

Course Syllabus

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Destruction of Images, Books and Artifacts in Europe and South Asia

University of Chicago, Spring 2018

CDIN 50204, SALC 50204, CMLT 50204, SCTH 50204, RLVC 50204, HREL 50204, ARTH 40204

This course offers a comparative perspective on European and South Asian (and occasionally Central Asian) iconoclasm. The comparative study of these traditions will allow us to extend the usual understanding of iconoclasm as the destruction of images to a broader phenomenon of destruction of cultural artifacts and help us to question theories of the image and understandings of materiality as they have developed both independently and interdependently in Europe and in South and Central Asia.

We will ask how and why, in the context of particular political imaginaries and material cultures, were certain objects singled out for iconoclasm? Who was considered to be entitled or authorized to commit their destruction? Through a choice of concrete examples of iconoclasm and discursive critiques or defenses of iconoclasm, we will query how religious and political motivations are defined, redefined, and intertwined in each particular case. We will approach these iconoclastic events through the lenses of philology, history, and material culture. Class discussions will incorporate not only textual materials, but also the close collaborative study of images, objects, and film. Case studies will make use of objects in the Smart Museum, Special Collections at the University Library, and the Art Institute of Chicago.

Class Format

Class sessions will be conducted as a workshop, with presentations and discussion. We will prepare readings and visual materials in advance as groups (it is up to each group to decide its meeting times and frequency). In class we will present ideas and discuss the readings and objects; it will not always be possible to address all points raised in small group discussions, but we should be prepared to discuss all points that arise during group preparation.

Presentations

Each student will be asked to lead once class session, which includes giving a short (approximately twenty-minute) presentation on a particular set of readings or objects. To utilize this as an opportunity for improving our scholarly presentation skills and receiving feedback, we suggest that you [contact the PATHS communication skills program \(https://grad.uchicago.edu/communication/gradtalk-presenting-interviewing\)](https://grad.uchicago.edu/communication/gradtalk-presenting-interviewing) to schedule a one-to-one appointment for training in public speaking.

Grading Rubric

Participation: 40%. This includes:

- Participation in class discussions
- Participation in group preparation of readings and visual materials
- Individual presentations

Final paper (approximately 15-20 pages), 60%

Resource contacts:

Smart Museum: Berit Ness, Assistant Curator of Academic Initiatives (bness@uchicago.edu)

Special Collections: Catherine Uecker, Rare Books Librarian (cuecker@uchicago.edu)

Art History Librarian: Nancy Spiegel (nspiegel@uchicago.edu)

South Asia Librarian: Laura Ring (rin6@uchicago.edu)

Required texts (available at Seminary Co-op)

Elias, Jamal J. *Aisha's Cushion: Religious Art, Perception, and Practice in Islam*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012.

Marie-José Mondzain, *Image, icon, economy: The Byzantine origins of the contemporary imaginary*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005.

Resource contacts

Smart Museum: Berit Ness, Assistant Curator of Academic Initiatives (bness@uchicago.edu)

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SCHEDULE AND READINGS

NB: Please note that readings may be changed per the requirements of the course.

Week One

March 28

Introduction to the Course and Theories of Iconoclasm, Survey of Iconoclasms of Europe and South Asia, Methodological Considerations

Required Readings:

Bruno Latour, "What is Iconoclasm? Or is There a World Beyond the Image Wars?" in Bruno Latour, Peter Weibel, eds., *Iconoclasm*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002, pp. 14-38.

Eck, Diana L. "Chapter 1: Seeing the Divine." In *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*. Chambersburg: Anima Books, 1981.

Adamjee, Qamar. "Seeing in a Sacred Manner the Shape of Things in the Spirit: Power and Wonder in Devotional Art." In Qamar Adamjee, Jeffrey Durham, and Karin G. Oen, *Divine Bodies: Sacred Imagery in Asian Art*. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2018.

Optional Readings:

Belting, Hans. "Image, medium, body: a new approach to iconology." *Critical Inquiry* 31, No. 2 (2005): 302-319.

Brown, Bill. "Thing Theory." *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (2001): 1-22.

Konchok, Pema. "Buddhism as a Focus of Iconoclasm in Asia." In Bruno Latour, Peter Weibel, eds., *Iconoclasm*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002, pp. 40-58.

Week Two

April 4

The Iconoclasm of Epiphanius of Salamis

Required Readings:

Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1992. (Course Reserve Regenstien Library)

André Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968. (Course Reserve Regenstien Library)

Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*. New York: Penguin, 1986 (Course Reserve Regenstien Library)

Olga Solovieva, "Christ's Body versus Christ's Image: The Iconoclasm of Epiphanius of Salamis"

John G. Gager, "Body-Symbols and Social Reality: Resurrection, Incarnation and Asceticism in Early Christianity." *Religion* 12 (1982): 345-363.

Optional: Augustine, two last chapters of *Confessions* and *City of God* [???] St Basil or Gregory?

Week Three

April 11

Images and Their Discontents in Indic Religions

This session investigates how various peoples of South Asia created, interacted with, and critiqued images in premodern South Asia, in the context of 'Indic' religions. Questions that we will wrestle with include: how were images imagined to partake of Divine immanence? How was the agency of images understood? What did images demand of their beholders? What form did critiques of image worship take? We will pursue these questions in the context of both writings and individual events of image creation, destruction, theft, and modification.

Required Readings:

Anantadās. "The Hagiographies of Anantadās : The Bhakti Poets of North India." In *The Hagiographies of Anantadās : The Bhakti poets of North India*, edited by Winand M. Callewaert. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000. "Namdev" and "Raidas."

Ravidas. *The Life and Works of Raidās*. Edited by Callewaert, Winand M. New Delhi : Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 1992.

Namdev. *The Hindi Padāvalī of Nāmdev: A Critical Edition of Nāmdev's Hindi Songs with Translation and Annotation*. Edited by Winand M. Callewaert, and Mukunda Lāṭha. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publishers, 1989.

Cuvāmināta Civācāryar, Ka. *Kāṃikāgamaḥ*. Madrās: Dakṣiṇabhāratārcakasaṅghaḥ, 1975.

Śaṅkarācārya, Kanhaiyālāla Jośī, Bādarāyaṇa., Appayya Dīkṣita., Amalānanda, and Vācaspatimīśra. *Brahmasūtraśaṅkarabhāṣyam*. Ahmedabad: Parimala Publications, 1981.

Davis, Richard: Indian Art Objects as Loot. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (Feb., 1993), pp. 22-48

Optional Readings:

Week Four

Byzantine Iconoclasm

April 18

Required Readings:

Iconoclasm, Papers given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, March 1975, edited by Anthony Bryer and Judith Herrin, 53-58. Birmingham: Center for Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, 1975.

Marie-José Mondzain, *Image, icon, economy: The Byzantine origins of the contemporary imaginary*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005.

Week Five

April 25 (Meet in Smart Museum)

Iconophilia and Iconoclasm in South and Central Asian Islam

In this session we will attempt to understand the different philosophical, religious, and political currents that caused iconophilia and iconoclasm to coexist as practices in medieval and early modern Islamic societies stretching from Anatolia to southern India. We will concentrate on untangling the philosophical, religious, and political, in order to arrive at a better understanding of the particular conditions that gave rise to (or prevented) the destruction of images (in books, in paintings, and in architecture) at a given historical moment.

The class meets at 10:30 am in the Smart Museum.

Required Readings:

Çelebi, Evliya. "An Account of Manuscript Defacement." In Ruggles, D. Fairchild. *Islamic Art and Visual Culture: An Anthology of Sources*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Davis, Richard H. "Chapter 3: Images Overthrown." In *Lives of Indian Images*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997. pp 99-112.

Eaton, Richard. "Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States." In David Gilmartin and Bruce B. Lawrence. *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000.

Flood, Finbarr. "Refiguring Iconoclasm in the Early Indian Mosque." McClanan, Anne L., and Jeffrey. Johnson. *Negating the Image: Case Studies in Iconoclasm*. Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2005.

Gruber, Christiane. "In Defense and Devotion: Affective Practices in Early Turco-Persian Manuscript Paintings." In Rizvi, Kishwar. *Affect, Emotion, and Subjectivity in Early Modern Muslim Empires: New Studies in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Art and Culture*. Leiden: Brill, 2018.

Kumar, Sunil. "Qutb and Modern Memory." Kaul, Suvir, ed. *The Partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.

Optional Readings:

Brubaker, Leslie. "Making and Breaking Images and Meaning in Byzantium and Early Islam." Boldrick, Stacy, Leslie Brubaker, and Richard Clay. *Striking Images, Iconoclasms Past and Present*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2013.

Elias, Jamal J. *Aisha's Cushion: Religious Art, Perception, and Practice in Islam*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012.

Week Six

May 2 (Meet in Smart Museum)***Protestant Iconoclasm in Northern Europe***

The class meets at 10:30 am in the Smart Museum.

Required Readings:

Religion and the Body, edited by Sarah Coakley, 111-130. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Aristide R. Zolberg, "Moments of Madness," in *Politics and Society* 2 (1972): 183-207.

Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. New York: Harper and Row, 1978.

Lionel Rothkrug, "Icon and Ideology in Religion and Rebellion, 1300-1600: Bayernfreiheit and Religion Royale." In *Interdisciplinary Workshop on Peasant Studies* (4th: 1982 : University of British Columbia), János M. Bak, and Gerhard Benecke. *Religion and Rural Revolt: Papers Presented to the Fourth Interdisciplinary Workshop On Peasant Studies, University of British Columbia, 1982*. Dover, N.H., USA: Manchester University Press, 1984.

Stallybrass, Peter, and Allon White. 1986. *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Week Seven

May 9***Book or/as Icon in Central and South Asia***

In this session we will meditate on the problem of the materiality of writing, and the questions that it had generated regarding immanence, materiality, sound, sight, and iconicity in premodern Central and South Asia. We will begin with actual cases of writing being treated as image, icon, or talisman, and 'work backwards' from these historical examples to reconstruct metaphysical notions of writing in Islam and Indic religions.

Required Readings:

Svensson, Jonas. "Relating, Revering, and Removing: Muslim Views on the Use, Power, and Disposal of Divine Words." In Myrvold, Kristina. *The Death of Sacred Texts: Ritual Disposal and Renovation of Texts in World Religions*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010. 31-

Orhan Pamuk, *My Name Is Red*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001 (excerpts)

Rosenthal, Franz. "'Of Many Books There Is No End': The Classical Muslim View." In *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*, edited by George N Atiyeh. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.

Balbir, Nalini. "Is a Manuscript and Object or a Living Being? Jain Views on the Life and Use of Sacred Texts." In Myrvold, Kristina. *The Death of Sacred Texts: Ritual Disposal and Renovation of Texts in World Religions*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010. 107-123.

Myrvold, Kristina. "Making the Scripture a Person: Reinventing Death Rituals of Guru Granth Sahib in Sikhism." In Myrvold, Kristina. *The Death of Sacred Texts: Ritual Disposal and Renovation of Texts in World Religions*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010. 125-

Week Eight**May 16*****Status of Writing in Europe and South Asia (Censorship and Expurgation of Books)*****Required Readings:**

Plato, *Phaedrus*.

Olga Solovieva, "*Corpus libri as corpus Christi: Poetics of Transsubstantiation in the Book of the Holy Trinity*" in Christ's Subversive Body".

Week Nine**May 23*****Encounters of Iconoclastic and Iconophilic Ways of Seeing*****Required Readings:**

Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986.

Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Chicago: Aldine, 1969.

Elias, Jamal. "The Taliban, Bamiyan, and Revisionist Iconoclasm." Boldrick, Stacy, Leslie Brubaker, and Richard Clay. *Striking Images, Iconoclasms Past and Present*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2013. 145-163.

Clément, Jean-François. "The Empty Niche of the Bāmiyān Buddha." In Latour and Weibel (ed.), *Iconoclasm*. 218-220.

Frodon, Jean-Michel. "The War of Images, or the Bāmiyān Paradox." In Latour and Weibel (ed.), *Iconoclasm*. 221-223.

Saba Mahmood, "Religious Reason and Secular Affect: An Incommensurable Divide?" In *Is Critique Secular? Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech*. Berkeley: University of California, 2009. 64-100.

Optional Readings:

See also the writings on Islamic book art by Christine Gruber: <https://umich.academia.edu/ChristianeGruber>
(<https://umich.academia.edu/ChristianeGruber>)

Week Ten

May 30

Conclusions: *Grammars of Iconoclasm*

Guest Lecture by Charles Lock (University of Copenhagen): 'Must we be iconoclasts?'— Lock links the Byzantine thinkers—Nikefor, Theodore the Studite—to Kant and Lessing, and attempts to demonstrate the difficulty of venerating an icon in a world of print. In the very layout of sixteenth-century books we can see how print prejudices the eyes against images.

Required Readings:

Pinney, Christopher. 2001. "Piercing the skin of the idol." In *Beyond Aesthetics: Art and the Technologies of Enchantment*, edited by Christopher Pinney and Nicholas Thomas, pp. 157-180.

Course Summary:

Date	Details
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