

Heroes, harlots and holiness: Dutch history painting in the time of Rembrandt

Start date 17 March 2017

End date 19 March 2017

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge

Tutor Dr Sophie Oosterwijk

Course code 1617NRX069

Director of Programmes

Emma Jennings

**For further information on this
course, please contact**

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To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Sophie Oosterwijk was born in Gouda, the Netherlands. She studied English at Leiden University and Medieval Studies at the University of York before completing her PhD in the History of Art at Leicester; she also has a second PhD in Middle English literature from Leiden. Sophie has published widely on her specialist research subjects: medieval iconography, medieval sculpture and tomb monuments, the image of the child in western art, and the *Danse Macabre*. Recent publications include two co-edited volumes entitled *Monumental Industry: The production of tomb sculpture in England and Wales in the long fourteenth century* (with Sally Badham, Shaun Tyas: 2010) and *Mixed Metaphors: the Danse Macabre in medieval and early modern Europe* (with Stefanie Knöll, Cambridge Scholars Publishing: 2011).

Sophie has taught at the universities of St Andrews, Leicester, Manchester and Nottingham, Sotheby's Institute of Art, and other organisations. She was also for many years Editor of the journal *Church Monuments* and also until 2013 the Coordinator of Tomb Monuments for the MeMO (Medieval Monuments Online) project at Utrecht University. She is currently working as a free-lance lecturer and researcher. A regular guest lecturer at Madingley Hall, she has previously taught weekend schools on Early Netherlandish art in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, 'memento mori' themes in medieval and renaissance art, and Dutch genre painting in the seventeenth century.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	Session 1. Introduction: art and society in the seventeenth century
22:00	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 2. History painting: subjects and approaches
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 3. Reading biblical scenes
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	Session 4. Classical tales: mythology, literature and history
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Session 5. The Utrecht masters
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 6. Lastman, Lievens and Rembrandt
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 7. Rembrandt's later years
12:45	Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

1. To offer insights into the different genres and styles of painting produced in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.
2. To teach students how to recognise history paintings and to read the story depicted.
3. To increase students' understanding of Rembrandt's oeuvre and in particular his approach to history painting.

Content:

In this course we shall be looking first of all at art, religion and society in the Dutch Republic. This will provide the context for the discussion of history painting, which appealed to a distinct, largely elitist clientele. We will study the main artists who practised this genre (esp. Lastman, Lievens and Rembrandt, but also the Utrecht masters and the Dutch classicist painters of the period), but also look at some artists best known for other types of work who occasionally produced history paintings (e.g. Vermeer, Steen, Metsu). Comparisons will also be made with history paintings by artists outside the Dutch Republic (e.g. Titian, Rubens) to show differences and similarities in approach and interpretation. A core theme in this course will be the presentation of women in history painting. However, we will focus in particular on Rembrandt and his often very individual interpretation of history subjects, which sometimes failed to find favour with his contemporaries.

Presentation of the course:

Lectures illustrated with PowerPoint combined with class discussion on chosen works.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

1. Understand more about the different genres of painting produced in the Dutch Republic during the seventeenth century.
2. Read and identify history paintings of the period.
3. Feel familiar with a wider range of lesser known Dutch artists and works produced at this time.
4. Appreciate Rembrandt's interpretation of history painting.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
A. Blankert <i>et al.</i>	<i>Dutch classicism</i> (exhibition catalogue)	Rotterdam: Boymans van Beuningen/NAi, 1999.
C. Brown, J. Kelch and P. van Thiel	<i>Rembrandt: The Master and his Workshop</i> (exhibition catalogue, 2 vols)	New Haven/London: Yale, 1991.
B. Haak	<i>The Golden Age: Dutch Masters of the Seventeenth Century</i>	London, 1984.
J. Loughman and J.M. Montias	<i>Public and Private Spaces: Works of Art in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Houses</i>	Zwolle: Waanders, 2000.
K. Muizelaar and D. Phillips	<i>Picturing Men and Women in the Dutch Golden Age: Paintings and People in Historical Perspective</i>	New Haven/London: Yale, 2003.
M. North	<i>Art and Commerce in the Dutch Golden Age</i>	New Haven/London: Yale, 1997.
S. Slive	<i>Dutch Painting 1600 to 1800</i>	New Haven/London: Yale, 1995.
S. Schama	<i>The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age</i>	London, 1987.
S. Schama	<i>Rembrandt's Eyes</i>	London, 1999.
J.A. Spicer <i>et al.</i>	<i>Masters of Light: Dutch Painters in Utrecht during the Golden Age</i> (exhibition catalogue)	New Haven/London: Yale, 1997.
Wetering, Ernst van de	<i>Rembrandt: The Painter Thinking</i>	Amsterdam University Press, 2016.
J.L. Williams <i>et al.</i>	<i>Rembrandt's Women</i> (exhibition catalogue)	Edinburgh: National Gallery of Scotland, in collaboration with the Royal Academy of Arts, 2001.

Website addresses

Many museums now have excellent websites that allow visitors to search their collections and find out more about artists and their works, such as the National Gallery in London (www.nationalgallery.org.uk) and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (<http://www.rijksmuseum.nl/>).

For Rembrandt's work see the Rembrandt Database website <http://www.rembrandtdatabase.org/Rembrandt>.

Useful is also the website www.essentialvermeer.com, which offers further information on Dutch art and society of the period.

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 27 February 2017