

## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS 科目簡介**

### **COURSES FOR TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES**

#### **VIS501 Critical Perspectives in Art History (3 credits)**

The focus of this course is not on the history of art itself, but on theories of art history that have been developed by art historians and philosophers of art since the 19th century. The purpose of these theories usually is to explain why art developed the way it did over a wider stretch of time; for example, why a certain style (e.g. Baroque) or movement (e.g. Modernism) emerged. In some cases, however, the explanatory function of the theories is hard to disentangle from a normative outlook on the art of a given period.

#### **VIS502 Provenance Research (3 credits)**

Collectors, dealers, curators, gallerists, auction houses and artists are traditionally active agents in the art market and the world of museums. However, objects also changed hands through illicit trade in the black market and the acts of cultural plunder associated with wars that violated local laws and international covenants and agreements laid out by the global community. To avoid acquiring displaced objects from illegal or unethical sources, provenance research helps reveal the ownership history, authenticity, historical value and cultural significance of individual items or collections. It raises questions about due diligence and ethical practices in the management of private and public art collections as well as trading objects in the global art market.

This course sheds light on the role of provenance and provenance research in the context of collecting art and artefacts from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present. It explores the relationship between provenance research, the aspiration of contemporary society to guard against the illicit trade and trafficking of culture, and the highest standard of due diligence in the art trade. Weekly themes cover, but not limited to, the historical development and context of provenance research; the provenience of imperial treasures, state-owned antiquities and undiscovered material; the standards applying for provenance research on Nazi spoliated art, including due diligence standards and procedures, benchmarks and best practice; the practical aspect of reading, recording and verifying provenance; and the role of databases of stolen and looted art and cultural objects in this topic.

#### **VIS503 Approaches to Curating (3 credits)**

Curating is a contested field of practice, mediating the production, circulation and consumption of art and culture, as well as offering a reflection on the social and cultural phenomenon. To enable students' understanding of curatorial approaches, this course will introduce the histories of curating and curatorial discourses and practices in both Western and Asian contexts. It will focus on key themes and debates within exhibition-making such as the role of curator, boundary-pushing curatorial concepts, curating in and outside the museum and working with communities and other mediums and disciplines. Besides, it provides an experimental platform for students to interpret artworks and design exhibitions, and a forum to discuss the challenges faced by curators in contemporary society.

#### **VIS504 Connoisseurship of Chinese Painting and Calligraphy (3 credits)**

Our discipline faces a crisis: students of Chinese art history frequently misidentify basic information (e.g. dates, provenance, authorship) about art pieces and incorporate the resultant mistakes into their interpretations. This graduate seminar will teach students how to avoid such mistakes. The class aims to train students' eyes in object-based examination of Chinese

paintings and calligraphy, while simultaneously helping them to build a solid foundation in archival research. The first two weeks will introduce students to research materials and historical resources, such as art catalogues, biographical references, research guides, dictionaries, annotated lists and indices. Starting from week 3, the class will use case studies to address various elements of connoisseurship. The seminar will culminate in two weekly presentations, one final presentation, and a term paper on a previously unstudied work of art. Thereby, students will demonstrate their ability to authenticate and analyse Chinese art.

The class meets once per week and will be conducted in the format of seminar discussion. Students are required to attend all seminars, report on weekly reading assignments and contribute to discussions.

### **VIS505 Managing Art Collections (3 credits)**

Collections management is a fundamental and integrated aspect of museum operations that facilitates a series of practices and decisions performed by registrars, curators and other museum staff. This course provides students with a thorough knowledge of the basic theories and professional practices of collections management and care. It explores the visions, principles and approaches involved in amassing, using and dismantling collections in museums, galleries and similar institutions.

Weekly topics include processes of establishing collections policies; strategic acquisitions, accessioning, cataloguing and deaccessioning; code of ethics; cultural property and legislation; digitisation of collections and inventory records; collections care and preventative conservation; handling and transit of objects; storage, security and emergency planning; copyright and ownership of objects and images; and physical and intellectual access to collections. Seminars, workshops and fieldtrips on the above themes run by the course instructor and guest speakers will be organised to provide hands-on activities and create dialogues with museum professionals.

### **VIS506 Learning in Museums (3 credits)**

This course introduces the critical and fundamental educational function of museums, core responsibilities of museum educators and the social impact of museum education practices. It has threefold concerns: learning theories, audience studies and education programming. Firstly, it studies how people learn, how people teach, and the unique roles that objects play in an informal learning environment. Secondly, it analyses the role of education in audience development, as well as the approaches and strategies for developing museum programmes and interpretive projects for audiences such as children, families and students. Thirdly, it explores the role and perspective of museum educators in museum programming and the strategies used for measuring success.

### **VIS507 Digital Technologies and the Museum Experience (3 credits)**

This course explores the role of digital technologies in curatorial practice. It aims to provide competent knowledge of various forms of digital media employed by curators in exhibition design and museum management. Digital media provides specific potentials in interactive, participatory, physical or virtual presentations. The course will start with an overview of such development and application in a museum setting. With case studies to different digital tools, students will be familiar with their advantages and limitations, especially to their potentials in narrative, communicative and educational purposes. Students will be guided to identify the media specific properties and based on these, they will plan for an effective strategy to match curatorial objectives

**VIS508 Internship (0 to 3 credits)**

The goal of this course is the development of competence in the practice of art history and curatorship. It is an integral part of the MA curriculum and provides experiential learning opportunities for students to reinforce subject knowledge gained in the programme and apply it to real-life projects in a museum or gallery setting. Major placement duties, including planning and implementation of educational programs; engaging in strategic planning and event management; conducting research for exhibition projects, will be co-designed by the person-in-charge of the host institution and the VS internship coordinator/MA programme director. The internship will be specific to the project nature, helping students to develop their career goals and interests. Host institutions of this internship course can be in Hong Kong, China and abroad. Students are required to document their work progress and research findings of the project(s) carried out during the internship period. The duty documentation can be a daily duty log, a critical evaluation report and other audio/visual records that will be due at the end of the course.

**VIS509 Summer School (3 credits)**

Summer School provides non-local learning activities and short-term study programmes for students to engage in knowledge exchange in the global context and to broaden their international outlook. The School will provide students opportunity to study in a summer programme at a partner institution (The Graduate Institution of Conservation of Cultural Relics and Museology, Tainan National University of the Arts in Taiwan or other prospective partner institutions including the University of St Andrews, Peking University, University of Leicester, University of Glasgow, University of Essex, University of Melbourne, New York University, Stanford University and Central Academy of Fine Arts.) Likewise, students from partner institutions will be allowed to participate in an exchange programme at Lingnan. A wide range of scholarships and financial awards to this programme will be available for students to apply.

**VIS510 Research Dissertation (9 credits)**

This capstone project enables students to utilise theoretical frameworks and research methodologies learned through the Master's programme, to explore in-depth relevant topics of personal interest, and to develop skills of critical research, analysis, presentation and academic writing. The dissertation research is conducted through individual study and directed supervision, with consultation meetings arranged about once a month. You will work with a supervisor who has expertise in a discipline relevant to your project and who will provide guidance and academic support with developing, researching and writing the MA dissertation (10,000-12,000 words). Footnotes, paraphrases and quotations from primary and secondary sources in the main text are included in the word count, but appendices of primary sources, tables, captions for illustrations, and the bibliography are excluded. The dissertation may be thematic and issue-based, or may focus upon the critical analysis of a particular body of work. Students should make reference to relevant examples both from critical writing and visual/curatorial practice.

For full-time students, dissertation planning and supervision normally takes place in Semester 2 and you continue with your independent writing over the summer. Part-time students may devise a dissertation topic in consultation with your supervisors at the end of Year 1 and proceed to research and writing in Year 2.

The period of independent research is supplemented by a series of seminars and workshops, which students are expected to attend throughout the academic year.

**VIS511 Curatorial Project (9 credits)**

This course introduces students to the curatorial world through active collaboration with local museums. It will analyse key issues concerning the changing role of the curator and the diversity of exhibition venues such as museums, libraries and site-specific contexts in the contemporary world. Case studies will be used to illustrate the roles of curator, conservator, artist and educator in the projects of exhibition design, interpretation, evaluation and audience development. Exhibition visits and professional seminars will be arranged to engage art and museum practitioners in dialogue with students through work on site-specific projects.

The course provides students who have already completed required courses and some electives on Art History and Curating an opportunity to produce a real exhibition in a collection-based setting. In addition to field trips to local museums, the course will take advantage of Chinese art collections at the Fong Sum Wood Library of Lingnan University. Each group of students will design an exhibition plan, conduct research on selected objects and acquire practical curatorial skills, while producing interpretative and publicity materials for an exhibition in a physical venue.