SEARCHING FOR THE PAST:
HOW CAN WE POSSIBLY KNOW HOW IT ACTUALLY WAS?

Liberal Arts College Basement Seminar Room 2040 McKay Wed. 6 to 8:30
Dr. Virginia Nixon  ginny3694@hotmail.com Phone extension 2582
Office 2040 McKay, basement. Please use the back door off the lane if a class is in
progress in the Basement Seminar Room. My name is on the basement door.

HUMA 888: COURSE DESCRIPTION The intent of this seminar is to sharpen
participants’ ability to use historical method which for our purposes will be defined
as posing a question about to “what happened in the past,” reviewing the literature,
and developing an original thesis in answer to the question, and supporting it by
evidence.

The course is intended to develop skills in the following areas:
a) recognizing underlying assumptions and ideological standpoints;
b) assessing the roles of theoretical perspectives.
c) acquiring familiarity with sources, methodologies and conventions used in
different disciplines and periods;

We will look at four case studies, examining the works involved and the questions
and discourses surrounding them.

Subject #1: Leonardo’s da Vinci’s Virgin of the Rocks What did Leonardo
intend to say in this beautiful but puzzling painting? Renaissance scholars have
not agreed on an answer.

Subject #2: Latin American baroque and classical music by mixed race
composers of the 17th and 18th centuries. In recent decades musicologists and
musicians have researched, performed, and recorded a wealth of secular and
religious classical music composed by Latin American composers, some of them
mulatto or mestizo. Unanimously enjoyed as extraordinarily beautiful, this music
has nonetheless aroused controversy centering around Post-Colonial issues. Some
critics have accused performers of misrepresenting the music. Who is right? To
what extent? What criteria do we use to find our own positions?
**Subject #3: Beethoven’s Career.** Where should we situate Beethoven with respect to the changing class structure of late 18th and early 19th c. Vienna? Some have seen him as an emblem of the rising bourgeoisie. Tia DeNora argues controversially that Beethoven’s real supporters were Vienna’s old upper aristocracy. Views on his popularity, and on the quality and nature of his music have varied over the past two centuries? Can we decide who’s right?

**Subject #4: Corridart** was an eight-kilometer exhibit of artworks that was installed along Sherbrooke Street as part of the arts and cultural component of the 1976 Summer Olympics. Corridart included artworks that engaged with the history - and present state - of Montreal. Unfortunately few people got to Corridart because in a controversial decision, then Mayor Jean Drapeau had the exhibition torn down shortly after it went up. Most of the works were destroyed.[2] Why was Corridart demolished? How was the case reported in journalistic and critical literature?

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

**RESEARCH PAPER COMPONENT 70%**

*The research paper will propose and support an original thesis on a subject related to an aspect of the course content, topic to be chosen in consultation with the instructor.*

Meetings with instructor
Research Paper Outline (form)
Interim Short Presentations on aspects of the Research Paper
Presentation of Draft of Research Paper

**PARTICIPATION COMPONENT 30%**

Attendance at class with reading assignments prepared
Active participation in discussions of readings
Reports on readings
Leading of one or more class segments
Feedback on presentations given by other students
SCHEDULE OF SEMINARS
Class sequence and readings may change over the course of the seminar.

JANUARY 9  LEONARDO DA VINCI: PART ONE
a) Introduction to the course
b) Students’ research
c) Introductory Description of the four subject areas..
d) Discussion of readings.
Readings for this class
Reviews of the 2012 National Gallery Leonardo exhibition from the Times Literary
Supplement, the New York Review of Books, and the London Review of
Books. ONLINE REFERENCE WILL BE EMAILED
Syson, Luke, short excerpts, Leonardo da Vinci: Painter at the Court of
Bambach, Carmen C., short excerpts, Leonardo da Vinci, Master Draftsman,
Yale University Press, 2003 HANDOUT. WEBSTER RESERVE
ONLINE www.efn.org/~acd/vite/VasariLives.html. WEBSTER LIBRARY

Jan. 16  LEONARDO DA VINCI: PART TWO.
a) Student presentations on the readings, and discussion
Readings for this class
Ames-Lewis, Francis, short excerpts “Correspondence : Isabella and Leonardo
the artistic relationship between Isabella d'Este and Leonardo da Vinci,
1500-1506,” Yale University Press, 2012 HANDOUT; WEBSTER RESERVE.
Bourdieu, Pierre excerpt TBA
Da Vinci, Leonardo, short excerpts from his writings. HANDOUT.
Foucault, Michel, Introduction and Chapter One, “The Discursive Regularities,”
The Archaeology of Knowledge, Routledge (1972), 2002. WEBSTER
Online:www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/.../foucault.ht
Friesen, Ilse “Leonardo da Vinci’s Unorthodox Iconography: The Madonna with
the Cat,” Revue d’art canadienne / Canadian Art Review, XVI, I, 1989, 19-28, JSTOR
WEBSTER RESERVE.

Jan. 23 MIXED RACE BAROQUE & CLASSICAL COMPOSERS IN LATIN AMERICA
a) Presentation on the composers and their music (VN)
b) Student presentations on the readings, and discussion

Readings for this class
CD notes excerpts. HANDOUT
Katzew, Illona, Casta painting: images of race in eighteenth-century Mexico, Yale University Press, 2004, WEBSTER RESERVE
U-TUBE music selections. Titles to be announced.

Jan. 30 LATIN AMERICAN BAROQUE cont.
a) Student Presentations on the readings, and discussion

Readings for this class
Feb. 6 BEETHOVEN’S CAREER AND RECESSION
a) Presentation on Beethoven and his music (VN)
b) Student presentations on the readings, and discussion

Readings for this class
DeNora, Tia, *Beethoven and the construction of genius: musical politics in Vienna, 1792-1803*, University of California Press ELECTRONIC RESOURCE MCGILL LIBRARY. WEBSTER RESERVE TRY GOOGLE BOOKS ONLINE

Reviews of DeNora, Tia, *Beethoven and the construction of genius* HANDOUT
U-TUBE music selections. Titles to be announced.

Feb. 13 BEETHOVEN’S CAREER AND RECESSION cont.
a) Student presentations on the readings, and discussion
b) Students’ research reports

Readings for this class

Short Texts by Bettina von Arnhem, James Power, E.M. Forster etc. HANDOUT

Feb. 20 NO CLASS: READING WEEK

Feb. 27 BEETHOVEN’S CAREER AND RECESSION cont.
a) Student presentations on the readings, and discussion
b) Students’ research reports

Readings for this class
Adorno, Theodore, selections TBA TOD

**Mar. 6** THE CORRIDART EXHIBITION OF 1976

a) Presentation on Corridart (VN)
b) Student presentations on the readings, and discussion
c) Students’ research reports

**Readings for this class**
Concordia Archives, P119. Corridart collection.  1976-1981. 45 cm text. doc. ca 850 photographs. ca 10 artists' sketches. 6 architectural drawings. 2 videocassettes. 2 sound recordings. 1 artifact  CONSULTATION BY APPOINTMENT Hall Bldg. Room 1015 Tel.: 514.848.2424 (ext. 7775)

Gauvin, Kim Louise, Corridart revisited : excavating the remains, M.A. thesis, Concordia University, 1996,  N 6547 M65G38  ONLINE CONCORDIA SPECTRUM

Descoteaux, Louise, Corridart: La censure, M.A. thesis, Université du Québec à Montréal, 1993


Paikowsky, Sandra, *Corridart Revisited*, Concordia Art Gallery, 2001  N 6547 M6C677  WEBSTER RESERVE

**Mar. 13** TBA.
a) Student presentations on the readings, and discussion
b) Students’ research reports

**Mar. 20** Presentation and discussion of research paper drafts

**Mar. 27** Presentation and discussion of research paper drafts

**Apr. 3** Presentation and discussion of research paper drafts

**Apr. 10** Presentation and discussion of research paper drafts