

DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY & ART CONSERVATION

ARTH 293 / 3.0
Self/Image: The Portrait



CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

From ancient Egyptian mummies to contemporary selfies, portraits have reflected and shaped ideals of personal and collective identity in diverse cultures and historical periods. This course explores the art of portraiture and its significance in human society. Specific case studies may vary.

Prerequisites: Level 2 or above or permission of the Department. It is recommended that students have taken a basic course in the history of art (ARTH 120 or equivalent).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the age of the selfie, no art form is more popular than portraiture. We all do it, we all interact with it, but what does it really tell us about ourselves? This course will explore some of the many ways in which representations of real human beings have played a role in art and culture throughout recorded history and in diverse societies around the world. While charting the history of this engaging art form, we will consider how portraits have helped to express and shape ideas about private and public identity that continue to affect art and society today.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A detailed list of readings and requirements will be available at the first class. The course will be part lecture and part discussion. Attendance at all class meetings is expected and will count toward the final grade. Assignments will include in-class activities, quizzes testing mastery of class content and familiarity with required readings, and two short papers. One assignment will be to create a selfie and explain it to classmates. We will also visit and write about the special exhibition on British portraiture on view at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre. Some content and testing will take place on-line via OnQ.