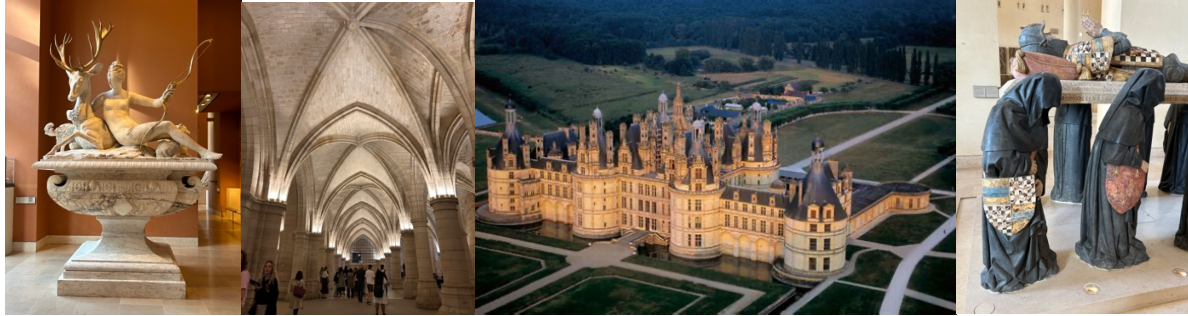


FAH3930Y: Studies Abroad in Renaissance Art and Architecture

Special Topic: The French Renaissance

Professor Christy ANDERSON

Paris, May 5 – 29, 2025



“In France, we do not merely imitate the ancients; we transform their wisdom into new forms that are fitting for our time and place.”

— Jean Bullant, architect and designer of Château d’Écouen

“Architecture should speak of strength and delight, for it is through these virtues that we fashion monuments worthy of kings and of God.”

— Philibert de l’Orme, architect and theorist, from *Le Premier Tome de l’Architecture* (1567)

“The French Renaissance, with its exquisite blend of reason and imagination, produced forms that were as bold as they were harmonious, shaping a new ideal of beauty.”

— Jules Michelet from *The Renaissance* (1855)

“It is in the châteaux of the Loire that one sees the true originality of the French Renaissance, where architectural ingenuity serves not only power but also pleasure.”

— André Chastel, in *The French Renaissance* [1994]

“The French Renaissance was not merely an era of borrowing but one of reinvention, where traditional Gothic forms and new classical vocabularies collided to produce uniquely French visions of art and architecture.”

— Anthony Blunt in *Art and Architecture in France, 1500–1700* [1953]

General Information about Course

This course delves into the rich cultural and artistic achievements of the French Renaissance, with a focus on the materials, techniques, and craftsmanship that shaped its art and design. Taught on-site in Paris and the Loire Valley, students will explore a wide range of artistic expressions, including furniture, stained glass, sculpture, gardens, architecture, urban design, and religious art. Through visits to châteaux, cathedrals, and urban centers, the course emphasizes the ingenuity and variety of French artisans and designers, offering a comprehensive understanding of how these works reflect the social, political, and cultural landscapes of the 16th century.

The course will be entirely conducted on site, through visits to important museums, buildings, and spaces in Paris and the landscapes beyond. A unique feature of this course will be the opportunity to hear French art historians and curators present material on site. We will hear from experts in France on the materials they know and study.

Three weeks of the class will be based in Paris, visiting the Bibliothèque National to look at Renaissance books and manuscripts; studying original manuscripts in the French archives; and learning how early furniture is restored at the workshop of a leading craftsman and conservator. We will have behind-the-scenes visits to a painting conservation workshop, and learn how French travelers brought back objects from the New World that are now in French collections.

One week we will travel to the Loire Valley to visit some of the great chateaux and gardens built by royal and elite patrons. We will likely be based in the city of Blois for three nights, and then travel by coach bus to see some of the great houses and landscapes in this verdant and rich river valley.

Your Instructor

[Christy Anderson](#) studies and teaches the history of architecture. While most of her work focuses on the buildings of early modern Europe, these projects extend broadly across oceans and into contemporary design. A full-time member of the Art History Department at the University of Toronto, and a member of [the Graduate Faculty at the Daniels](#), she enjoys teaching both the undergraduate students and those in the professional programs. She received her PhD from MIT in the School of Architecture. In addition to teaching at the University of Toronto since 2005, she has also taught at Yale University, MIT, and the Courtauld Institute in London.

Out of her many years of teaching, Christy Anderson has published a survey of *Renaissance Architecture* (Oxford University Press, 2013) that treats buildings across Europe and rewrites the history of the field. She has also published on the complicated history of classicism and gender, the failure of architectural language, and the politics of wonder. Her most recent project is a study of the ship as an architectural type by exploring the spaces and environments that connect the sea to the shore.

Projects and Assignments:

The main assessment for this course will be the creation of a notebook that you will submit four times during the course, on Friday of each week. In this notebook you will respond to a question set for each week. Using the readings, discussions, site visits, and most importantly, your own observations, you will respond to the question given. By Friday of each week you can take pictures of up to 5 pages from the notebook and submit these through Quercus. Each week of the notebook submission will be worth 20 points x 4 weeks = 80 points.

The final 20 points will be based on a presentation that you will make at one of the sites we are visiting. There will be a sign up for the presentations.

Course Expectations and Responsibilities

The opportunity to study art in person, and in context, is an extraordinary privilege and joy. While it is tempting to think of a month in France as a vacation, and to want to see all the things that tourists might see, the requirements of the class should be your main occupation. This course covers the material of a full year in 4 weeks, and certainly Monday through Thursday of each work will be taken up with visits and coursework. I suggest focusing your time during the week on the class, and then enjoying the weekends by exploring Paris and places nearby.

Participation in all class activities is required. Late work will be marked down 5 pts per day late.

Preliminary Weekly Schedule:

Week 1: Paris

Monday: Morning, introductory meeting @ residence hall

Tuesday: Musée de Cluny

Wednesday: Louvre – French Painting

Thursday: Paris walking tour

Week 2: Chateaux in the Loire

This week we will leave Monday morning and go to visit chateaux in the Loire valley: Blois, Chambord, Chenonceau, Anet. We will return on Thursday afternoon. There will be three nights spent in the Loire [likely in or near Blois].

Week 3: Paris – Museums, Materials, and Collections

Monday: Musée Carnavalet

Tuesday: Louvre [closed to public on Tuesdays]: French Furniture

Wednesday: Fontainebleau [via public transportation]

Thursday: St Denis: Royal Tombs

Week 4: Paris – Architecture and Urban Transformation

Monday: Paris Walking Tour

Tuesday: Musée de l'Armée

Wednesday: Château Écouen [via public transportation]

Thursday: TBD

Resources:

Baumgartner, Frederic J. *France in the Sixteenth Century*. 1st ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.

Blunt, Anthony. *Art and Architecture in France, 1500-1700*. Edited by Richard Beresford. 5th ed. / revised by Richard Beresford. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999.

Chastel, André. "French Renaissance Art in a European Context." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 12, no. 4 (1981): 77–103. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539879>.

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Chatenet, Monique, and R. J. Knecht. "Etiquette and Architecture at the Court of the Last Valois." In *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance*, 1st ed., 76–100. Routledge, 2002. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315259086-5>.

Chatenet, Monique. "The King's Space: The Etiquette of Interviews at the French Court in the Sixteenth-Century." In Smuts, Malcolm., George. Gorse, and Marcello. Fantoni. "The Politics of Space : European Courts : Ca. 1500-1750." Roma: Bulzoni, 2009. [online]

Cloulas, Ivan., and Michèle. Bimbenet-Privat. *Treasures of the French Renaissance*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998.

Courtright, Nicola. "A New Place for Queens in Early Modern France." In Smuts, Malcolm., George. Gorse, and Marcello. Fantoni. "The Politics of Space : European Courts : Ca. 1500-1750." Roma: Bulzoni, 2009. [online]

Cox-Rearick, Janet. *The Collection of Francis I: Royal Treasures*. New York: Abrams, 1996.

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- Giry-Deloison, Charles. *1520 : le Camp du drap d'or : la rencontre d'Henri VIII et de François Ier*. Paris: Somogy, 2012.
- Isom-Verhaaren, Christine. *Allies with the Infidel : The Ottoman and French Alliance in the Sixteenth Century*. London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2011. [online]
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- Roux, Simone. *Paris in the Middle Ages*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.
- Sankovitch, Anne-Marie. "Structure/Ornament and the Modern Figuration of Architecture." *The Art Bulletin* (New York, N.Y.) 80, no. 4 (1998): 686–717. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043079.1998.10786861>.
- Sankovitch, Anne-Marie. *The Church of Saint-Eustache in the Early French Renaissance*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2015.
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