

## CREATING A STRONG LINK BETWEEN THE CLASSROOM AND THE MUSEUM

### INTEGRATE THE CLASS SESSION INTO YOUR SYLLABUS

A good way to integrate a Museum class session is to prepare students for the visit in the previous class, introducing objects, themes, and ideas that will be employed at the Johnson. Similarly, following up the visit with a related assignment encourages students to connect and implement what they have learned. Instructors and students can access works online in advance or after the class session.

### CONSIDER YOUR PRIORITY—CONTENT OR SKILLS?

Teaching in the Museum does not always require art historical expertise! Some class sessions at the Johnson call for specialist knowledge, but many utilize skills that are analogous to the ones that instructors already employ in class and want to impart to their students. Consider the balance of content and skills in a class session: would listening to extensive information about an artwork benefit your students, or would having them practice close observation (akin to close reading), learn to draw conclusions about visual culture, and confront course themes and ideas in a fresh way suit your learning outcomes?

### GET CREATIVE WITH ARTWORK SELECTION

It's logical to select works of art that relate to your course theme, but keeping an open mind can open up new ways to understand and confront course content. Choosing art that relates in theme but does not speak to substantive course ideas can create an illustrative relationship between works and readings that exhausts quickly. Consider breadth when selecting artworks to discuss with your class. Comparing or contrasting cultures or time periods can often help students understand course themes by asking them to compare what they've learned so far with new material, often exposing new ideas, as well as latent assumptions and biases.

### CLASS ACTIVITIES ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO SEARCH FOR THEIR OWN ANSWERS

A museum can be an intimidating environment for visitors and students, raising larger questions about who is allowed to speak about art and how. Class activities empower students to explore and critically engage with visual culture, following their own interests and forming conclusions about a work in their own words. Activities often involve informal writing to stimulate discussion, peer interaction in groups, and tasks that foster concentrated observation, descriptive language, and analysis (see sample activities and worksheets).



**JOHNSON**  

---

**MUSEUM OF ART**  

---

To schedule a session for your course, please email **Alison Rittershaus** at [akr73@cornell.edu](mailto:akr73@cornell.edu) and allow three weeks' notice to arrange a visit.