



AHS 251A — CRN 10044  
GRADUATE-LEVEL COURSE

## PROSEMINAR IN THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ART HISTORY

**'Before you study the history,  
study the historians.'** (E.H. Carr)

**'Methods of art history, just like pictures, can be dated. This is by no means a depreciation of pictures or methods — just banal historical fact.'** (F. Antal)

This seminar examines the historical foundations of art history through readings of its formative texts. The idea is to jump right in to the key debates that have defined our understanding of artworks and visual expression in the Western Tradition from antiquity onward. The course will begin by dissecting core writings on art, aesthetics and meaning by early philosophers and historians. We will then consider how these ideas enabled the codification of art history as a humanistic discipline during the nineteenth century and fueled its further refinement in the early twentieth. Rather than conceptualizing art history as a series of separate and distinct approaches, we will instead trace a few durable concerns that have shaped its practice. Centrally, the seminar will interrogate an essential complementarity in art history: that artworks exist simultaneously as objects of living encounter and artifacts of historical meaning. Our purpose lies in examining how foundational thinkers balanced a desire to conceptualize the *aesthetics* of art (in the ancient Greek sense of “relating to perception by the senses”) with the need to place such expressive efforts in relationship to *history*.

**Professor Jason Weems**

**Wednesday, 1:10 — 4:00pm, ARTS Seminar Room 333**

For more information on the Department of History of Art, visit: <http://arthistory.ucr.edu>  
Above: Elihu Vedder, *Listening to the Sphinx*, 1863