

Aby Warburg and the Afterlife of Antiquity (online, 7 Jul–18 Aug 25)

Online / Luís Krus Centre – Lifelong Learning, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences (FCSH), NOVA University of Lisbon., Jul 7–Aug 18, 2025

Deadline: Jun 23, 2025

Fabio Tononi, NOVA University of Lisbon

Summer School: Aby Warburg and the Afterlife of Antiquity: Art, Culture and Memory.

This course explores the thought of German historian and theorist of art and culture Aby Warburg (1866–1929), analysing some of his seminal works. Warburg is considered one of the founders of modern art history. Two of his most important contributions are the inclusion of different types of artefacts in the study of art history and the conception of art history not as a study of artistic styles and schools, but as a cross-cultural historical discipline, which he named 'science of culture' (Kulturwissenschaft). In conceptualising this discipline, he combined the historical approach (focusing mainly on the political and social ramifications of culture) with other disciplines, such as psychology, anthropology, and religious studies. He applied this method to study the transmission of ancient patterns to Renaissance artists such as Sandro Botticelli and Domenico Ghirlandaio. Warburg defined this phenomenon as the 'Afterlife of Antiquity' (Nachleben der Antike) in European culture, which he mapped in his atlas of images entitled Mnemosyne.

Students will develop appropriate critical and analytical skills through reading and discussing philosophical and interdisciplinary texts on topics related to interdisciplinary research, cultural memory, hereditary memory, empathy, style, symbols, and the role of biology in the creation, transmission, and perception of images. Furthermore, students will learn to navigate theoretical thinking by addressing philosophical questions, including: How to explain the recurrence of certain iconographic motifs in art history? What is the role of biology in cultural studies? What is the role of psychology in the creation of artistic styles? What does it mean to engage in interdisciplinary research? This course addresses these and other questions by focusing on the works of one of the foremost theorists of art and culture, Aby Warburg.

Read more about the Summer course here: <https://www.fcsh.unl.pt/outros-cursos/aby-warburg-and-the-afterlife-of-antiquity-art-culture-and-memory/>

The course will be entirely in English and is intended for undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral students. It is also open to everyone interested in the intellectual biography of Warburg.

Teacher: Dr. Fabio Tononi

Deadline: 23 June 2025

COSTS

General public: 200€

Students: 150€

NOVA FCSH students: 137,50€

For information about the application process and costs, see: <https://www.fcsch.unl.pt/faculdade/centro-luis-krus-formacao-ao-longo-da-vida/escola-de-verao-informacoes-uteis/>

For further questions, contact fabiotononi@fcsch.unl.pt

PPROGRAMME:

7 July–18 August 2025 (13 classes, 25 hours)

CLASS ONE (7 July, 14h00–15h00)

First Teachers and Studies (1886–88)

Ernst Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1970), pp. 25–42.

CLASS TWO (9 July, 14h00–16h00)

The Dissertation on Botticelli (1888–91)

Aby Warburg, 'Sandro Botticelli's Birth of Venus and Spring: An Examination of Concepts of Antiquity in the Italian Early Renaissance', in Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, trans. by David Britt (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 1999), pp. 89–156.

CLASS THREE (14 July, 14h00–16h00)

Warburg's Interdisciplinary Approach (1891–97)

Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, pp. 67–95.

CLASS FOUR (16 July, 14h00–16h00)

The Afterlife of Antiquity

Warburg, 'The Emergence of the Antique as a Stylistic Ideal in Early Renaissance Painting', in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, pp. 271–274.

Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, pp. 96–127.

CLASS FIVE (21 July, 14h00–16h00)

On Leonardo da Vinci (1899)

Warburg, *Three Lectures on Leonardo 1899*, trans. by Joseph Spooner (London: The Warburg Institute, 2019).

CLASS SIX (23 July, 14h00–16h00)

The Stars (1908–14)

Warburg, 'Italian Art and International Astrology in the Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara', in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, pp. 563–592.

CLASS SEVEN (28 July, 14h00–16h00)

The Lecture on Serpent Ritual

Warburg, 'A Lecture on Serpent Ritual', trans. by W. F. Mainland, *The Journal of the Warburg Institute*, 2: 4 (1939), pp. 277–292.

CLASS EIGHT (30 July, 14h00–16h00)

The Theory of Social Memory

Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, pp. 239–259.

CLASS NINE (4 August, 14h00–16h00)

The Life of Symbols (1926–29)

Warburg, 'Dürer and Italian Antiquity', in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, pp. 553–558.

CLASS TEN (6 August, 14h00–16h00)

The Last Project: Mnemosyne

Warburg, *Der Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, ed. by Martin Warnke and Claudia Brink (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003).

Warburg, 'The Absorption of the Expressive Values of the Past', trans. by Matthew Rampley, *Art in Translation*, 1 (2009), pp. 273–283.

CLASS ELEVEN (11 August, 14h00–16h00)

The History of Warburg's Library (1886–1944)

Warburg, 'From the Arsenal to the Laboratory', translated by Christopher D. Johnson, ed. by Claudia Wedepohl, *West 86th*, 19: 1 (2012), pp. 106–124.

Saxl, 'The History of Warburg's Library (1886–1944)', in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, pp. 325–338.

CLASS TWELVE (13 August, 14h00–16h00)

Edgar Wind Interpreter of Warburg (1931/1934)

Edgar Wind, 'Warburg's Concept of Kulturwissenschaft and its Meaning for Aesthetics', in Wind, *The Eloquence of Symbols: Studies in Humanist Art*, ed. by Jaynie Anderson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 21–35.

CLASS THIRTEEN (18 August, 14h00–16h00)

Wind vs Gombrich on Warburg (1971)

Wind, 'On a Recent Biography of Warburg', in *The Eloquence of Symbols*, pp. 106–113.

—

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Freedberg, David, and Claudia Wedepohl (eds), *Aby Warburg 150: Work, Legacy, Promise* (De Gruyter, 2024).

Gombrich, Ernst, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* (The Warburg Institute, 1970).

Sears, Elizabeth, 'Aby Warburg's Hertziana Lecture: 1929', *The Burlington Magazine*, 165: 1445 (2023), pp. 852–873.

Tononi, Fabio, 'Aby Warburg and Edgar Wind on the Biology of Images: Empathy, Collective Memory and the Engram', in *Edgar Wind: Art and Embodiment*, edited by Jaynie Anderson, Bernardino Branca and Fabio Tononi (Peter Lang, 2024), pp. 47–72.

Warburg, Aby, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, translated by David Britt (The Getty Research Institute, 1999).

Reference:

ANN: Aby Warburg an the Afterlife of Antiquity (online, 7 Jul-18 Aug 25). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 6, 2025 (accessed Apr 4, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/49437>>.