



## Modern Art 109

Fall 2019

Tu/Th 1:30-2:45 pm

Kadema Hall 145

Professor Elaine O'Brien

Office: Kadema Hall 190

Hours: Tuesday 3-5 pm

(and by appointment)

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<http://www.csus.edu/indiv/o/obriene/>

**Course description:** This is a survey of avant-garde modern art from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. The first half of the course will focus on the art of Western Europe and the United States. In the second half, we consider case studies of modern art in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Taking a world perspective on Modern art, which was the first truly global visual language, we will see how the aesthetic of newness, originality, anti-academicism, and radical formal invention characteristic of avant-garde modernism was rooted in the universal societal transformation that was modernity: the rise to power of urban middle classes, secularism, positivism, faith in “progress,” individualism, and capitalism. Modern art was the product of the forces of modernization – industrialization, urbanization, colonialism – that transformed the entire world during the era we study.

After defining “Modern” art and “Modernism,” the course begins with the Post Impressionism of Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin and proceeds through the modern movements of Fauvism, Cubism, Expressionism, Constructivism, Dada, and Surrealism: movements that fundamentally reinvented the vocabulary of visual art. The first half of the course concludes with American Abstract Expressionism in the World War II decade that began the final chapter of the Age of Europe. The second half of the course switches to a seminar format with discussions of readings in the modern art of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

*Prerequisites: Upper-division standing and Art 1B, Art 1C or equivalent with instructor approval*

**Course objectives:** I propose ten objectives, but I urge you to formulate your own learning objectives as well. My goal is to offer you the opportunity to:

1. learn about major modern artists, artworks, and concepts and the social, political, and intellectual contexts of global modernity that shaped them
2. achieve a deeper and more focused appreciation of modern art through the anthology assignment

3. advance your visual literacy and vocabulary
4. learn how to discern the relevant (and irrelevant) aspects of artists' lives
5. gain insight into artists' intentions for their artwork from reading their own writings
6. master the meaning of critical terms, beginning with "modern," "modernism," "modernity," "modernist," "avant-garde," "academic," and "global modernisms"
7. become aware of why and how modern art and modernism were so radically different from what came before and why key modernist values have fallen into disrepute today
8. come to an understanding of why there are so few women and non-European artists in the (Western) canon of modern art history
9. be able to see art production from a historical perspective
10. improve skills in writing, research, critical thinking, collaborative learning and communication

To help you achieve these objectives and earn an A in this and other courses see:

- Study Guides and Strategies Website <http://www.studygs.net/>

Take advantage of free Sac State student services:

- CSUS Writing Center: <https://www.csus.edu/undergraduate-studies/writing-program/reading-writing-center.html>
- For support on all academic skills: Visit the Peer and Academic Resource Center (PARC), Lassen Hall 2200, (916) 278-6010, or schedule an appointment online: <https://www.csus.edu/parc/>
- CSUS Tech Center: <https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/>
- CSUS Library instruction: Reference librarians will help you find trustworthy information for your research project. Arts Librarian, Anna Harper, will visit the class to teach Endnote and instruction in finding reliable sources using CSUS research databases. Anna Harper welcomes one-on-one appointments with students: <https://csus.libcal.com/appointments/annaharper>

### ***Minimum time required for a 3-unit course (3 credit hours) at CSUS?***

*As of July 1, 2011, federal law (Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations, sections 600.2 and 600.4) requires all accredited institutions to comply with the federal definition of the credit hour. For all CSU degree programs and courses bearing academic credit, the "credit hour" is ... "One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester." In other words, for every hour in class, two hours of work out of class (6 hours of homework per week for a 3-unit course) are the minimum requirement.*

**Required Texts:** Note: always bring the relevant essay or book to class for discussions.

**Books:** Available to rent or buy at the Hornet bookstore. Copies are on library reserve

- Herschel Chipp, ed., *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book by Artists and Critics*, UC Press, 1984. A classic collection of European modern artists' writings on art.
- Elaine O'Brien, ed., *Modern Art in Africa, Asia, and Latin America: An Introduction to Global Modernisms*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2013

**Essays:** available for downloading on the course website under "Art 109, Readings"

## **Course Requirements and Grade Basis:**

**10% Participation:** Good participation is how much you help yourself and others learn: a positive, questioning, engaged *attitude* toward the class. This is evident in attendance, being on time, attentiveness, informed engagement in discussions, and note-taking.

- **Note taking:** The first part of the course is lecture based. Information presented in lecture contains information and central concepts of the course. Your knowledge of what was presented will be tested on exams.
- **Participation during small-group discussion:** The second part of the course is largely discussion based. You will be asked to join in small-group discussions where your participation (how much you help others learn) is most important.
  - Please do not leave your discussion group to talk with me individually during class time about personal matters. [Talk with me after class if it's a quick question or comment. See me during office hours or email me for an appointment if it's a personal or complicated issue requiring privacy and my full attention.]
  - Never leave the classroom during small-group discussions unless you have an emergency.
- **Attendance policy**
  - *Two unexcused absences reduce your grade by half a letter grade; three reduce it by one letter grade; each subsequent absence reduces your grade by a whole letter. **Five unexcused absences result in automatic failure.***
  - *Chronic (more than 3 times) lateness or leaving early or during class can reduce your grade by one letter.*
    - Illness (yours or your child's) and health emergencies are excused with a medical excuse. You can get a medical excuse from the CSUS student health clinic. If you don't have a medical excuse, come to see me in person during my office hours and tell me what kept you from class. I will probably excuse your absence.
    - Scheduled appointments, transportation problems, and job demands are *not* excused.

Please inform me about family emergencies or any situation that will keep you from class or affect your ability to learn. Do not hesitate to come to see me during my office hours or make an appointment for another time via email. We can also schedule a phone call.

- **NOTE:** *Use of cell phones, laptops, any electronic communication device is forbidden because it distracts other students and shows disrespect for the class. Keep everything turned off and out of sight. Otherwise, I might ask you to leave and mark you absent.*
- **NOTE:** *A dark art history room can be soporific. Sleeping in class, however, means you aren't learning and it brings down class morale, including mine. I might wake you up, ask you to leave class, and mark you absent.*
- **NOTE:** *No eating or drinking please. I will ask you to put it away.*

**NOTE: If you believe, for equal educational access, that you may require academic adjustments for this class, you are encouraged to contact Services to Students with**

**Disabilities (SSWD).** A current accommodation letter from SSWD is required before any modifications, above and beyond what is otherwise available for all other students in this class, will be provided. Contact SSWD at: 714-432-5807 or via e-mail [sswd@csus.edu](mailto:sswd@csus.edu). For more information go to their website <https://www.csus.edu/sswd/>. Note: disability-related academic adjustments are NOT retroactive.

### **Basic Needs Support for Students**

If you are experiencing challenges in the area of food and/or stable housing, help is just a click, email or phone call away! Sacramento State offers basic needs support for students who are experiencing challenges in these areas. Please visit our [Basic Needs website](#) or contact Manager Danielle Munoz in Lassen Hall 3008, [danielle.munoz@csus.edu](mailto:danielle.munoz@csus.edu), (916) 278-6060.

**If you are struggling with feelings of stress, anxiety, or depression; with drug or alcohol abuse; or with family or interpersonal conflict**, personal counseling is available for free to all students. Contact The Well's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), (916) 278-6461.

**If you or someone you know has experienced any type of sexual violence (including harassment, assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking):** The completely confidential campus resources are the campus Confidential Advocate (916) 278-5850 and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (916) 278-6461. You may speak to these confidential resources on campus without the incident being reported to campus officials. You can also contact WEAVE, Inc. Sacramento, which provides confidential support 24 hours a day at (916) 920-2952.

### **Course Assignments and Grade Basis:**

#### **45% reading response papers, 1-page (200 words) each**

*\*Important NOTE: Late reading response papers are not accepted except for excused absences. The response papers are often the basis of class discussions and must be on time so you can contribute to the discussion and get more out of the lectures. If you have an excused absence, attach a note to the late paper and turn it in for full credit.*

The "**RReading**" assignments are indicated on the syllabus schedule.

#### **For each of the readings in the Chipp anthology, *Theories of Modern Art*:**

1. On top of your paper, write your name, date, full name of author or authors, title of the reading(s), and *original* (first) publication date or the date the piece was written.
2. Choose three quotations from the beginning, middle, and end of the each assigned reading that give the *best insights into the work of the artist(s)*.
3. After each quotation, put the author's last name and the page number in parentheses.
4. Conclude your RReading response paper with a paragraph about what you learned about Modern art from the reading(s).

Note: many RR assignments include one than one reading. Try to do all of them in 200 words. You may write one conclusion that considers the week's readings together.

**For each of the readings in the *Global Modernisms* anthology:**

1. At the top left of your paper, write 1) your name, 2) date, 3) author's name, 4) title of the reading including subtitle (put quotation marks around the title), and 4) date of first publication of the article, not the date the anthology was published.
2. Find and quote *the author's thesis statement* in the article. Use quotation marks and put the page number in parentheses next to the quoted thesis statement.
3. Paraphrase the author's thesis statement – put it into your own words and sentence structure. Each paraphrase should be about equal in length to the quotation.
4. *Quote and paraphrase three (3) supporting points* the author makes - from the beginning, middle, and end of the reading.

NOTE: A "Supporting point" is not merely interesting; it gives evidence that supports (proves) the credibility of the author's thesis. A supporting point is often a historical *fact* that the author is using to persuade the reader that his or her claims are true.

NOTE: Read the introduction (headnote) to each article, which I wrote to give you needed background and contexts, but do not select your quotes from it.

5. Conclude with a short paragraph about what you learned about Modern art from the reading.

NOTE: Proving that you *comprehend* the arguments in these readings is the main objective of the assignment. You might need help understanding the reading. Please ask me for help. I want to help you. Come to see me during my office hours or by appointment. We can also make a telephone appointment. You can email me anytime. I try to respond in a day.

**10% Midterm Exam: October 17:** A one-hour cumulative exam consisting of three slide identification questions (see format description below) and one essay question drawn from lectures and readings. I will give you the essay question and go over the exam on October 22.

- Slide identification questions: 1) full name and nationality of artist, 2) title of artwork and 3) date within five years, 4) medium, and 5) historically significant points about the artwork from lectures, class discussions, and readings.
- Your midterm exam grade is based on how much mastery of the material you demonstrate. This includes historical facts (who? what? when? where? why?), and historical contexts learned from lectures, readings and class discussions.

**Suggestions for how to study for an art history test:**

- Form a study group or get a study partner
- Go to the Art 109 PowerPoint lectures on the course website
- Make flashcards – one for every artwork shown in lecture.
  - 1) On the front of the card draw a thumbnail sketch of the artwork with no written information.

- 2) On the back, write down information you need to know about that artwork. Note information from readings, videos, and lectures about the artwork and related artworks.

### **35% Creation of an anthology on a topic of Modern art history**

**10 points** - The anthology topic: due October 31 Subject + 100 words on why you chose it

**15 points** - The anthology proposal: due November 19:

The proposal consists of

- 1) the topic description (revised, final choice)
- 2) the bibliography listing eight (8) strong articles on the topic *in correct Chicago style*.

Note: Your completed anthology will include six (6) of the eight articles.

Note: Your anthology proposal is graded on the originality and appropriateness of the topic, the quality of the selected sources, and the accuracy of citation format. It is worth 15% of your anthology grade.

### **75 Points – The Anthology: Due December 3**

How to create the anthology:

The textbooks for this course are both anthologies, collections of writings by other people. Using them as models, create an anthology of readings focused on a topic in Modern art that you want to know more about. Choose a topic you wish were covered in the course, or a topic about art you identify with personally, or about art that has been neglected in modern art history. Art by women and artists of color needs much art historical attention. Consider your personal interests, learning and career goals.

\*\*Come to see me to brainstorm ideas. I love to do that. You can also email me your ideas. We will come up with a topic you'll enjoy. Always check the WorldCat database to be sure a published anthology on that topic doesn't already exist. Go to the University Library databases for W, scroll down to WorldCat - <https://csus.libguides.com/az.php?a=w>. Login to the library using your Sac State login.

#### Anthology Format:

- Begin with a 500-word introduction that:
  - 1) presents your reader with an overall description of the topic
  - 2) explains the relevance of each of the articles included and explains why they are in the order in which they appear
  - 3) compares the six anthology authors' points of view
- Select *six* excellent essays (articles or book chapters) written by different authors from different times, places, and points of view. Each essay should propose an argument and not be merely informational (as are encyclopedia articles). Articles should not duplicate each other in content or point of view. Authors must be recognized specialists on the subject.

- For each article's introduction (headnote) give the full bibliographical citation (in Chicago Style) and write a brief (c. 100 word) introduction to the reading. Use the article introductions (headnotes) in the *Global Modernisms* anthology as your model. \*\*Each article introduction should include a brief statement of 1) the *expertise* of the author and 2) his or her *thesis*.
- You will be turning in the anthology bound as a book with
  - a title page (Chicago Style)
  - a table of contents (Chicago Style)
  - Clean copies of the articles and chapters you are anthologizing.
    - You don't have to include the entire article or chapter. Cut irrelevant sections but indicate where you have deleted text.
- Have your anthology printed and coil bound at a printer. Staples and Office Depot will copy and bind it for around \$7.

Grading: Your anthology is evaluated on the quality of your selections: expertise of authors, range of authors' positions, and overall unity of the anthology. Your 500-word general introduction and 100-word introductions for each reading are evaluated on the quality of your writing, critical and analytic thinking, and how well the content satisfies the assignment requirements. The professional appearance of your anthology is also part of the grade.



Amrita Sher-Gil, *Dressing the Bride*, 1937

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## Schedule of assignments (subject to changes announced in class)

### GENERAL NOTES ABOUT ASSIGNMENTS:

- Assignments are due the *next* class unless otherwise indicated.
- The PowerPoints for lectures are available on the website just before I give them in class.

**August 27: Introduction**

Assignment:

- **Upload a photograph of you to your Canvas profile.** Check out the resources for the course on the website and Canvas. I will post grades on Canvas.

RReading Response: Marshall Berman, from Introduction to *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (Download from Art 109 "Readings" webpage.)

NOTE: for this article, follow the RReading Response directions for articles in the *Global Modernisms* anthology. See page 4 of the syllabus

**August 29:** Post Impressionism: Paul Cézanne and Vincent van Gogh

**\*\*Exchange contact information with two students**

RReading Response: Chipp pp. 24-47. *The Letters of Van Gogh*

**September 3:** Post Impressionism: Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin

RReading Response: Introduction, pp. 48-57, to section on Symbolism and Other Subjectivist Tendencies

**September 5:** Symbolism

RReading Response: Chipp: selections from pp. 58-71: "Feeling and Thought" (1885); "Notes Synthétiques" (1888); "Memory" (1892); "Gauguin on His Paintings" pp. 67-71; "Gauguin on Primitivism" pp. 78 & 79 and "Life of a Savage" (1903), p. 84.

**September 10:**

Symbolism

~~RReading Response: Chipp: selections from "Symbolist Theories" pp. 81-94; G-Albert Aurier, from "Essay on a New Method of Criticism," 1890-1893; "The Symbolist Painters," 1892; and Maurice Denis, from "Definition of Neotraditionism," 1890 (just section #1, which is a famous one-sentence "manifesto" of abstract painting.~~

**September 12:** Library research class for your anthology

RReading Response: Chipp: Henri Matisse, "Notes of a Painter," 1908 (pp. 130-137), and "Exactitude is Not Truth," 1947, pp. 137-139; and "Testimonial," 1952, pp. 141-143

**September 17:** Wassily Kandinsky

RReading Response: Chipp pp. 152-157: Wassily Kandinsky, "The Effect of Color," 1911; and "On the Problem of Form," 1912 (This essay is worth reading entirely, but you are only required to read to the bottom of page 157)

**September 19:** Cubism: Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque

RReading Response: Chipp: Guillaume Apollinaire, "The Beginnings of Cubism," 1912 (pp. 216-219); Pablo Picasso, "On *Les Femmes d'Alger*," 1933 (p. 266)

**September 24:**

No assignment

**September 26:** Futurism

**RReading Response:** Chipp: “Futurism: Dynamism as the Expression of the Modern World,” Introduction by Joshua C. Taylor (pp. 281-283) F.T. Marinetti, “The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism,” 1908; and “Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto” (pp.284-293); Umberto Boccioni, “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Sculpture,” 1912, (pp. 298-304);

**October 1: Constructivism**

**RReading Response:** Chipp: Naum Gabo, “The Realist Manifesto,” Moscow, 5 August 1920 (pp. 325-330)

**October 3: Dada**

**RReading Response:** Chipp: Richard Huelsenbeck, from *En Avant Dada: A History of Dadaism*, 1920 (pp. 377-382); Marcel Duchamp, “Painting...art the service of the mind,” 1946 (pp. 392-396)

**October 8: Surrealism**

**Extra Credit RReading Response:** Chipp: André Breton, “What is Surrealism?” 1934 (pp. 410-417)

**October 10: Abstract Expressionism**

**Extra Credit RReading Response:** Chipp: Jackson Pollock, “Three Statements,” 1944-1951 (pp. 546-548); Mark Rothko, “The Romantics Were Prompted,” 1947 (pp. 548-549); Barnett Newman, “The Sublime is Now,” 1948 (pp. 552-553); Harold Rosenberg, “The American Action Painters,” 1952 (pp. 569-570)

**October 15: O’Brien away / Class make-up class assignment: mock midterm (required)**

**October 17:**

**October 22: No reading. Study for midterm**

**October 24: Midterm exam**

**RReading Response:** *Global Modernisms*: Elaine O’Brien, “General Introduction: The Location of Modern Art,” (pp. 1-14)

\*NOTE: Follow the syllabus directions on page 4 for the *Global Modernisms* readings.

\*NOTE: The rest of the course will be seminar style with small and large group discussion and short lectures

\*NOTE: You are responsible for the material presented in the *introduction* to each reading, but do not use quotations from the introductions in your RReading Response papers.

**October 29:**

**RReading Response:** *Global Modernisms*: Everlyn Nicodemus, “African Modern Art: An Ongoing Project” (pp. 17-25)

*Global Modernisms*: Steven Sack, “From Country to City: The Development of an Urban Art” (pp. 39- 44); and Elza Miles, “Nomfanekiso Who Paints at Night: The Art of Gladys Mgudlandlu” (pp. 45-48).

NOTE: The Elza Miles piece is very short and does not argue a thesis. For your RReading Response just read it (including the introduction to it) to find the answer to the question of how Mgudlandlu managed to become one of the rare African women in the modern era to become an artist and to be recognized. Write your answer separately from the **RR** for the Sack essay in around 100 words.

**October 31: Anthology topic due**

**RReading Response:** *Global Modernisms*: Michael D. Harris, "Art of the African Diaspora" (pp. 63-72)

**Assignment:** Decide on your anthology topic. Write the topic down on a sheet of paper and (in around 100 words) explain why you are choosing that subject. You may write down two subjects if you are ambivalent and want me to help you choose one or the other. I'll circle the one I think is best (most needed, most doable) and will probably want you to talk it over with me

**November 5:**

**RReading Response:** *Global Modernisms*: Okwui Enwezor and Octavio Zaya, "Negritude, Pan-Africanism, and Postcolonial African Identity: African Portrait Photography" (49-57)

**November 7:**

**RReading Response:** *Global Modernisms*: Frantz Fanon, "On National Culture" (p. 7-88); Aimé Césaire, "Discourse on Colonialism" (89-90); Uche Okeke, "Natural Synthesis" (91-93); Jean Rouch and Ousmane Sembène, "A Historic Confrontation between Jean Rouch and Ousmane Sembène in 1965: 'You Look at Us as if We Were Insects'" (pp. 94-97).

**NOTE:** For each of these short excerpts, read the introductions, find the thesis statement and *one* supporting quotation from each of the texts. Write one concluding paragraph about what you learned about Modern art from the three readings together.

**November 12:**

**RReading Response:** *Global Modernisms*: Melissa Chiu and Benjamin Genocchio, "Introduction: Asian Modern Art: A Case of Alternative, Parallel, and Intersecting Modernisms" (pp. 101-105)

**November 14:**

**RReading Response:** *Global Modernisms*: Partha Mitter, "The Formalist Prelude" (pp. 138-149)

**November 19: Anthology proposal due – Upload to Canvas**

**RReading Response:** *Global Modernisms*: Gennifer Weisenfeld, "Western Style Painting in Japan: Mimesis, Individualism, and Japanese Nationhood" (pp. 165-180)

**November 21:**

**RReading Response:** *Global Modernisms*: Ralph Croizier, "Post-Impressionists in Pre-War Shanghai: The Juelanshe (Storm Society) and the Fate of Modernism in Republican China"

(pp. 254-271); Ni Yide, Pang Xunquin, et al, "The Storm Society Manifesto (October 1932)," (pp. 279-280). Add a quotation from the manifesto and brief commentary to the **RR** for the Croizier essay. Include both readings in your conclusion.

**November 26:**

RR Reading Response (due December 3): *Global Modernisms*: Mary K. Coffey and Roberto Tejada, "Introduction: Modernism in Latin America: Strategic Vanguard" (pp. 283-291)

**November 28:** NO CLASS / THANKSGIVING

RR Reading Response: *Global Modernisms*: Andrea Giunta, "Strategies of Modernity in Latin America" (pp. 302-314)

**December 3: Anthology due** // Assignment: email me a medium-high resolution jpeg of two or three works of art relevant to your anthology topic. I will make a PowerPoint for class presentations of anthologies.

**December 5:** Presentations of anthologies

**Final Exam time: Dec 12, 12:45 - 2:45 pm. Presentation and In-class discussion of anthologies. Anthologies returned. Attendance required**