

**DEPARTMENT OF  
ART HISTORY & ART  
CONSERVATION:  
ART HISTORY  
GRADUATE PROGRAMME**

ARTH854: Taking Rococo  
Seriously: French Rococo  
Painting and Décor and its  
International Diffusion

Prof. Gauvin Bailey



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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Now is a very exciting time in the scholarship on Rococo world-wide. The first style in the Western canon to originate in décor, Rococo has suffered from a persistent reputation for frivolity through its association with the aristocracy in pre-Revolutionary France, and it has been discarded as a merely ornamental derivation of the Baroque, and the antithesis of the Enlightenment. However this attitude is changing quickly as scholars are revealing Rococo artists' preoccupations with consequential themes relating to polite society such as conversation, decorum, absorption, and spirituality, as well as Enlightenment values such as emotional love as defined by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Denis Diderot. Indeed, although born in the private aristocratic Parisian home, Rococo quickly transformed into one of the world's most important styles for adorning large, sacred, public spaces, from Germany to Brazil. This course will explore in particular Rococo's links with sociability and the institution of the salon, with the role of women in society, with ideas of health and euphoria, and with spirituality.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

A detailed list of readings and requirements will be available during the first class. This course will be a seminar, with discussions. The requirements will include a minimum of two oral presentations and a term paper.