Sapphic Modernities

Romaine Brooks, Self-Portrait, 1923 / Marie Laurencin, Femmes à la colombe, 1919 / Gerda Wegener, Lili med fjerkost, 1920

ARH 6496 Modern Art Seminar
School of Art + Art History, College of the Arts, University of Florida
Fall 2023
Credits: 3
Course Fees: $12.25

Tuesdays
Periods 9–11 | 4:05–7:05pm
FAC 116A

INSTRUCTOR
Professor Rachel Silveri
Email & Office Phone
rsilveri@arts.ufl.edu
352-273-3053

Office
FAC 119B
Office Hours
Tue. 1:00–3:00pm

Course Description and Objectives
This graduate seminar considers how visual artists played a central role in the development of queer and lesbian subcultures in the early decades of the twentieth century in Europe. It takes as its premise the fact that a fundamental part of modernity was the shifting terrain of social and sexual norms that enabled the emergence of queer and nonnormative ways of living. In short, “becoming non-heterosexual was synonymous with becoming modern,” as the architectural historian Jasmine Rault writes of this time. Engaged with the concept of “sapphic modernity” as it has been developed in adjacent humanities disciplines (literature, architecture, media studies), the purpose of this class is to explore and theorize the value of “sapphic modernity” for the discipline of art history. Considering Left Bank Paris, Bloomsbury London, and Weimar-era Berlin, it centers on several important case studies, including Marie Laurencin, Natalie Barney, Romaine Brooks, Gluck, and Jeanne Mammen, among others. Units on transgender modernisms, as well as readings on Claude Cahun and Lili Elbe, will allow students to explore the potential trans, genderqueer, and nonbinary aspects of sapphic modernity.

CAA Advancing Art & Design awarded this class one of its Art History Fund for Travel to Special Exhibitions grants. With this support, our seminar will travel to Philadelphia to see the Marie Laurencin: Sapphic Paris exhibition. In addition, with the support of the School of Art + Art History’s Harn Eminent
Scholar Chair in Art History (HESCAH) endowment, Dr. David Getsy will be invited to campus for a guest lecture and will conduct a seminar on transgender methods in art history for this class.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Seminar Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Presentations</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response Papers</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper Abstract &amp; Bibliography</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper Presentation</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
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Completion of all presentations and assignments is necessary to pass the course.

For more information on UF’s grading policies and assigning grade points, see: [https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx](https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>% Equivalency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 and above</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 to 93</td>
<td>3.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 to 89</td>
<td>3.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 to 86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 to 82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 to 79</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73 to 76</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70 to 72</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>63 to 66</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60 to 62</td>
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<td>E, I, NG, WF</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
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**Assignments**

**Weekly Presentations**
To facilitate discussion, many of the assigned readings will be presented in-class by seminar participants. The goal of such presentations is to unpack the main arguments and critical stakes of the readings; relate them to other texts, issues, or works already discussed; and raise questions about them for discussion. Other presentations might focus on artworks related to the readings. Presentations should be 5–10 minutes in length. Students should expect to make two or three of these presentations throughout the semester.

**Response Papers**
Throughout the semester, students will be responsible for short, weekly response papers. For every class, students will be expected to turn in one response (total) summarizing the assigned readings; this response paper should be a short 1–2 pages total. (The page count is per class, not per text, i.e., if there are four readings assigned, you should summarize them all together in a 1–2-page response). Your response
should briefly state the main argument of each reading, its methodology (how the argument is made, how the author arrives at their claims), and the materials (texts, artworks, theories) that it examines.

**Final Paper Abstract & Bibliography**
In advance of their final projects, students will prepare an abstract of 500 words outlining the scope of their topic and the issues/materials to be examined. They will also include a preliminary bibliography of at least ten scholarly texts.

**Final Paper Presentation**
Students will present a polished, conference-style presentation of their final paper to the class, complete with a PowerPoint of related images. Presentations should be 15–20 minutes in length.

**Final Paper**
The final research paper should be at least 15 pages in length and demonstrate significant research, original argumentation, clearly defined critical stakes, and mastery of the related secondary literature. It should also incorporate feedback and suggestions from the final project presentation. Plagiarism, in part or in full, will be grounds for failing the course.

In lieu of a final research paper, MFA students are welcome to produce a new, original studio work that is both substantial and directly related to the themes of the class. (Studio works previously created or done on assignment for another course will not count). An artist statement should accompany the work.

Students should discuss their final projects with the instructor in advance.

All assignments must be in Times New Roman 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. Please number the pages. Any citations must be done in Chicago-style.


**Readings**
All assigned readings will be available either on reserve at the Architecture & Fine Arts Library or made available online through the Canvas e-Learning Course Website. All readings must be completed before each class. Please bring copies of the readings to class with you and be prepared to discuss them.

**Attendance, Participation, Due Dates**
Attendance in seminar is mandatory. Any absences that are incurred as a consequence of illness, religious observance, or family emergency will be excused; please simply inform the instructor and, in the case of illness, provide a doctor's note.

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and to actively participate throughout our seminar discussions. Active participation means continually engaging and contributing to seminar conversations throughout the entire semester, coming to class having completed all the readings and being ready to discuss them (consulting images, identifying puzzling aspects of the texts, highlighting passages for analysis, raising questions for discussion), and being respectful of your instructor and peers.

All assignments must be turned in on time. Late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for every twenty-four hours past their due date (i.e., from an A to an A-). Any extensions on assignments and the acceptance of late submissions are solely at the instructor’s discretion.
Requirements for class attendance, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:
https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx

Course Policies & Additional Information

Land Acknowledgement
The University of Florida rests on the traditional lands of the Potano, Timucua, and Seminole peoples, territories which later had long ties with the Miccosukee and Mascogo peoples as well. As one of the 52 land-grab universities in the United States, the University of Florida has benefited from the forced cession and sale of 90,226 acres of Indigenous lands from 121 Tribal Nations under the Morrill Act of 1862.

Please learn more at the Land-Grab Universities Project and Native Land Digital:
https://www.landgrabu.org/universities/university-of-florida
https://native-land.ca/

As faculty, I recognize and respect these Indigenous communities past, present, and future, and honor the ongoing important work of dismantling settler colonialism.

Email
Announcements about the class will be sent out over email. Please check your UF email regularly. If you send the professor any emails, please do so from your official UF account and practice email etiquette and courtesy when messaging (write a clear subject line, include a salutation and closing, address your instructor as “Professor” or “Dr.,” etc.). If your professor sends you an email answering a question or providing research advice, please consider saying thank you.
For more information on email etiquette, see the guide from Inside Higher Education:
https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/04/16/advice-students-so-they-dont-sound-silly-emails-
essay

Disability Accommodations
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.

College of the Arts Mission
The University of Florida College of the Arts intends to be a transformative community, responding to and generating paradigmatic shifts in the arts and beyond. We do so by:
• Embracing the complexity of our evolving human experience and seeking to empower our students, faculty, and staff to shape that experience fearlessly through critical study, creative practice, and provocation
• Collaborating effectively with the forces of change
• Preparing students to access and unsettle centers of power in a radically changing world
• Facilitating an arts education that will position emerging artists and researchers as catalysts for equity on local and global levels

School of Art + Art History Mission and Values
Mission Statement:
The School of Art + Art History nurtures a culture of critical inquiry in our scholarly and creative work. Our educational mission is to empower each student with knowledge, skills, and insight to engage thoughtfully with our changing world.

*Values Statement:*
We believe in community and transformation. We aspire to be courageous, generous, and engaged.

- **Community:** We foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community through mutual respect and acceptance.
- **Transformation:** We pursue positive transformation and impact through education, research, and creative works.
- **Courage:** We ask challenging questions, take risks, and strive for excellence.
- **Generosity:** We assume the best in others and enable a culture where everyone can flourish.
- **Engagement:** We believe the diverse contributions of art, design, and scholarship are critical to our community and beyond.

*Diversity*
We will explore the content of this course in a way that is respectful of diversity—including gender identity, sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, ability, socioeconomic class, nationality, religion, and culture. Throughout, this course explores diverse points of view, which might be challenging. Maintaining a respectful environment will be the responsibility of both the students and the instructor. This course is intended to serve students from all backgrounds and perspectives and is based upon the premise that the diversity which students bring to the classroom is a resource, strength, and benefit. Throughout the semester, your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

*Critical Thinking, Honest Questions, & Open Debate*
Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint, or belief.

People learn best when they are encouraged to ask questions and express their diverse opinions on course content which may include images, texts, data, or theories from many fields. This is especially true in courses that deal with provocative or contemporary issues. UF offers many such courses, in which students encounter concepts of race, color, sex, and/or national origin. We teach these important issues because understanding them is essential for anyone who seeks to make economic, cultural, and societal contributions to today’s complex world. With this in mind, we do not limit access to, or classroom discussion of, ideas and opinions—including those that some may find uncomfortable, unwelcome, disagreeable, or even offensive. In response to challenging material, students and instructors are encouraged to ask honest questions and thoughtfully engage one another’s ideas. But hostility, disruptive and disrespectful behavior, and provocation for provocation’s sake have no place in a classroom; reasonable people disagree reasonably. These guidelines can help instructors and students as they work together to fulfill the mission of the University of Florida, which includes the exploration of intellectual boundaries, the creation of new knowledge, and the pursuit of new ideas.

*Evaluations*
Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at [https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/](https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/).
Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

**University of Florida Student Honor Code**

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.’”

In addition to The Honor Pledge, students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the Student Honor and Conduct Codes, both of which are available in full here: https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/

UF’s policies regarding academic honesty, the Honor Code, and the Conduct Code will be strictly enforced. Plagiarism, in part or in full, will be grounds for failing the course.

**Campus Resources: Health and Wellness**

**U Matter, We Care:** If you are in distress or have a friend who is, please contact “U Matter, We Care” so that a team member can reach out to the student.

- Email: umatter@ufl.edu
- Phone: 352-392-1575
- Website: http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/

**Counseling and Wellness Center:**

- Address: 3190 Radio Road, Gainesville, FL 32611
- Phone: 352-392-1575
- Website: https://counseling.ufl.edu/

**Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), at the Student Health Care Center:**

- Phone: 352-392-1161
- Website: http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/sexual_violence

**Campus Resources: Academic**

**The Writing Studio,** 2215 Turlington Hall, offers help with brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers, as well as online tutoring.

- Phone: 352-846-1138
- Website: http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/

**Academic Resources,** 1317 Turlington Hall, for tutoring and strengthening study skills.

- Email: teaching-center@ufl.edu
- Phone: 352-392-6420
- Website: https://academicresources.clas.ufl.edu/

**Harn Museum of Art,** 3259 Hull Road, excellent collection on campus with more than 10,000 works of art; offers free student memberships that include admission to 75+ museums nationwide, invitations to museum events, and more.

- Phone: 352-392-9826
- Website: http://harn.ufl.edu/
**Resources for Art Historical Research:**


UF Libraries Inter-Library Loan Service: [https://uflib.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/FUG/logon.html](https://uflib.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/FUG/logon.html)

Journals:

Databases:
*WorldCat, JSTOR, Artstor, Oxford Art Online* – access through UF Libraries Catalogue.

Chicago Manuel of Style Quick Guide for Citations:
[https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

**Important Dates to Remember**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, September 28</td>
<td>HESCAH Lecture by Dr. David Getsy, 6:00–7:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, September 29</td>
<td>Master Class with Dr. David Getsy, location and time TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 12</td>
<td>Final Project Abstract &amp; Bibliography Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Travel to the Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, November 28</td>
<td>Final Presentations (Day 1/2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, December 5</td>
<td>Final Presentations (Day 2/2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, December 11</td>
<td>Final Papers Due</td>
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**Schedule**

The schedule may change slightly during the semester in response to the needs of the class.

**Week 1**
Tuesday, August 29: To the Seminar! Overview + Introductions

**Week 2**
Tuesday, September 5: Theorizing Sexuality and Gender

**Week 3**
Tuesday, September 12: Lesbian Modernism: Establishing the Field(s)

**Week 4**
Tuesday, September 19: Trans Modernisms
Week 5
Tuesday, September 26: Abstract Bodies, Queer Behavior, Transgender Capacity

☞ Thursday, September 28  HESCAH Lecture: Dr. David Getsy, “Chic Radicals: Street Drag as Critical Performance Art in the 1970s,” Harn Museum of Art, 6:00–7:00pm, followed by reception

☞ Friday, September 29  Master Class with Dr. David Getsy, location and time TBA

Week 6
Tuesday, October 3: Decadent Origins & Symbolist Narcissism

Week 7
Tuesday, October 10: Haunting – Specters – Lesbian Invisibility

☞ Thursday, October 12 by 11:59am  Final Paper Abstract + Bibliography Due

Week 8
Tuesday, October 17: Panic – Scandal – Interwar Anxieties

Week 9
Tuesday, October 24: Sex Sells! Mass Culture, Eroticism, & Censorship

Week 10
Tuesday, October 31: Spaces: The Street, Bookstore, Bar, Salon, & Home

Week 11
Tuesday, November 7: Masculinities (Brooks, Gluck, Stein)

Week 12
Tuesday, November 14: Femininities (Laurencin, Garland, Elbe)

Week 13
Tuesday, November 21: No Class (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 14
Tuesday, November 28: Final Presentations (1/2)
Week 15
Tuesday, December 5: Final Presentations (2/2)

☞ Monday, December 11 by 11:59am Final Paper Due