

The History of Art Department is willing to let the Subcommittee of the ASC CCI that normally oversees the evaluation of courses for the Historical Studies component of the GEC evaluate International Studies 210 on its appropriateness to that category. However, we would strenuously oppose any effort to make this course as it is presently configured count within the VPA category (as was apparently suggested by the History Department). Our reasons are as follows:

First, we feel it is imperative that VPA GEC status be reserved for courses taught by instructors with both formal training and a strong record of scholarly achievement in the history and criticism of art.

Second, whereas much attention in International Studies 210 is devoted to the rehearsal of historical and political events (the “context,” as it were for a history of art), the role assigned to the examination and explication of individual works of art seems inappropriately limited for a VPA GEC course. Indeed, the sheer amount of material covered in the course—visual and otherwise—would seem to preclude the kind of sustained engagement with art necessary to instill the capacity for real critical and analytic capacities in the students. To what extent, one wonders from looking at the syllabus, has art been reduced to the passive illustration and/or visual exemplification of broader cultural currents?

Furthermore, the course appears to offer no training in the fundamentals of iconographical and visual analysis or guidance towards the establishment of aesthetic discernment in the students. It fails, in short, to meet the principal goals articulated for that category of the GEC, namely: *[to] develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; for interpretation and evaluation; for critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing; and for experiencing the arts and reflecting on that experience.*

Andrew Shelton, Chair
Lisa Florman, Associate Chair
History of Art