

ARTH 4383: Art History Seminar
Spring 2026
CRN 21332
Dr. Melissa Warak

***Note: seminar students will follow primarily the ARTH 3399 course schedule and policies and will be added to the respective ARTH 3399 Blackboard page. See the final page for requirements. Seminar students should use exam times to do research on their own in the library.**

Seminar Paper Requirements

The primary focus of the art history seminar is a **seminar paper**, which is a research project of circa fifteen to twenty pages. This project will allow you to practice several different skillsets in art history, including conducting art historical research, narrowing a thesis, creating bibliographies, giving an oral presentation, and crafting a project from a single methodology. The end goal is a publication-quality essay that contributes something original to the field of modern or contemporary art history. Students will need to **meet with Dr. Warak (virtually or in person) every two to three weeks** to discuss progress on the seminar paper.

The project will be completed in different stages. Components will include a **prospectus**, an **annotated bibliography**, an **outline**, a paper **draft**, a fifteen-minute **research presentation** in class, and a **final paper**. Students should submit drafts of each section (listed below) for feedback from the professor. Students will then revise these for the combined final submission at the end of the semester. Students will receive editorial suggestions from Dr. Warak on all parts of the project (email sections as Word .docx documents to mcwarak@utep.edu to receive electronic edits; Dr. Warak will send an email to confirm receipt). The final project will be turned in via SafeAssign on the ARTH 4383 Blackboard page. Dr. Warak will make notes on a grade sheet and submit it to Blackboard.

THE USE OF AI (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE) PROGRAMS IS PROHIBITED FOR THIS PROJECT. SEE THE AI POLICY IN THE COURSE SYLLABUS.

Key due dates:

Week of February 2-6: seminar paper prospectus due (two paragraphs)

Week of February 23-27: annotated bibliography due (eight sources annotated)

Week of March 9-13: outline of seminar paper due

Week of April 13-17: draft of paper due

April 29-30: practice talks for in-class presentations

May 4: research presentations in class

May 15: final papers and other compiled material due by 11:59 p.m. by SafeAssign on Blackboard

Late penalties:

Note that all items listed above will incur a three-point deduction from the final seminar paper grade per day that they are late (per the time stamp of the email sent; items should be submitted by Friday at 11:59 pm of the week that they are due). Missed research meetings will incur a ten-point deduction from the final grade.

The **May 15 deadline** for the final paper is absolute and no projects may be submitted after that date, so please plan accordingly.

Seminar Paper Topic

You have a lot of freedom in the topic of your investigation, but unless it is a thematic topic, I recommend focusing on one or two artists at most. You will want to choose a topic about which you can form an argument or thesis (not a fact, but something that can be argued the other way as well). Your research will then focus on supporting your thesis. Your paper will use images to illustrate your ideas. You will want to choose an angle of interpretation and a methodology for your research; these include investigations of style, formal elements, social history, cultural history, artist's biography and/or psychology, iconography, or even a theoretical basis. When you submit your paper topic, keep it under a page and make sure to include the artist(s) or object(s) of your investigation. We will revise the scope of your topic together.

Thesis Statement

What is a thesis? It is the **argument** that you are making about your work of art. It is not the same thing as a topic sentence. All of your research and your interpretation should relate to this thesis. A thesis statement needs to be made early in a paper to direct the reader to the main points of the paper, all of which should tie back to the argument. A thesis is different in a scholarly book than it is in a journal article, so it may be helpful to consider the strength of the thesis statements in the scholarly articles we read for class. In art history, a thesis is not a given fact (though it may contain facts), but rather, a particular claim that is based on research and that may be argued a different way. A thesis is also not an opinion ("X's work was beautiful and important"), nor is it a generalization ("X's work was groundbreaking and unique"). A good thesis attempts to interpret works of art in a new way so as to add to the discourse or the body of literature around a work of art, an artist, or a movement. Some students find it helpful to start a thesis statement by writing, "This paper will argue that..." and then completing the interpretive concept. You may want to start with a broad thesis and edit it in a more narrow and specific way as you write your paper.

Starting Research

You will need to devise some keyword searches to find the sources for your project. WorldCat is a good place to search for books about your topic. On the UTEP library webpage, you can find some of the most useful article databases include Oxford Art Online, JSTOR, Art Source, Grove Encyclopedia of Art, and the Bibliography of the History of Art (BHA), which is available for free at <https://www.getty.edu/research/tools/bha/index.html>. One of your challenges will be to find quality reputable scholarship. Wikipedia is not peer-reviewed and is thus not reputable, but some entries have bibliographies at the end and those may be useful. Major peer-reviewed research journals for art history include *The Art Bulletin*, *Art Journal*, *Leonardo*, *The Burlington Magazine*, *Art News*, *ArtForum*, *American Art*, *Winterthur Portfolio*, *Art International*, *Studio International*, *October*, *Grey Room*, *Flash Art*, and *Art History* (published in the UK). These are good places to search for scholarly articles in English, but there are many other good journals as well. If there are books or articles in other languages, you should include them here and attempt to understand the thesis of these publications. You should be able to use **Interlibrary Loan** (ILLIAD on the UTEP library website; create a free account at <https://utep.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/logon.html>) for books and articles that we do not have at UTEP's library and that are not available from its databases. It may take several weeks to receive items from ILL, though articles and PDFs of book chapters are often delivered within a week.

Annotated Bibliography

In the course of doing your research, you should create a bibliography (a list of books, articles, etc.) with Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) annotations, which are evaluations of each of those sources. Each entry of your annotated bibliography should include a full CMS bibliographic entry followed by its annotation. Your final annotated bibliography should include a **minimum of fifteen sources**, which may include **books (research monographs or edited volumes with multiple authors), museum catalog essays, scholarly articles, newspaper articles, interviews, and web sources**. You should discuss the distribution of sources necessary for your project with Dr. Warak. Your bibliography entries should be listed alphabetically by the author's last name.

An **annotation** is a (**minimum five-sentence**) description of the source and / or what information from it may be useful to your project. Your annotations should include both the author's focus or argument and an analysis of what is useful to your project. It is a great idea to include page numbers of quotes and ideas that you may want to use in your paper. Dr. Warak can provide examples. For all questions pertaining to grammar, syntax, footnoting and style, see the latest edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style](#). Annotations are usually **single-spaced**.

Citing Sources in Footnotes

Your paper should include **Chicago style footnotes** citing the research you reference. This is a common citation style for the humanities; we generally do not use parenthetical citations. These numbers should be in superscript and consecutive numbers (do not repeat any numbers, even if you are using the same source).

The point of a footnote is to give credit to the author and to point your reader to where they may find the information. It is not the same thing as a works cited page. You need to footnote anything in your paper that 1) is not your idea and 2) is not "common knowledge" to the general public. It is better to err on the side of caution with footnotes. Footnote all of your research, including biographical details on your artists. A paper of this length would probably have a minimum of 45 footnotes. All quotations must be cited with a footnote and you should introduce the quotations in your text (e.g. "In her book *The Best Book Ever*, Dr. Jane Doe writes, "... <footnote here in superscript>"). The tutorials in the Indiana University Plagiarism Quiz will be useful in helping you understand what you need to cite. I have posted samples of Chicago style citations on Blackboard, but also see chicagomanualofstyle.org for help. You may also want to use EndNote to organize your research, and you can create a free UTEP account here: <http://libguides.utep.edu/endnoteweb>.

Outline

This is where you will create a map of the paper you will write. Make this as detailed as possible with Roman numerals for each section (including introduction and conclusion). You should include your **tentative thesis statement** at the beginning and **works of art** that you want to discuss as well (artist last name, *title*, date). Aim to make your outline at least two pages, single-spaced. Please do not include full paragraphs. See [here](#) if you need help understanding what an outline does.

Paper Draft

The more thorough you make this, the better your edits from Dr. Warak will be. Research citations (footnotes) need to be in place in your draft and preferably in the correct format. There might be slight deviations from

your outline; in this case, adjust your outline as well. You can add in questions for Dr. Warak inside [brackets]. It's also good to **highlight these in another color**.

Follow your approved or revised outline as you write. Your introduction should indicate the issues at hand with your topic and should explicitly state your thesis. Your conclusion should tie together the different sections of your paper and address lines of inquiry that you would make for future research. Some students like to write the introduction and conclusion last, so these sections do not have to be fully completed at the time that you submit the draft.

Include your **images and image list** in your draft. You must include images for every work of art that you discuss in any detail in your paper, even if you mention a work by another artist as a point of comparison. You should number them Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, etc. in your text and images should go at the end of your paper in the order that they appear in the text. You should create an image list that includes identifying information for each work. The **image list** should include the following for each work: figure number in your paper, artist's full name, title of work (in *italics*), date, medium (oil on canvas, etc.), dimensions in inches, owning institution. Here is an example:

Figure 1. Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa (La Gioconda)*, ca. 1503-1519. Oil on wood, 2'6" x 1'9" (77 x 53 cm). The Louvre, Paris.

<include image here>

Research Presentation (in class)

At the end of the course, each student will make a fifteen-minute presentation on their research project and findings. You should use detailed notes or a script to keep you on track and to time. You will need to include images, either in a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation. A fifteen-minute presentation will be about seven double-spaced pages of script. A good guideline for the PowerPoint presentation is to show a slide for a minute or more each, so you probably don't want more than fifteen slides total. Make sure to practice your presentation out loud, time it with your images, and speak slowly! Public speaking is, of course, a major fear for many of us. Fear not. You will be the expert on your topic. Not only will you shine, but you will do it with style and sophistication. You will not turn in anything for the presentation and we will schedule a practice run of your talk for the week before you present.

Final Paper

After receiving feedback from Dr. Warak on your draft, you should work on editing your paper toward the final version. The seminar paper will be a **minimum of 5,000 words** (about fifteen pages) of text, exclusive of footnotes, bibliography, etc. The UTEP Writing Center (at the library) can help finesse your grammar, style, and syntax.

Indiana University Plagiarism Tutorial and Quiz

<https://plagiarism.iu.edu/index.html>. Complete the Basic (<https://plagiarism.tedfrick.me/tutorials/task1/>) and Novice (<https://plagiarism.tedfrick.me/tutorials/task2/>) level tutorials. Next, take the four-question practice quiz at the end of the Novice level. You need 3 out of 4 correct to pass. Take a screenshot of your results and attach it to your paper. If you are doing a certification test (more than four questions), go back; you are doing too much.

What to Compile for Your Seminar Paper Project

Compile these into a single Word document or PDF and upload them to the SafeAssign link in the ARTH 4383 Blackboard page. Use the file name <your last name.your first name.Seminar Project.pdf>. Your final submission should include the following in this order:

- 1) your final seminar paper with Chicago style footnotes
- 2) image list
- 3) images labeled Figure 1 and so forth
- 4) your revised prospectus
- 5) your revised outline
- 6) your revised annotated bibliography with all sources annotated
- 7) a screenshot of your Indiana University plagiarism quiz results

Every part of your project should be **typed, double-spaced, have one-inch margins, have page numbers, and use a professional 12-point font**. Your paper itself should have a **title page** with your paper title, your name, the course name, and the date; you do not need to repeat this information again in the paper.

Research and Writing Help

Students may want to reach out to a librarian at the **UTEP library** for research help. Ms. Joy Urbina, Information Literacy Librarian, specializes in helping students navigate appropriate resources for research. Her email is jurbina4@utep.edu and you may schedule an appointment with her [here](#). Students who are concerned about the quality of their writing should contact the [University Writing Center](#) and make an appointment well before the paper's deadline. The UWC staff can help you organize your ideas and it is a terrific idea to take your paper to them for proofreading. They have eagle eyes for comma errors, awkward phrasing, homonyms (their, there, they're), and everything else you can imagine. You may also discuss your paper with Dr. Warak at any time during office hours.

SafeAssign, AI, and Plagiarism

Dr. Warak will check all papers using AI detection software. Any paper that plagiarizes material or uses AI to write it will receive a zero or will be reported to the [Office of Community Standards](#). SafeAssign will give me a time stamp, an Originality Report, and show everything you uploaded. I recommend that you submit your paper twice. Submit it once, check SafeAssign for the Originality Report, which will show you if you have forgotten to cite material with a footnote, and then submit a second version if you need to make revisions. SafeAssign will catch plagiarized material and even closely similar material, so be diligent about using your own ideas in your work. That said, **SafeAssign will flag your quotations and footnotes**, so your Originality Report should not be 0%; this would mean you have exhibited no research. Instead, aim for under 35% match on the Originality Report. It is your job as a UTEP student to know and understand the [UTEP policy](#) on academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty.

To Do Before Submitting Your Paper

- Make sure that you have **covered all required parts of the paper** and that you reach the word count.
- Use the **grading rubric** to your advantage; it shows where your points will go.
- Make sure that your **combined final document includes all required parts**. You will not receive credit for parts that are not submitted, even though you wrote drafts of them earlier in the semester.

- **PROOFREAD your paper.** Check for spelling and grammatical errors and do not rely only on your spellchecking function. For most art historians, it is easiest to mark up a paper draft rather than edit on a computer screen. You may want to use Grammarly or the Editor function in Microsoft Word.
- **Read your paper *out loud*** at least once after you have written it to make sure that the sentences make sense and seem to flow.
- Check the format of your **Chicago style footnotes and bibliography entries.**
- **Cut out flowery or hyperbolic language** (e.g. “amazing,” “beautiful,” “genius,” “masterpiece,” etc.), which is distracting to your reader and detracts from a sophisticated argument.
- Titles of works of art should go in *italics*.
- **Paragraphs** should be half a page to two-thirds of a page.
- **Numbers** under 100 are written out fully (ex. ninety-seven); over 100, they are written numerically (ex. 1,000).
- Make sure your **formatting** is correct.
- Make sure your **images** show up in the PDF.
- Check for **plagiarism** in citing all research materials in your paper. Any paper that plagiarizes material will be sent to the Office of Community Standards as a misconduct case. At the minimum, a determination of plagiarism will result in a zero on the project. You can check SafeAssign for an Originality Report, which will show you if you have forgotten to cite material with a footnote. SafeAssign will catch plagiarized material and even closely similar material, so be diligent about using your own ideas in your work. It is your job as a UTEP student to know and understand the UTEP policy on academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/standards/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html>
- Make sure to do the **IU plagiarism tutorial** and include a screenshot of your quiz results.

Grading Rubric for Seminar Project (364 total points)

Prospectus	10 points total
Research Presentation	40 points total
Use of visual aids	15 points
Clarity of ideas	25 points
Annotated Bibliography	60 points total
Chicago style (CMS) entries	10 points
Annotations (15 required)	35 points
Thoroughness and clarity	15 points
Outline	40 points total
Clarity and Thoroughness	20 points
Organization	20 points
Seminar Paper	214 points total
Title and Introduction	10 points
Strength of Thesis	10 points

Body of Paper (content)	114 points
Conclusion	10 points
CMS Citation Format	10 points
Strength and Use of Research	25 points
Image List and Images	10 points
Grammar and Spelling	10 points
Organization and Clarity	10 points
IU Plagiarism Quiz	5 points

Deductions for format penalties (-2 each) and missing footnotes (-5 each).

Course Requirements

Students enrolled in ARTH 4383 will complete only some of the ARTH 3399 requirements, including any extra credit opportunities. Notably, seminar students do not take the class exams. The seminar requirements include the following for a total of 500 points.

Syllabus Quiz:	6 points
Seminar Project:	364 points
Quizzes (8, but lowest quiz grade free):	70 points
Participation I:	20 points
Participation II:	20 points
Rubin Center Worksheet:	10 points
El Paso Museum of Art Worksheet:	10 points

You will see that the Blackboard page allows for 510 points, but this accounts for the free quiz grade. You are graded only out of 500 points. Therefore, here is the point breakdown for grades:

- 450 – 500 points: A
- 400 – 449 points: B
- 350 – 399 points: C
- 300 – 349 points: D
- 000 – 299 points: F