CSUN Course Syllabus

Art 404:

**A History of African and Oceanic Art**

Instructor: Peri M. Klemm, Ph.D.

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**Office Hours:** by appointment Tues 1-2pm, Th 9-11am on Zoom

**Course Description:** This course examines central issues in African and Oceanic art history through a series of case studies that examine African and Oceanic art in its historical and contemporary contexts. The class will focus on various art making practices with special attention to the body as subject and object. These arts include masquerades, sculpture, architecture, and body arts. Each week we will discuss the assigned readings in class. Students will present their research projects at the end of the term. The course will include still images and film.

## **Zoom Etiquette and Expectations:**

## When you enter our classroom, please be ready to be seen and herd. Keep your microphone off when you’re not talking but keep your video on (this means that you should be dressed and out of bed). I look forward to seeing you! The expectation is that you come to class having read the assigned materials and ready to participate.

**Core Course Objectives:**  
1. To understand the role and function of African and Oceanic arts within their religious, political, social and/or economic contexts.   
2. To investigate the histories of change in the arts resulting from the impact of Western contact, including colonization, religious conversion, and the introduction of new materials.

3. To demonstrate a general knowledge of important art historical terms, methods, issues, and ideas as applied to African and Oceanic art.

4. To be able to demonstrate research skills including ability to locate, evaluate, organize, and document sources for written assignments and articulate ideas verbally in class.  
5. To recognize, explore, and dispel stereotypes associated with Africa and Oceania, enabling a greater appreciation and respect for their arts.

**Readings:**

All readings and videos, unless noted, are on our course Canvas site.

**Attendance:**

Regular class attendance is extremely important for a successful semester. Absences due to religious observances are excused if I am notified ahead of time.

Lateness to class or from the break disturbs your classmates and professor. Please let me know if you foresee the need to arrive late or leave early **before** the designated class.

**Course Break-Down: (All assignments must be completed to pass this class)**

10%- Class Participation and Presentations

20%- Writing Assignments (2)

30%- Research Paper/Project

20%- Midterm Exam

20%-Final Exam

**Grading Scale:**

A = 100-93% A- = 92-90%

B+ = 89-87% B = 86-83% B- = 82-80%

C+ = 79-77% C = 76-73% C- = 72-70%

D+ = 69-67% D = 66-60% D- = 59-57%

F = 56-0%

**Class Participation and Presentation:** There will be time set aside for the discussion of topics related to the reading and lecture during each class meeting. In addition, each of you will also be responsible for two presentations this semester. The first presentation will consist of a short (5 minute) informal discussion that will critically address and react to key concepts and arguments drawn from the weekly readings (lecture and discussion material may also be incorporated). The objective of your presentation will be to summarize a portion of the reading that interests you, to share your opinions, and to generate questions for the class to foster further discussion. The second presentation will be a brief outline, preferably in Powerpoint, of your research findings at the end of the semester. You must be present for two presentations for credit.

**Research Paper/Project:** This assignment will be gone over in class. Essays are to be typed, double spaced, and 5-7 pages in length (not including images and bibliography). All writing is graded on content, organization, grammar, style, and spelling. Papers are due in class. A late paper will be marked down a half letter grade (5 points) for each day it is late. If you foresee having to turn the paper in late please see me at least a week before the deadline so we can make other arrangements.

**Exams:**

There will be two examinations that will test your ability to integrate the material you have studied. They will include visual identification of key artworks, short answers, and multiple-choice questions. An exam review and key works list will be provided. Essays will be graded on the basis of 1) recall of information, including texts, lectures, films, and still images 2) ability to interpret and critically compare this information 3) clarity and correctness of writing. Details are crucial; broad generalizations with little supporting evidence get little credit. There will be no make-ups or substitutions for the midterm and final. If you are not present, you will not pass the class.

**Assignments:**

All assigned readings/videos are **required** and should be completed before the class meeting for which they are assigned. Be prepared for weekly in-class reading discussions and 2 writing assignments.

**Students with Disabilities:**

If you have a disability and need accommodations, please register with the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) office or the National Center on Deafness (NCOD). The DRES office is located in Bayramian Hall, room 110 and can be reached at 818.677.2684. NCOD is located on Bertrand Street in Jeanne Chisholm Hall and can be reached at 818.677.2611. If you would like to discuss your need for accommodations with me, please come see me.

**Academic Integrity:**

CSUN expects its students and employees to conduct themselves in an honest and professional manner at all times. Talking during class while the instructor or other students are talking is disrespectful. Cheating, plagiarism and disrespect to the instructor and/or other students will also not be tolerated. If a student is caught cheating or plagiarizing in any form, he/she will receive a failing grade for the course and be reported to the university for appropriate disciplinary action.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (January 28)- Introductions and Course Overview

**Week 2 (February 4)- Identifying and Interpreting African Art**

Assignment:

1. Readings/Videos on CANVAS
2. Find an African or Oceanic art-making practice that interests you and begin thinking about your research proposal

**Week 3 (February 11)- West Africa: Arts from Kingdom of Benin, the Yoruba, the Dogon, and the Asante**

Assignment:

1. Readings/Videos on CANVAS
2. Research Paper Proposal Due

**Week 4 (February 18)- Film and Writing Assignment #1**

**Week 5 (February 25)- The Horn of Africa: Arts of the Muslim Oromo and Christian Ethiopia**

Assignment:

1. Readings/Videos on CANVAS

**Week 6 (March 4)- Central Africa: Arts of the Congo**

*Exam Review*

Assignment:

1. Readings/Videos on CANVAS

**Week 7 (March 11)- Midterm Exam**

*Spring Break*

**Week 8 (March 25)- Introduction to the South Pacific**

Assignment:

1. Readings/Videos on CANVAS

**Week 9 (April 1)- Film and Writing Assignment #2**

**Week 10 (April 8) Polynesia: Arts of New Zealand, Hawai’i, Samoa, Tonga**

Assignment:

1. Readings/Videos on CANVAS

**Week 11 (April 15)- Polynesia: Arts of Easter Island**

Assignment:

1. Readings/Videos on CANVAS

**Week 12 (April 22)- Melanesia: Arts of Papua New Guinea**

Assignment:

1. Readings/Videos on CANVAS

**Week 13 (April 29)- Contemporary Art in the South Pacific and Africa**

Assignment:

1. Readings/Videos on CANVAS
2. Prepare a copy of the opening paragraph, thesis statement, and outline of your research paper. You will place it in a CANVAS folder before class.

**Week 14 (May 6)- Class Presentations**

**Week 15 (May 13)- Class Presentations**

#### Research Papers Due

*Exam Review*

**Week 16** **(May 20)- Final Exam**

*Syllabus is subject to change.*