The Art and Science of Colour (HIST 133)

Credit Hours: 4

Course Pre-Requisites: None

Instructor Name: Nadhra S. N. Khan, Muhammad Zaheer
Schedule: Monday to Friday (10.00 AM – 12.50 PM)

Course Description

Color is one of the most potent expressions nature uses to communicate ideas intrinsic to life on this planet. Whether it is the clear blue sky gradually turning grey to denote the forthcoming downpour, or the mango dangling from a tree slowly turning yellow promising its sweet nectar—the language of color is discernible to the seeing eye across space and time, to all forms of life. Human mind, consequently, has been using color to express abstract ideas for millennia. Starting with cave paintings dateable to the Paleolithic period (approx. 30000 BCE), down to the 21stcentury visual imagery, color in its different states; as pigments and paints made of organic dyes or synthetic materials, have been used to express human impressions of shape and form. Bedazzled by their aesthetic qualities, viewers of these artworks rarely care to delve into the scientific properties of colors and the molecular rhythms of their substance that play equally vital roles in the overall schema.

This course is designed to introduce the world of colors both by following an artist's hand and through a scientist's lens. Alongside the intellectual attributes of different colors from an art historical perspective, you will be studying molecular structures of natural and synthetic dyes and pigments; color integration with electromagnetic radiation, atoms, and ions and paints integrated with classes of matter. This introductory course aims to offer a desegregated approach to study art and science in a rather unconventional manner, with hopes of introducing new methods of investigating the two fields. Several hands-on activities and demonstrations will not only give you an opportunity to explore the aesthetic side of colors and their application but will also enable you to understand scientific principles involved in the creation of art.