

# White Gold: Global Histories of Porcelain, Pleasure and Power

## SYLLABUS

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**Instructor**

*Sascha Ebeling*

**Quarter:** Summer 2024

**One day course:** 15 June 2024

**Session day/time:** Saturday, 15 June 2024, 10 AM – 4 PM CST

**Course Code and Section:** FFAC10107, 24U1

**Email**

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**Course Overview****Modality**

Remote learning

This course explores the entangled histories of porcelain and the people who created, traded, admired, collected, and died for it, its beginnings in China, its development as a coveted trade commodity in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, the extraordinary passion for porcelain that swept across Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, and the large-scale production beginning in the late nineteenth century for the new middle classes in the US and Europe. Following porcelain will allow us to examine a fascinating global history, tracking its aesthetic, social, political, commercial and technological evolution over the centuries and across many societies and places, from China via the great collections and manufactories in Europe (e.g. Meissen, Sèvres) to the twentieth-century Chicago-based porcelain painting company W.A. Pickard. Drawing on examples from collections around the world, we will study some of the finest pieces of art ever made as well as more humble everyday tableware. We will explore porcelain's connection to violent quests for power, colonialism, exploitation, and social inequality, while also appreciating the enduring beauty of a fundamental human practice.

**Reference Materials**

No reading or other preparation is required in advance of this class. The CANVAS learning site for this course will contain materials for further reading and study for those who would like to keep thinking about the global histories of porcelain.

Please note that for reasons of copyright and privacy of our virtual classroom, **recording any part of this course in video or audio format is strictly prohibited.**

## Course schedule

Session	Topics
10:00-10:45 AM	White Gold: What is porcelain and why should we care? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Course Overview</li><li>• Ways of Studying Porcelain</li><li>• Humans and Pottery</li><li>• The Origins of Porcelain in China</li></ul>
10:45-11:45 AM	Beauty and Power: Europe's Passion for Porcelain (16 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> Century) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Export "China" for Europe</li><li>• The Arcanum: Böttger's "Discovery" of Hard-Paste Porcelain in 1708</li></ul>
11:45 AM-12:30 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meissen</li><li>• Vincennes and Sèvres</li></ul>
12:30 – 1:30 PM	Lunch break
1:30 – 2:30 PM	The 19 <sup>th</sup> Century: Porcelain for the Middle Classes and Mass Production <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• German Porcelain Manufactories: From Bavaria to the World</li><li>• The Rosenthal Story</li></ul>
2:30 – 4:00 PM	Export, Style, Function, and Back to Art: From the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century to Today <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pickard in Chicago</li><li>• Porcelain art today</li><li>• Discussion</li></ul>

### Accessing remote courses

Remote courses are taught through our Canvas platform. Approximately two weeks before your class begins, we will add you to your canvas site using the email address you provided at the time of registration. An invitation will then be sent to that email. Click the "Get Started" button in the email to begin the Canvas login process. For step-by-step instructions, please visit <https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/academic-programs/online/learning-resources/liberal-arts>. Once you've created your Canvas account, you can access any Graham School canvas course for which you are registered at: <https://canvas.uchicago.edu>.

### Accessibility information

Student Disability Services (SDS) works to provide resources, support and accommodations for all students with disabilities and works to remove physical and attitudinal barriers, which may prevent their full participation in the University community. Students that would like to request accommodations should contact SDS in advance of the first class session at 773.702.6000 or [disabilities@uchicago.edu](mailto:disabilities@uchicago.edu).

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For more information, please see [this handout for students](#) as well as the [University’s Policy on Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct](#) and [Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment](#). You can also reach out directly for services and support from the [Office for Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Support](#) by emailing [titleix@uchicago.edu](mailto:titleix@uchicago.edu).

If you, or another student you know, wishes to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, please contact the Sexual Assault Dean on Call through the UChicago Safe App or at 773.834-HELP.

Questions? Contact Zoë Eisenman at [zme1@uchicago.edu](mailto:zme1@uchicago.edu).