

northwestern university
DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY

Quarter/Year	Course Number	Day/Time	Instructor
Spring 2019	ART-HIST 349	TR 11-12:20	Swan
Course Title			Degree/Distro Fulfillment
Early Modern Art: Materiality and Experience			



The materiality of art is obvious—and central to how art looks, how it means, and how it endures. This new course is designed as a survey of current discussions of the materiality of objects and works of art made during the early modern era (c. 1400-1700). Works in a variety of materials—ivory, wax, woods, feathers, shells and mother-of-pearl, oil paint, lacquer, metal, fresco, stone—populate a series of case studies drawn from European, Mesoamerican, and East Asian workshops. In addition to learning about what goes into making an early modern work of art, students will trace the geographies of materials, and the ways in which materials, format, and durability all affect the viewer’s experience. Students will read, analyze, and discuss current research on the makings of art, on theories of the materiality of art, and problems in conservation of art—and will participate in close examination of works in the collections of the Block Museum of Art, the Art

Institute of Chicago, and the Loyola University Museum of Art. (Admission to collections is free; travel is available on the intercampus shuttle.) Prior coursework (AH 250 or AH 330) is beneficial but not required.

Image: Antonio Abondio, Wax relief portrait miniature of Anne of Austria, on obsidian, 1618

Required Textbooks	Assessments
Readings will be made available via CANVAS and/or on Library Reserve	Five short written assignments in response to texts or works; one 10-page final paper.