Art History 116
Topics in Modern & Contemporary Art

Modern Art in Africa, Asia and Latin America: An Introduction to Global Modernisms

Wednesday 3-5:50 pm
Eureka Hall 104
Elaine O’Brien, Ph.D.
Office Hours: Tu 3-5; W 6-7 pm
(and by appointment)
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Course description:
This seminar consists of discussions of readings in the history of African, Asian, and Latin American modern art. There is a research paper (or project for advanced studio majors) and presentations, but no exams. We are using a textbook that I began over five years ago to fill a gap in art history pedagogy. Modern art textbooks were either Eurocentric or narrowly regional and nation based. The premise of this course is that modern art was always global, not merely European, and that interactions among the world’s visual cultures and travelling artists was always already the source of the new vocabulary of art invented by the moderns before the internet and jet travel, long before our contemporary global era.

The Modern period here is loosely the last century of the Age of Europe, from around the 1860s to the 1950s. As we will see, since Modernism is premised on individual freedom of expression, in many colonized places (Africa and India, for example) the chronology of Modernism reaches into the post-colonial decades of the 1960s through the 1980s. Besides learning art history, a key question we will consider, both objectively and subjectively, is whether or not identity (including our own) is located in a time, place and origin culture. Are we citizens of our time and place of origin or are we free of the circumstances of time and place, citizens of the world? Can we be both? Are identities constructs or myths, or is there something « authentic » about them? One objective of this seminar is for you to locate yourself as a creative professional or professional to be. Do you
believe that what you produce is shaped by your « location » and the forces of your childhood and current circumstances?

Your research paper or project will track the influences and intentions of an artist you select whose work explores issues of local/global identity and experience that you find relevant to yourself today. Students with at least 9 upper-division units of art practice have the option to do a project: that is, to produce a work of art (performance, installation, object) inspired by the art of a major African, Asian, or Latin American modern (not contemporary) artist. You will present your research paper or art project in class at the end of the semester. Presentation for research papers is a PowerPoint lecture. Art projects may be presented « live ». Students doing projects can collaboratively arrange a group exhibition.

**Course Prerequisites:** Upper-division or graduate status; completion of the University’s Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement; completion of Art 1B or equivalent; and an upper-division course in a related subject area or instructor’s permission.

**Required textbook :**


NOTE: A copy is on 2-hour reserve in the library under « Art 116 »

NOTE: Always bring the book to class with thesis, key points, talk points and questions marked for discussion.

**Course Requirements and Basis of Grade Evaluation:**

**15%: Participation:**

- Attitude: The success of the seminar for each individual depends on team work. You must be prepared, show engaged listening and responding, respect the opinions of fellow students and try to engage them; ask them questions that might help them clarify their thinking. You are expected to ask frank questions, show an effort to understand and learn from the views of others. Do not monopolize class discussion, but don’t hold back either; contribute often and practice listening and asking questions of other students. Make eye contact with other students when you speak. Good participation could raise your course grade by as much as a whole letter; poor participation can lower it as much.

Attendance policy:

- Each unexcused absence reduces your grade by half a letter grade. Three unexcused absences result in failure.
- Work, transportation problems, and any scheduled appointment are not excused.
- Repeated lateness and/or leaving early can reduce your grade by as much as a whole letter.
- Illness (yours or of someone you take care of) and family emergencies are excused. Tell me in person what happened within a week of your absence, not later.
- No matter how valid your reasons for missing class, however, after four absences, excused or unexcused, you will be asked to withdraw from the course.
If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to SSWD, Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-6955. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or during my office hours early in the semester.

35%: 200-word (one page) reading response papers: double-space, 12-font. For each of the readings indicated on the syllabus.

1. On top put your name, the date, full title of the reading and the author's name.
2. Find and quote the author's thesis statement. (Put the page number in parentheses after the quotation.)
4. Quote 3 key points (one or two sentences) of the author's argument from the beginning, middle, and end of the reading. NOTE: “key points” are not merely interesting points; they must support the author's thesis.
5. Immediately after each quotation, put it in your own words (paraphrase each key point). This is essential since your interpretation may not be the same as other students’.
6. End with the one most important question you got from the reading. These questions will be the basis of small group discussions.

NOTE: Always bring the textbook to class with important passages marked.

Each response paper is graded on a 1-10 scale based on 1) thoughtfulness and evidence of time spent reading to understand the author's argument, 3) quality of question, 4) how well the required format is followed, 5) completeness, 6) grammar and spelling.

5%: Informal In-class commentaries: The purpose is to refresh your memory and help ready you for discussion.

Two parts:

1. At the beginning of each class: Before the collaborative presentation (see below), you will write an informal summary of the main thesis and supporting points of the argument of the week's reading. You may refer to your reading response paper as you write.
2. At the end of each class: After discussion you will conclude the commentary with a paragraph on what you learned and will probably remember. Turn in the commentary with the journal entry at the end of the class. I will mark them with a check plus, check, or check minus, mark them in my roster, and return them to you the following week.

10%: Two collaborative presentations of readings: Reading presentation groups will be selected on the first day of class.

Get together outside of class with your group, discuss the readings for the weeks you are to present and prepare a 10-minute presentation that you will read at the beginning of the assigned class. Make a handout to distribute to the students and me before your presentation. For each reading, identify the author (why is he or she credible?), the thesis question and thesis, key points (supporting points) of the argument, your questions and positions. You do not have to prepare a PowerPoint.
Your presentation is nearly the same as the response paper, which you do not have to do when you give a class presentation.

- **NOTE:** *It is crucial that the work be shared as equally as possible among members of the presentation group.* Begin your presentation by introducing yourselves and a brief explanation of how you collaborated. (For example, a meeting plus email exchanges, phone calls, whatever method you used.)

**35% : 8-page (1800 word) Research Paper** [See below for Art Project option for students with a minimum of 9 upper-division units in studio art practice]

**Topic:** Select an African, Asian or Latin American *modern* (not contemporary) artist whose work deals with the issue of locational identity (That is, they overtly identify as African, Asian, or Latin American) as the topic for your paper. Get my approval of the artist as a topic for you before writing your proposal.

**NOTE:** No more than two students can write on the same artist.

**Format** (Chicago full endnote and bibliographical citation style only. Please do not use parenthetical citations):

- CSUS online Chicago style guide: [http://library.csus.edu/guides/wangh/chicagostyle.htm](http://library.csus.edu/guides/wangh/chicagostyle.htm)
- Online quick guide to Chicago style citations: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

**NOTE:** I will give you a library class on September 5, and I am always available during my office hours to help you find information, focus your thesis, format properly or whatever.

- *If you miss the library lesson in class, you are required to attend a workshop in the library. Bring me the attendance card to get credit:* The library workshop schedule: [http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=202](http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=202) or [http://library.csus.edu/workshops](http://library.csus.edu/workshops)

University reference librarians are always available at the reference desk on the second floor to help you find information. Do not hesitate to ask for help. You can also get help at the Writing Center in Calaveras Hall:

*Use the Writing Center:* For free, one-on-one help with writing in any class, visit the University Reading and Writing Center in Calaveras 128. The Reading and Writing Center can help you at any stage in your reading and writing processes: coming up with a topic, developing and organizing a draft, understanding difficult texts, or developing strategies to become a better editor. To make an appointment or a series of appointments, visit the Reading and Writing Center in CLV 128 or call 278-6356. We also offer real-time online tutoring and small-group tutoring. For current Reading and Writing Center hours and more information, visit the website at [www.csus.edu/writingcenter](http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter).

**NOTE:** Except for excused absences (see above), all late papers are marked down half a letter grade for each class day they are late. See or email me if you have any problems.

**Paper proposal and research bibliography:** Due September 26
Proposal: A one-page (200-word) thesis statement. For definitions of these terms, see website tutorial: http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/thesis_statement.shtml.

Important: The thesis question is the same for everyone. The question is: In what way(s) is the oeuvre (body of work) by the artist you have selected “African, Asian, or Latin American”? How does the artist identify with Africa, Asia, or Latin America? How is it visibly conveyed in his or her art? After you have done some preliminary research, propose an answer to that question and write it up as your thesis statement. The research you do for the paper will be to find out if your answer is correct. If you discover it is not correct, you can change your thesis.

NOTE: I recommend that you see me during my office hours for help selecting your topic and formulating your proposal. You can also email me your thesis statement up to one week before the due date if you want my advice.

Research bibliography: This is a complete list in correct Chicago style format for every source of information available on your topic. The research bibliography is the starting point of your research and tells you if your thesis about the topic has already been published. It should include everything published on your subject in books, articles, films, documentaries, and the web. Primary sources – interviews and unpublished archival research – are cited too. Look in books, catalogues, art encyclopedias, and articles for the citations of their sources and copy them into your research bibliography. You will not use all of the resources you find. The “research” bibliography is not a “selected” bibliography (sources you actually use).
  - Use full-text peer-reviewed articles only. (definition: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/lsl/help/modules/peer.html)
  - Use WorldCat (OCLC) for resources in libraries worldwide that can be ordered through Interlibrary Loan. This is a fabulous resource! Allow a minimum of two weeks.
  - Recommended databases: Use «Art Multisearch», which includes the best databases for art history, including Art Full Text, JSTOR, Project Muse, WorldCat, Academic Search Premiere (EBSCO), and Oxford Art Online
  - Consult the bound Art Index (Library 2nd floor reference area) for magazine articles as far back as a century ago.

First and Second (final) draft have exactly the same requirements:
  - First draft (see below, «second (final) draft, » for requirements) due October 17
  - Second (final) draft due November 28
An 8-page (1800 word, 12 font, double spaced) research paper, including
  - Footnotes
  - “Works Cited” bibliography
  - cover page (Chicago style format) with your name, title of paper, course name, and date
  - Reproductions of all artworks referred to in your paper with figure citations.
  - Staple in upper left corner (*Please do not use plastic sleeves. I might want to make notes on the pages.)
Submit the final second draft in a new, flat, 2-pocket file. Include all the work you've done: the original (marked) proposal, the research bibliography, and first draft. Submit all parts together.

Your grade will be based on overall quality, effort, and presentation from start to finish.

**Grading rubric:**
- Strength and clarity of thesis: 20 points
- Logic of argument development (composition): 20 points
- Strength of visual evidence: 15 points
- How clearly and concisely the conclusion sums up the argument and evaluates the thesis: 5 points
- Quality of scholarly sources: 10 points
- Accuracy of citation usage and format (footnote and bibliography): 10 points
- Quality of writing (grammar, syntax, punctuation, spelling, etc.) and overall presentation = 20 points

100 total points: 100-90=A, 89-80=B, 79-70=C, 69-60=D.

**Note:** This class adheres to CSUS policy on plagiarism. Please review the policy: http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353 Cite quotations and all information that is not general knowledge. Web sources must have full bibliographical information or they cannot be used in your paper. Wikipedia is excellent for figuring out your thesis and for preliminary searches, but it cannot be cited as a source for research papers because the authors are anonymous.

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**Art Project option** for students with at least 9 upper-division units in art studio practice

**Note:** This option requires a one-on-one talk with me to discuss options. If you are interested, please see me before the end of the second week of classes. I have an office hour after our class if you can stay for that. We can also talk on the phone.

**Project description:** Using as inspiration the work of one global modern artist that you have researched, create an installation, object, and/or performance work in any media.

The work should convey some idea of how you see your own spatial and temporal location, how you identify your role as an artist (not as a daughter, son, wife or father, friend, student, worker, etc.) of a particular time and place, and/or of universal time and global location. Think about questions such as what being and not being « home » makes possible and what it precludes. How is your experience in Sacramento in 2012 different from that of the modern artist who inspired you?

**Criteria for evaluation:** You are free to make whatever you want. I will evaluate it on quality of research, use of research to advance you as an artist, sincerity and intelligence of
self-reflection, seriousness of effort, and amount of time spent. I will NOT evaluate the « success » of the formal result, so take a chance. See if you can make an «ugly,» honest, and affecting work.

Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal.... The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different than that from which it is torn....

T.S Eliot, 1920

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**Art Project Proposal and Research Bibliography:** Due September 26

- Follow format guidelines above for research paper proposal and bibliography, but with your artwork objectives in mind.
- Research one artist (as for research paper, above) whose work you admire who identified as African, Asian, or Latin American.
- Research his or her intentions and sources in visual art and find out what other arts, such as music, literature, dance, theater, popular culture, he or she has drawn upon.
- Using the research artist’s work as a springboard, appropriate (fearlessly!) his or her ideas for a work that might be quite unlike anything you have ever made. Write a one page (250 words) proposal for an installation, performance work, or object that communicates something about your own temporal and locational identity.
- Write a thesis statement about your own professional (as an artist) locational identity. For example: «As an art historian, I strive to serve my region as a world citizen. I am aware, however, that my values are shaped and limited by the fact that I am an Irish-American female from an impoverished, East Coast, center-city childhood and upper middle class suburban adolescence. I identify with a generation politicized by the civil rights movements, especially feminism, of the late ‘60s and ‘70s. Since I practice my profession in a regional, not cosmopolitan location, my work aims to bring something of the larger cosmopolitan art world to Sacramento State university students. The project I will present this semester is a course on global modern art...» [Then write a brief description of the project.]

**Art Project progress report:** due October 17: A 250-word update on your progress with photographs and/or sketches or some other visual documentation. Students writing a research paper submit a first draft on October 17, not a progress report.

10%: **Class presentation of your project or paper:** 30-minute illustrated talk. You are required to practice your presentation with me at least one week before you present it to the class. You are responsible for scheduling the practice session. Art project can be presented live in another space. The class can be the viewers/audience. But please discuss that with me ahead of time so we can plan it.

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**Schedule:** Subject to changes announced in class.
NOTE: All readings are from the textbook

Aug 29: Introductions / scheduling collaborative presentations / Showing selection from 1975 film Xala by Ousmane Sembène / Reading and discussion of reading: « A Historic Confrontation between Jean Rouch and Ousmane Sembène in 1965 »

Sept 5: Student presentation and discussion of readings and research paper and project assignments / library research lesson
Note: If you miss the library research lesson, you are required to attend a library research workshop. See syllabus page 4.
Reading assignment (due Sept 12): Part 1: readings #1 (Okeke), #2 (Sack), #3 (Miles).
NOTE: For the Miles reading #3 write only a question, not thesis or key points.

Sept 12: Student presentation and discussion of readings
Reading assignment (due Sept 19): Part 1: readings #4 (Enwezor and Zaya), #5 (Enwezor),

Sept 19: Presentation and discussion of readings and discussion of research proposals
Reading assignment (due Sept 26): Part 1: readings #6 (Harris), #7 (Fathy), #8 (Ukadike)

Sept 26: Research Paper & Project Proposals and Bibliographies due / Presentation and discussion of readings
Reading assignment (due Oct 3): Part 1: readings #9 (Fanon), #10 (Césaire), #11 (Okeke)
NOTE: These three readings are very short excerpts and manifestos. Quote the thesis statement and paraphrase it. Select one key point to quote and paraphrase, and write your discussion question.

Oct 3: Attend O’Brien lecture on primitivism and the global avant-garde in the Library Gallery 3-4 pm / Meet in Eureka 104 at 4:30 for presentation and discussion of readings
Reading assignment (due Oct 10): Part 2: Introduction (Chiu and Genocchio), and readings #13 (Supangkat) and #14 (Mashadi)

Oct 10: Presentation and discussion of readings
Reading assignment (due Oct 17): Part 2: readings #16 (Mitter), #17 (Jamal), and #18 (Tagore)

Oct 17: Research paper first draft due / Art project progress report due
Reading assignment (due Oct 24): Part 2: readings #19 (Weisenfield), #21 (Takeba), and #23 (Tagahashi Sinkichi)

Oct 24: Presentation and discussion of readings
Reading assignment (due Oct 31): Part 2: readings #25 (Croizier), #26 (Dongtian), and #27 (Ni Yide, Pang Xunqin, et al)
Oct 31: Presentation and discussion of readings  
Reading assignment (due Nov 7): Part 3: Introduction (Coffey and Tejada), readings #28 (Retamar), #29 (Giunta)

Nov 7: Discussion of your individual papers and projects / Presentation and discussion of readings  
Reading assignment (due Nov 14): Part 3: readings #30 (Folgarait), #31 (Mosquera)

Nov 14: Discussion of your individual papers and projects / Presentation and discussion of readings  
Reading assignment (due Nov 21): Part 3: readings #34 (Holston), #35 (Stam)

Nov 21: Discussion of your individual papers and projects / Presentation and discussion of readings  
Reading assignment (due Nov 28): Part 3: readings #36 (Darío), #37 (Torres-García), #38 (Vasconcelos), #39 (Oswald de Andrade), #40 (Lispector)  
NOTE: These are very short historical documents: excerpts and manifestos. For the Lispector, which is a poetic reflection on Brasília, just write the author’s main point, your one discussion question, and your favorite sentence.

Nov 28: Final draft of research paper due / Presentations of readings and research papers and projects

Dec 5: Presentations of research papers and projects

Monday, Dec. 10, 3:00 pm-5:00 pm (finals week): Presentations of research papers and projects. If students who created art projects want to show them in a group show off campus or elsewhere on campus, we can do that if it’s planned far enough ahead.

NOTE: There is no final exam. I will return your research papers on December 10, but I will not be holding office hours during final exam week.