ART OF THE BIBLE:
THROUGH THE EYES OF THE GREAT MASTERS
Wednesdays, 7-9:05 pm, October 4 - December 6 (No class on Nov. 22)
Preliminary Syllabus

Course Aims:

Eusebius and Jerome illustrated their homilies with the visuals of the *Biblia pauperum*, “the Bible of the poor,” which was fresco or mosaic art on basilica walls, not surprising since visual literacy has always enjoyed wider currency than textual literacy. How profoundly has the Bible influenced art history? Since Constantine brought Judeo-Christian art out from the catacombs and made it acceptable, Western art has drawn on biblical texts again and again. Whether commissioned by churches and clergy or devout individuals, or inspired by personal devotion, great masters visually recreated the Bible in their idiosyncratic interpretations. In this course, we will survey major artists who illustrated biblical texts and their most important narratives. Masters to be discussed range from Early Christian artists to Giotto, da Vinci, Botticelli, Mantegna, Raphael, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Rubens, Rembrandt, and many others.

Along the way, we will read the major biblical texts illustrated by these artists and learn to visually identify essential literary narratives from the Old and New Testaments. We will also see how Apocryphal biblical personae such as Judith, Tobit, and Susannah were needed to fill in narrative gaps. Most of all, we will be delightfully astonished by how the rich imaginations of the great masters responded to the important literature of the Bible.

Course requirements:

Students attend the nine lectures and complete assigned readings, including from course texts and supplemental as provided. This course is mostly lecture oriented with lavish illustrations and discussions are at the discretion of the instructor. If taken for credit, a brief 10 page critical paper will be completed, and its topic will require instructor consent.

Course Texts:

ARHT 228  Art of the Bible: Through the Eyes of the Great Masters

Course Outline:

10/4  Genesis through Deuteronomy
      Reading: Murray 1-4, 31, 208-9, 264-7, 276-7, 327-8, 368-72, 403-4,
             407, 455-6, 529-30, 612

10/11 Joshua though Judges, Job, Ruth
      Reading: Murray, 271-9, 503, 514-5

10/18 Kings Saul, David and Solomon
      Reading: Hunt Caravaggio 132-3, 141-3;
             Murray 515-6, 519-20, 543-5

10/25 Prophets from Elijah, Elisha and Jeremiah
      Reading: Murray 159-63, 171-3, 265, 269, 448-9, 625

11/1  Babylonian Captivity and Daniel through Esther
      Reading: Murray 55, 139-40, 181-2, 379, 456-7

11/8  Apocryphal Art: Judith, Tobit, Susannah
      Reading: Hunt Caravaggio 57-60;
             Murray 29-30, 95-6, 282-3, 465-6

11/15 Art of Advent, Nativity
       Reading: Hunt Art of Christmas: Puer Natus Est, ix-206

11/29 Life of Jesus
       Reading: Hunt Caravaggio, 44-6, 68-91, 115-6, 124-5, 146-7,
              Murray 112-3, 134-5, 221-2, 268-74, 315-8, 325-6, 360-1,
              402-3, 407, 417-9, 427-8, 446-8, 471-2, 511-3

12/6  Acts of the Apostles through Revelation
      Reading: Murray 28-9, 155-6, 281-2, 307-8, 403-4, 409-12, 414-6, 618

Note: course instructor reserves right to amend schedule