HART 208: Art and Empire from Constantine to Justinian  
Fall 2011, 12:10-1:25, Cohen Hall 308  
Professor Robin Jensen, Cohen Hall 115  
Office Hours: M/W 2:00-3:00 or by EMAIL: robin.jensen@vanderbilt.edu

Course Description:
This upper level seminar is an interdisciplinary study of the art and architecture in the Roman Empire of the fourth through sixth centuries CE in the context of political and religious transformations during that era. Particular focus is placed on development of Christian art, architecture, and urban design in first centuries after the conversion of Constantine when Christianity became the official religion of the Empire.

Each week’s lectures, more or less chronologically organized, will take a broad look at specific art historical, religious, and political developments along with a more narrow consideration of key monuments from the period under discussion.

Course Books (other readings posted on OAK):
No single textbook exists for this course. Nor are most of the best readings in affordable or in print volumes. The reading assignments are drawn from a variety of sources and, therefore, even if available online, are posted on Oak. Those that are accessible online and are noted below. Students may wish to purchase some of the more frequently used volumes that are still in print or available through Amazon.com or other vendors in used versions (noted below). All volumes also will be on reserve in the Heard Library. They include:


Krautheimer, Richard. Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics (Univ. of California, 1983). ON GOOGLE BOOKS and AFFORDABLE, USED COPIES AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET.

Lenski, Noel, ed. The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine (Cambridge, University Press, 2006). AVAILABLE ONLINE through ACORN.


Safran, Linda, ed. Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium (Penn State, 2004). ON RESERVE and on OAK, AFFORDABLE COPIES AVAILABLE, both new and used.

Spier, Jeffrey, ed. Picturing the Bible: The Earliest Christian Art (Yale, 2007), ON RESERVE AND STILL IN PRINT.
Other readings are drawn from the following books that are also on reserve or available by WEBACCESS:


Harris, W.V. *The Transformation of Urbs Roma in Late Antiquity* (JRA, supplement 33, 1999).


McLynn, Neil. *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Univ. of California, 1994). AVAILABLE ONLINE through OAK.


Slides from each lecture (power point) will also be posted on Oak just prior to each class period and will be available throughout the semester for study and reference.

**Assignments and Grading (Undergraduates):**

1. Two exams – one midterm (October 5), one final (not cumulative – Date TBA – see the registrar’s schedule of final exams). Each exam will present ten images for identification (selected from the lectures – PowerPoint shows will be posted on Oak), followed by brief (leading) questions about the significance of the works in historical or religious context.

   Each exam = 20% of final grade.
Note: Make up exams only permitted if arrangements are made in advance and a valid reason is given and approved by the Professor.

2. Object analysis – 5 pages, object selected by October 31 (to be approved by professor); written analysis due no later than December 9th. 35% of the final grade.

3. Class oral presentation of object – 15 minutes, beginning the week of November 29. Depending on course enrollment, three or four students will presentation per class session. 15% of the final grade.

In addition: Students are expected to keep up with weekly reading assignments and contribute to class discussion following lectures. No more than two unexcused absences from class will be permitted. After that, each absence will lower the final grade by ½ of a letter (e.g., from an A to an A-). 10% of the grade will reflect quality of class participation.

4. Graduate/Divinity Students (only) – A brief, topical research-oriented essay, approximately 8 pages in length. Topic, précis, and initial bibliography due November, paper due December 12. This will count for 30% of the final grade (recalculating – exams each = 15%, object analysis = 20%, presentation 10% and class participation 10%).

Schedule of readings and lecture:

Introduction – August 24, Introduction to the course

Week 1, August 29, 31. Theme: Imperial Rome at the beginning of the fourth century. Monument(s): The Aureus and Cameo of Constantius I.


Martin Henig, “Art in the Age of Constantine,” from *Constantine the Great*, 65-76 (OAK).


Read: Harold Drake, “The Impact of Constantine on Christianity,”
from *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, 111-36 (ONLINE).

Jas Elsner, “From the Culture of *Spolia* to the Cult of Relics,” *The Arch of Constantine and Late Antique Forms,* Papers of the British School at Rome 69 (2000), 149-84 (OAK).

**Week 3, September 12, 14: Religion and art in Constantine’s Rome. Monument(s): The Lateran Basilica, St. Peter’s Basilica.**


G. W. Bowersock, “Peter and Constantine,” from *St. Peter’s in the Vatican*, 5-15 (OAK).

**Week 4, September 19, 21. Theme: Constantine’s New Rome (Constantinople). Monument: The Column of Constantine.**


Excerpts from Eusebius’ *Life of Constantine* and the *History of the Church* (OAK).
Sarah Bassett, “The Shape of the City,” from *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*, 17-36.

**Week 5, September 26, 28. Theme: Constantine’s Holy Land – Jerusalem. Monument: The Church of the Holy Sepulchre.**


Excerpts from Eusebius, Life of Constantine, Socrates, The History of the Church (OAK).

Week 6, October 3, 5. Review, object choices, and exam.

Review for exam, summary of the class to this point. Object choice due and discussed: October 3. Midterm Exam, October 5.


Read: Neils Hannestad, The Ruler Image of the Fourth Century: Innovation or Tradition, from Imperial Art as Christian Art, 95-107 (OAK).
Sible de Blaauw, “Imperial Connotations in Roman Church Interiors,” from Imperial Art as Christian Art, 137-46 (OAK).
Johannes Deckers, “Constantine the Great and Early Christian Art,” from Picturing the Bible, 87-109 (OAK).

Week 8, October 17, 19. Theme: Milan in the age of Theodosius and Ambrose. Monument: The Sarcophagus of Stilicho.

Olaf Steen, “The Iconography of the Sarcophagus in S. Ambrogio,” from Imperial Art as Christian Art, 283-94 (OAK).
Week 9, October 24, 26. Theme: Ravenna—Catholic, Visigothic, and Byzantine Capitol. Monument: The Basilicas of Sant’Apollinare Nuovo and Sant’ Apollinare in Classe.


Week 10, October 31, November 2. Theme: Constantinople from Theodosius to Justinian. Monument: The Church of Hagia Sophia.


Week 11, November 7, 9. Theme: Rome of the Popes, in the Shadow of the Byzantine Empire. Monument(s): The Basilicas of Sant’Agnese and San Lorenzo.


Excerpts from the *Liber Pontificalis* (OAK).
Robin Jensen, “The Consecration of Churches and the Translation of Relics in the West” (OAK).

Week 12, November 14, 16. Theme: Imperial Motifs in Theology and Liturgy. Monument(s): Byzantine processional crosses.


Excerpts from the Book of Ceremonies (OAK). John Cotsonis, Byzantine Processional Crosses, 8-54 (OAK).

Week 13, November 28, 30: Presentations.

Week 14, December 5, 7: Presentations (graduate students second paper due December 9).