

Quarter/Year

Fall 2019

Course Number

ART-HIST 340-2

Day/Time

TR 12:30-1:50

Instructor

Swan

Course Title

Rembrandt

Degree/Distro Fulfillment

300-level in Renaissance/Baroque  
Distro: Historical Studies, Lit & Fine Arts



Who was Rembrandt and (why) are his works still relevant? The Dutch artist is celebrated as the inventor of the selfie; as a master of landscape, portraiture, and history (narrative) paintings; and as an experimental printmaker. He experimented throughout his life with materials, media, and genres. His most famous work, *The Nightwatch*, updated the sober conventions of group portraiture in ways we are still accounting for. He was a Dutchman by birth and never left his native country, but has been claimed as an intrinsically German and even a modern artist.

Timed to coincide with the 350th anniversary of the death of Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669), “Rembrandt Year 2019,” this lecture course offers students an introduction to the works, life, and critical legacy of the seventeenth-century Dutch artist. By the end of the quarter, students will be familiar with the most central aspects of his art, its primary themes and concerns; the place of Rembrandt’s oeuvre within early modern art in a general sense; and the ways in which his memory has been preserved and his efforts

celebrated over the intervening centuries. We will also consider the matter of connoisseurship (“who done it?”) with direct reference to workshop practice, considering technological methods of analysis. This course coincides with a stunning exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago of Dutch and Flemish Drawings, which we will visit. Topics to be addressed include but are not limited to: Rembrandt Storyteller; early modern self-portraiture; Rembrandt experimental printmaker; Rembrandt and the Dutch landscape; the representation of the passions; Rembrandt and classical antiquity; Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt (connoisseurship and attribution); the representation of women; sight and blindness; Rembrandt and film; and Rembrandt collector.

Required Textbooks

None; all readings will be available via PDF or at University Library. Recommended: Mariët Westermann, *Rembrandt* (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), any edition.

Assessments

Attendance and participation; assignments include three brief written assignments, two brief in-class presentations, and one longer research paper.