COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This graduate-only seminar will focus on the Louvre Museum in Paris from the year of its opening as a public museum in 1793 until the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte and the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in 1814-15. During these two decades, transformations to the size, scope, display and definition of the Louvre collection took place, consequent on the political crisis of the French Revolution. Most significantly, during the French Wars of 1794-1801, which were sparked by the revolution, hundreds of valuable paintings and antiquities were confiscated from the Continent and from North Africa. Subsequently, under Napoleon, the Louvre was refashioned as his imperial museum. Yet when he fell from power, the demand by European countries for the repatriation of their treasures occasioned the first major event of art restitution. The legacy of these developments at the Louvre will be evaluated, as seen, for instance, in: the repeated pattern of imperial looting by Hitler during WWII; the tendency of some to associate art museums with imperialism and colonialism; and the pressure placed on major museums today to restitute cultural objects.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
A detailed course outline will be available in the first class. The course will involve readings, in-class projects, group discussions, student presentations and writing assignments. Each graduate student will undertake a major research project for the seminar, which will result in an essay of about 15 pages.