AHT269
The Global Lives of Objects: Material Culture in Context

Course Description: This course examines global material culture and the rich diversity of objects and the processes, knowledge, and meanings embedded therein. Despite renewed interest in material culture, the conversation about objects often remains siloed in discrete disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, design history, museology. Building on the material turn in art history, this course aims to explore productive interdisciplinary methodologies for engaging with objects. Taking a broad, cross-cultural and multi-temporal approach, the course will explore key themes in the study of material culture including: production, use, circulation, exchange, consumption, commodification, colonialism, and haptic and sensorial engagements. Focusing on the cultural biographies of objects students will consider how historical and contemporary objects connect with, undermine, or complicate notions of art, taste, authenticity, tradition, value, identity, and nationhood broadly defined.

Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion students will: 1) Develop a body of knowledge about key issues and themes in material culture studies. 2) Develop extended and refined skills of object analysis in relation to relevant socio-political and historical contexts. 3) Acquire abilities of critical thinking and reflection. 4) Develop skills of research, interpretation and writing.

Literacy Outcomes: Literacy outcomes for AHT electives focus on research, critical analysis, and preparation of formal essay writing.

Assessment Criteria: Object Biography (30%), Object Case Study Essay (50%), Participation (20%)

Attendance: 85% attendance is required to pass (attendance evaluated via online participation – see assessment criteria below).

Penalties for Late Submission: Late essays will be penalised at the following rates: 1-6 days, 10%; 7-14 days, 20%; then 10% per week thereafter. AHT does not give extensions in advance for illness or misadventure. Instead, you can apply to have the late penalties lifted after submitting your assignment. Please go to the AHT website for details.

Lecture + Course Readings: Lecture and Readings are available as pdfs at AHT webpage.


3) Course Blog: https://aht269globallives.wordpress.com/ this blog is a place where we can share ideas, readings, news stories, and resources.

Queries or Help with the Course: If you need any help or have a question please email us at priya.vaughan@nas.edu.au or Molly.Duggins@nas.edu.au
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easter Break + Launch of core AHT subjects</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; May</td>
<td><strong>Clothing and Adornment</strong>  &lt;br&gt; Guest Lecture: Mark De Vitis</td>
<td>Miller, D., 2005, 'Introduction' in Kuchler, S and Miller, D (eds), <em>Clothing as Material Culture</em>. Bloomsbury Online.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Object/Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; June</td>
<td>Object Biographies Online</td>
<td>Assessment 1. Blog Post + Peer Assessment</td>
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**Assessments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Object Biography Blog Post + Peer Feedback (online)</td>
<td>Wednesday 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; of June</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Object Biography Case Study Essay</td>
<td>Wednesday 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; July</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<td>Participation (online)</td>
<td>Weeks 3-12</td>
<td>20%</td>
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**Student Symposium Online: Object Biographies**

Length: 5 minute oral presentation + 500 word summary for Blog

Percentage: 30%

Due Date: Wednesday 3rd June (Week 9): Oral presentation delivered in Zoom Seminar during tutorial times, and blog post submitted before midnight.

Description: Students will present a 5 minute 'biography' on an object of their choice. Students will focus on one key aspect of the object (e.g. material form, aesthetic properties, function, history, production, display, collection, consumption etc.) drawing on key theoretical ideas and themes discussed across the course. Students will submit a 500 word summary of their presentation as a blog post.

Students will deliver their oral presentation at our online Student Symposium held via zoom from (5.30-7.30pm) in week 9. The process to be as follows:

1. Students will be placed in designated groups by Molly and Priya.
2. Students will present their biographies to their group via Zoom break out rooms (5 mins).
3. Following this presentation group members will offer the presenter constructive feedback (5mins). Remember to be constructive and offer advice on improvement as well as discussing things that worked well, or suggesting areas for further research etc.
4. Reflecting on the presentation, and feedback, the group member will grade their peer's presentation, filling out the Rubric form (see below) (5mins).
5. You will assign a mark out of 100 and a grade on this rubric form.
6. After the symposium please email copies of these rubric forms to Molly or Priya (Before midnight 3rd June).
7. Before midnight 3rd June students will post a 500-word summary of their object biography to the elective blog (see details below). Please include citations and a bibliography.
8. A student’s final mark will be an average of their peer’s grades and Molly and Priya’s grade of their summary.
9. BYO tea and treats to the Zoom Symposium

Elective Blog: [https://aht269globallives.wordpress.com/](https://aht269globallives.wordpress.com/)
Log on here: [https://wordpress.com/log-in](https://wordpress.com/log-in) using your Wordpress credentials (same as your use to access the blog)

Click on 'My Site', then 'Write+' to add your summary. **Don't forget to add your name or initials to the title of your post**
### Object Biography: Blog Post Rubric

**Student Name:**

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<tr>
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<th>Needs Development (Fail)</th>
<th>Adequate (Pass)</th>
<th>Good (Credit)</th>
<th>Very Good (Distinction)</th>
<th>Outstanding (High Distinction)</th>
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<td>Object analysis</td>
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<td>(material, aesthetic, historical, visual etc.)</td>
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<td>Theoretical framework</td>
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<td>(connected to theoretical ideas or broader scholarship related to material culture etc.)</td>
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<td>Critical insight</td>
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<td>(critical analysis and interrogation of ideas)</td>
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<td>Extent of research</td>
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<td>(evidence of scholarly or other research)</td>
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<td>Structure of essay</td>
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<td>(essay presents clear argument or narrative)</td>
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<td>Clarity of written</td>
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<td>expression</td>
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**MARK:**

**GRADE:**

### Grade descriptors

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Mark</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>0-49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>50-64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>65-74</td>
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<td>Distinction</td>
<td>75-84</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Distinction</td>
<td>85-100</td>
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Object Biography Case Study Essay

Length: 1500 words

Percentage: 50%

Due Date: Wednesday 1st July, before midnight

Description: Write a case study on an object of your choice, connecting broadly to themes in the course. Address the object's material and sensorial properties and the specific aesthetic frameworks through which it has acquired meaning and value. Examine how production, use, circulation and exchange have shaped the life of the object. You may like to consider how your object connects with, undermines, or complicates notions of art, taste, authenticity, tradition, value and identity. Note: You should work with the object featured in your 'Biography', so that you can utilise feedback given during your symposium presentation.

Case Study Rubric/Marking Guide

1. Research materials: High-quality scholarly sources applied to build the core of the essay. This means refereed sources (scholarly books and journal articles.) NB. Feel free to also draw on other sources if there is a lack of scholarly material on your chosen artists. But work with scholarly sources to inform your argument.

2. Argument: Presents a focused and substantial argument developed through your independent critical thinking. Students will formulate an argument by reading a diverse array of research materials. Resolving the different ideas presented in the research material into a connected whole will act as the foundation of the argument. The argument should be outlined in the introduction. It should develop over the body of the text, rather than simply being reiterated in the same form throughout. It should shape and draw together all of the included material, and it turn be shaped as your progress through the material.

3. Object Analysis: Your argument should be demonstrated through detailed analysis, particularly, visual analysis. Works should not be used as illustrations of an idea, stated separately from key points. Instead, object analysis should establish and extend the argument. Think critically. Explain 'how' and justify 'why', for each idea presented. Never rest with statement. Unpack visual ideas, giving substantial detail to demonstrate their significance. Think ‘analysis’, and reject ‘summary’.

4. Structure: Employ a formal essay structure. Begin with a clear introduction, outlining your thesis and justifying your project’s parameters. Write using properly developed paragraphs, and end the paper with a conclusion that demonstrates the implications of your work.

5. Independence of ideas and interpretation: Independence of ideas will come through a demonstrated knowledge of a variety of high quality source materials, not simply relying on one source for a whole section of your paper. Grow the paper by drawing together different research materials. In doing this, the paper will demonstrate the active application of ideas, rather than simple summary. Do not quote unnecessarily. Paraphrase instead – this will mean you have to translate the idea into your own words and argument.

6. Writing Style: Craft your work carefully to develop a clear and polished style. Work on sentence structure, paragraph structure, expression and flow. Dedicate time to editing. Include accurate referencing and bibliography.
Participation

Length: At least **ONE** comment on relevant blog post **EACH WEEK** (Weeks 3 to 12). Comments should be up to **250 words**. See Week 3 Lecture Video for more details.

Percentage: 20%

Due Date: Weeks 3 – 12

Description:

- Each student is required to upload one question, comment, OR point for discussion to the relevant blog post each week
- Comments should respond to the lecture video, weekly readings, or other student commentary.
- The online contribution should be up to 250 words, written in paragraph form.
- Don't worry about being speculative, or not having the answers, these contributions are meant to replace in-class discussion and foster dialogue. So, we don't expect perfection!
- Please also feel free to upload any imagery related to the week's theme, or material objects under discussion.

**Participation Rubric/ Marking Guide:**

Student will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Active and meaningful engagement in discussions of seminar topics (e.g. ideas raised in lectures);
- Constructive and thoughtful engagement with ideas raised by other students;
- Adequate preparation, particularly the ability to thoughtfully and constructively discuss seminar readings.

Further Reading


Mentz, S., 2019, Break up the Anthropocene, USA: University of Minnesota Press


Fred R Myers, ed. The empire of things: Regimes of value and Mat Cult (Santa Fe and Oxford: School of American Research Press, 2001)


Stewart, S., 1993, On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, Durham:


