

northwestern university
DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY

Quarter/Year

Course Number

Day/Time

Instructor

Winter 2017

ART-HIST 410

M 2:00-5:00

Gunter

Studies in Ancient Art: Ornament



What is ornament, and how do we describe and analyze it? What are some of the main theoretical approaches to exploring major traditions of ornament in various geographical and cultural spheres? Why has the study of ornament played such a major role in the development of art history as a discipline, and how has that historiography shaped current scholarship?

This course offers the opportunity to engage with key texts in the study of ornament, including contributions by G. Semper, A. Riegl, E. H.

Gombrich, and O. Grabar. Examples selected for detailed discussion are primarily drawn from the ancient to Late Antique Mediterranean world and its neighbors in the Near East and Central Asia. Topics include plant, animal, and geometric ornament; ornament and writing; representation and abstraction; ornament and architecture; cross-media exchange; and cross-cultural interaction.

Required Textbooks

Readings will be made available on Canvas.

Assessments

Seminar participation (30%), reading responses (20%), catalogue entries (20%), research paper (30%).