During classroom-based instruction, the programme will be developed in master class sessions, always with the accompaniment of images and occasionally the reading of texts or the use of some electronic resource. Readings will be assigned and others will be recommended.

- Interventions by students will be welcome, in the form of questions, comments or contribution of complementary information that can generate a debate or lead to other aspects of interest.

- The Virtual Campus /Aules Moodle will be used to provide lists of bibliography, links and other material deemed appropriate, as well as to warn of incidents that may affect the course.

- There will be a regular control of attendance to class. Attendance is necessary to obtain one's own class notes, for a correct understanding of the subjects and for participation in the activities that may be carried out.

- All information regarding readings, tasks, calendar and programmed activities will be provided in the classroom and/or through the Virtual Campus / Aules Moodle. E-mail will only be used when agreed upon by both parties.

- Tutorials are reserved for specific and particular doubts, leaving those of collective interest for interventions in the classroom.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Exercise	20%	0	0	3, 4, 2, 10, 5, 1, 7, 8, 9, 11, 6
Mid-term exam 1	40%	0	0	3, 4, 2, 10, 5, 1, 7, 8, 6
Mid-term exam 2	40%	0	0	3, 4, 2, 10, 5, 1, 7, 6

To pass the subject, students must obtain a grade of no less than 5 out of 10.
A grade of *Not assessable* will be awarded if the student has completed less than 30% of the assessment activities.
When the results of each evaluative activity are published, the procedure and date for grade review will be announced (via Moodle).

The following assessment tasks will be carried out:

A) Two midterm exams
One halfway through the semester and another at the end, covering the material taught in each part. Dates will be set on the first day of class.

B) Exercise
One exercise (worth 20% of the final grade), the format of which will be specified in due course.

Resits (Make-up exams)

A missed exam may be retaken only under the following conditions:

- if it could not be taken at the scheduled time (with valid justification)
- if the final grade is a fail with a score no lower than 3.5

- The resit date is set by the Faculty. No changes or individual exceptions will be allowed. If any changes occur, they will affect the entire group and will be duly communicated.
- The resit exam will follow the same structure as the midterms. The length may vary slightly.
- There is no resit option for classroom exercises; only for exams.

Single assessment

Students opting for single assessment are not exempt from attending class. The only difference is that they will have a single date to complete all assessments for the course.
It will consist of the same components:

- one exam on the course content (80% of the final grade)
- one or two exercises to be specified (20% of the final grade)

Date: A single assessment date will be set within the official period defined by the Faculty.

IMPORTANT

If a student engages in any irregularity that may significantly affect the grade of an assessment task, that task will be given a grade of 0, regardless of any disciplinary process that may follow. If multiple irregularities occur in the assessments of the same subject, the final grade for that subject will be 0.

For this subject, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is allowed only in very specific and justified cases. AI use is permitted exclusively for support tasks, such as proofreading and/or translation, and never for the creation of written exercises. If used (and only when permitted), students must clearly identify the parts generated with AI tools and specify which tools were used.
Lack of transparency in the use of AI in any assessed activity will be considered academic dishonesty and may result in partial or total penalisation of the activity's grade, or more serious sanctions in severe cases.

Assessment tasks involving irregularities are not eligible for resits.

It is not permitted to take photographs in class or record sessions by any means.

Bibliography

Bibliographic selection (general works)

* The virtual campus will provide a broader list of bibliography, especially exhibition catalogues, which are essential for the subject.

Monographic studies and scientific articles will be cited in due time.

Leader-Newby, Ruth E., *Silver and Society in Late Antiquity. Functions and Meanings of Silver Plate in the Fourth to Seventh Centuries*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2004.

Sena Chiesa, Gemma (ed.), *Gemme dalla corte imperiale alla corte celeste*, Hoepli / Università degli Studi di Milano, Milà, 2002.

Caillet, Jean-Pierre, Bazin, Pierre (dirs.), *Les Trésors de sanctuaires, de l'Antiquité à l'époque romane*, Nanterre, Université de Paris-X (Cahier du Centre de recherches sur l'Antiquité tardive et le haut Moyen Âge, 7), Picard, París, 1996.

Burkart, Lucas. *et al.*, *Le trésor au Moyen Âge. Discours, pratiques et objets*, SISMEL (Micrologus Library, 32)-Edizioni del Galluzzo, Florència, 2010.

Cordez, Philippe, *Trésor, mémoire, merveilles. Les objets des églises au Moyen âge*, EHESS, París, 2016.

Cutler, Anthony, *The Craft of Ivory. Sources, techniques and uses in the Mediterranean World: AD 200-1400*, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, 1985.

Cabrol, Henri; Leclercq, Fernand [& Marrou, Henri-Irenée], *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (DACL), 15 vols., Letouzey et Ané, París, 1905-1953.

Perrin, Joel; Vasco Rocca, Sandra, *Thesaurus. Objets religieux du culte catholique/ Religious Objects of the Catholic Faith / Corredo ecclesiastico di culto cattolico*, edició trilingüe francès / anglès / italià, Éditions du Patrimoine, París, 1999.

Castelfranchi Vegas, Liana, *Lo splendore nascosto del Medioevo. Arti minori: una storia parallela, V-XIV secolo*, Jaca Book, Milà, 2005] trad. castellana: *Esplendor oculto de la Edad Media. Artes menores, una historia paralela siglos V-XIV*, Lunwerg, Barcelona, 2005].

Hourihane, Colum, *From minor to major. The minor arts in Medieval Art History*, Penn State University Press, University Park, 2012.

Lasko, Peter, *Arte sacro, 800-1200*, Cátedra (Manuales Arte), Madrid, 1999. [Ed. or. anglesa: *Ars sacra, 800-1200*, 2a ed. Yale 1994 (1ª ed. 1972)].

Gaborit-Chopin, Danielle, *Ivoires du Moyen Age*, Office du Livre, Friburg, 1978.

Gauthier, Marie-Madeleine, *Émaux du Moyen Age occidental*, Office du Livre, Friburg, 1972.

Gauthier, M.-M., *Catalogue international de l'œuvre de Limoges - Époque romane (tome I)*, Paris, Éditions du CNRS, París, 1987.

Gauthier, M.-M.,; Gaborit, D.; Antoine, Élisabeth (dir.), *Corpus des émaux méridionaux. Catalogue international de l'Œuvre de Limoges*, *Tome II, l'Apogée 1190-1215*, Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques (CTHS), París, 2011.

Gaborit-Chopin, D.; Tixier, F., *L'oeuvre de Limoges et sa diffusion. Trésors, objets, collections*, Presses Universitaires de rennes - Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Rennes - Paris, 2011.

García de Castro Valdés, César, *Signvm Salvtis. Cruces de orfebrería de los siglos V al XII*, Consejería de Cultura y Turismo del Principado de Asturias / KRK Ediciones, Oviedo, 2008.

Gauthier, Marie-Madeleine, *Les routes de la foi. Reliques et reliquiaires de Jerusalemà Compostela*, Bibliothèque des Arts, París 1983. Hi ha ed. en anglès.

Bozóky, Eva, Helvétius A.-M. (dir.), *Les reliques. Objets, cultes, symboles*, Brepols, Turnhout, 1999.

Hetherington, Paul, *Enamels, Crowns, Relics and Icons. Studies on Luxury Arts in Byzantium*, Ashgate Variorum, Farnham, 2008.

Robinson, J. *Finer then gold. Saints and relics in the Middle Ages*, The British Museum Press, Londres, 2011.

Hahn, Cynthia, , *Strange Beauty. Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries, 400 -circa 1204*, Penn State University Press, University Park, 2012.

Bruna, Denis, *Enseignes de pèlerinage et enseignes profanes dans les collections du musée national du Moyen Âge*, Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, París, 1996.

Bruna, Denis, *Enseignes de plomb et autres menues chosettes du Moyen Âge*, Le Léopard d'Or, París, 2006.

Bruna, D., *Saints et diables au chapeau. Bijoux oubliés du Moyen Âge*, Seuil, París, 2007.

Gudiol i Cunill, Josep, *Nocions d'arqueologia sagrada catalana*, Vic 1931-1933 [2a ed.; 1a ed., 1902] Apartats dedicats a arts sumptuàries i indumentària dels caps. VI-VIII.

Arts de l'objecte (col. L'Art gòtic a Catalunya), Enciclopèdia Catalana, Barcelona, 2008.

Hahn, Cynthia, *Passion Relics and the Medieval Imagination: Art, Architecture, and Society*, University of California Press, 2020.

Lund, Julie & Semple, Sarah (eds.), *A Cultural History of Objects in the Medieval Age*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2022.

Grandet, Matthieu & Goret, Jean-François, *Echecs et trictrac: Fabrication et usages des jeux de table au Moyen-Âge*, Errance, París 2012.

Electronic resources

* other resources of a more specific type will be mentioned throughout the course.

Metropolitan New York: http://www.metmuseum.org

British Museum London: http://www.britishmuseum.org/

Victoria & Albert, London: http://www.vam.ac.uk

Louvre Paris: http://www.louvre.fr

Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des monnaies, médailles et antiques [Cabinet des Médailles] Paris: http://www.bnf.fr/visiterichelieu/collections/mma_cp.htm

Treasures of Heaven (exhibition) http://www.learn.columbia.edu/treasuresofheaven/

Software

No specific software is required.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this link. To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed