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## **African Visual Arts - 1161-AFS4210VC1161-10055**

### **General Information:**

Instructor: Noelle Theard Phone: (305) 348 - 6860

Office Hours: By Appointment

E-mail: Please use Blackboard Messages; in the event that Blackboard is unavailable, you may email me at: [ntheard@fiu.edu](mailto:ntheard@fiu.edu)

### **Course Description and Purpose**

This course provides a survey of African visual art from the traditional arts of Africa to the contemporary African art movements that are currently energizing global art markets and academic discourses. Students will engage history and aesthetics to comprehend the role that African art has played in both traditional and contemporary African societies. The course will also contextualize the importance of African art on a global scale. Lectures, readings, films, and images explore the breadth of African visual arts. Students will understand the role that African art has played in traditional, colonial, post-colonial and contemporary contexts, and they will understand how historical and geopolitical events have affected African visual arts.

Students will begin by interrogating their own notions of Africa and will be able to analyze the ways in which Africa has been constructed in the popular imagination. Through the study of African history and geography, students will gain a foundational knowledge of the continent and the many countries that comprise it, as well as the role and function of art in traditional African societies. Moving forward, students will study the impacts of colonialism on the African continent, reading both art historical and anthropological texts to deepen their understanding of colonialism's effects on African art. Students will explore issues such as concepts of authenticity, the art/artifact debates, and modernism's appropriation of African art. Particular emphasis will be placed on postcolonial realities in Africa as a result of African independence movements and their effects on African visual arts. The course then incorporates African visual arts in the diaspora, and finishes the semester examining contemporary African visual artists.

### **Course Objectives**

#### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify critical historical moments and art movements in African art.
- Compare and contrast different styles and genres of African art.
- Understand the global and historical significance of African art.
- Evaluate the importance of African art in a global context.
- Synthesize the links between history and art making.
- Critically engage art historical texts.
- Understand how processes of globalization affect African art.
- Critique African art in the context of international global art movements.

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- Appreciate art from the global African Diaspora, as well as continental Africa.
- Explain their personal positions, tastes, and opinions regarding African art

### **GL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- GLOBAL AWARENESS: Students will demonstrate their understanding of how world historical events affect African artists
- and how those artists, through their artistic choices, in turn, influence history.
- GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE: Students will develop an analysis of the short and long term effects of British and French systems of
- colonialism on African society, and particularly on traditional, modern, and contemporary African visual arts.
- GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT: Students will be tasked to engage in their communities to seek out and support African and African Diaspora arts initiatives. They will define problems facing African arts and find solutions to raise awareness of the importance and impact of African visual arts.

### **TEACHING METHODOLOGY**

Lectures, readings, films, and discussions are the core components of the course.

Student engagement and participation via discussion forums is a key part of the course.

The instructor will regularly post relevant articles and encourage students to also post and interact with other students in the class.

Small group dialogs and chats will also be an important component of the class. Students will learn from each other's multivalent experiences as students from many different disciplines and walks of life.

Independent research and critical engagement with the course topics will be encouraged.

### **POLICIES**

Please review the FIU's Policies webpage. The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses.

### **TEACHING REQUIREMENTS & SKILLS**

One of the greatest barriers to taking an online course is a lack of basic computer literacy. By computer literacy we mean being able to manage and organize computer files efficiently, and learning to use your computer's operating system and software quickly and

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easily. Keep in mind that this is not a computer literacy course; but students enrolled in online courses are expected to have moderate proficiency using a computer. Please go to the "**What's Required**" webpage to find out more information on this subject.

Please visit our **Technical Requirements** webpage for additional information.

Please visit our **ADA Compliance** webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

Please visit **Blackboard's Commitment Accessibility** webpage for more information.

For additional assistance please contact **FIU's Disability Resource Center**.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

There are no proctored exams for this course.

There are no required textbooks for this course. All readings and videos will be provided for you via the Blackboard site.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF THIS COURSE**

This is an online course, which means most (if not all) of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same for a traditional course. In fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

### **Students are expected to:**

- Review the how to get started information located in the course content
- Introduce yourself to the class during the first week by posting a self introduction in the appropriate discussion forum
- Take the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with Blackboard
- Interact online with instructor/s and peers
- Review and follow the course calendar
- Log in to the course twice per week
- Respond to discussion boards, blogs and journal postings within 3 days
- Respond to Blackboard Messages within 3 days
- Submit assignments by the corresponding deadline

### **The instructor will:**

- Log in to the course 4 times per week
- Respond to discussion boards, blogs and journal postings within 2 days
- Respond to Blackboard Messages within 2 days
- Grade assignments within one week of the assignment deadline

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## **COURSE COMMUNICATION**

Communication in this course will take place via Messages. All messages should be sent through the Blackboard system. I will respond to messages quickly, so please do not hesitate to contact me.

Messages is a private and secure text-based communication system which occurs within a course among its Course members. Users must log on to Blackboard to send, receive, or read messages. The Messages tool is located on the Course Menu, on the left side of the course webpage. It is recommended that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication.

Visit our **Writing Resources** webpage for more information on professional writing and technical communication skills.

## **VIDEO LECTURES AND COURSE CONTENTS**

Start each week by viewing the brief video lectures I have recorded summarizing the main ideas we are dealing with each week. These lectures will help to contextualize the course materials into the larger themes in the class, and will help you be successful on your weekly assignments.

All of the materials provided to you to view and read on Blackboard are mandatory. Do not skip or skim the contents, the class has been carefully designed to maximize learning and your understanding of the materials.

## **PARTICIPATION**

Students must participate in the online class discussions each week, and are welcome to post links that are related to the course material.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Students will have 12 Weekly Assignments worth 50 points each over the course of the semester. This will establish a routine so that you can manage your time accordingly, and it also ensures that you are keeping up with the course materials.

Most assignments will be composed of five questions, worth 10 points each, and should be answered as comprehensively as possible, usually within one long paragraph per question.

Review the detailed **Turnitin instructions** on how to submit your assignments and how to review the Grademark comments (feedback) from your professor.

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## FINAL REPORT ON AFRICAN ARTIST

Students will write a final 7-10 page research paper on an African artist of their choice.

Review the detailed **Turnitin instructions** on how to submit your assignments and how to review the Grademark comments (feedback) from your professor.

### Course Requirements

12 Weekly Assignments (50 points each)  
Final Report on African Artist  
Discussion Participation  
Total

### Total Points

600  
250  
150  
1,000

Letter	Range (%)	Letter Range (%)	Letter Range (%)
A	Above 940	B- 800 - 839	D+ 670 - 699
A-	900 - 939	C+ 770 - 799	D 640 - 669
B+	870 - 899	C 740 - 769	D- 600 - 639
B	840 - 869	C- 700 - 739	F <599

### WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Date

Tasks

Week 1

To Do:

1. View slideshow on African geography.
2. Read "Africa, Art, and History." pp.14-23 in A History of Art in Africa. New York: Harry Abrams, Inc, 2001.

Assignments:

Introduce yourself on discussion board

Week 2

To Do:

1. Ch 1, "Introducing Africa" and Ch 2, "The Development and Study of African Art." Willet, Frank. African Art. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2002.
2. "Africans Live in Tribes, Don't They?" in Keim, Curtis. Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind. Boulder: Westview Press, 2009.

Assignments:

Participate in the discussions and complete your weekly assignment

Week 3

To Do:

1. Required book - you must read this entire short, art-filled book this week. Eisenhofer, Stefan. African Art. Los Angeles: Taschen Books, 2010.

Assignments:

Participate in the discussions and complete your weekly assignment

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Week 4

To Do:

1. Ch 21, "The European 'Scramble,' colonial conquest, and African resistance in east, north-central, and West Africa." Shillington, Kevin. History of Africa. New York: St Martin's Press, 1995.
2. African Slave Trade – African Holocaust slideshow
3. FILM: "Boma – Tervuren, The Journey" by Francis Dujardin, 1999.

Assignments:

Participate in the discussions and complete your weekly assignment

Week 5

To Do:

1. "Europe, African Arts, and the Uncanny" by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Phillips, Tom. Africa: The Art of a Continent. Munich: Prestel, 1995.
2. "Why Africa? Why Art?" by Kwame Anthony Apiah
3. "Introduction to Art/Artifact: African Art in Anthropology Collections" Susan Vogel Morphy, Howard and Morgan Perkins. The Anthropology of Art: A Reader. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Assignments:

Participate in the discussions and complete your weekly assignment

Week 6

To Do:

1. "The anthropology of African art in a transnational market" and "The quest for authenticity and the invention of African Art" by Christopher Steiner. Steiner, Christopher. African Art in Transit. Cambridge University Press, 1993.
2. FILM: "In and Out of Africa" produced by Ilisa Barbash and Lucien Taylor, 1993.

Assignments:

Participate in the discussions and complete your weekly assignment

Week 7

To Do:

1. Introduction to "The Short Century" by Okwui Enwezor Enwezor, Okwui. The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa: 1945-1994. Munich: Prestel, 2001.
2. Olu Oguibe. "Into the Heart of Darkness."
3. Lumumba – a film by Raoul Peck

Assignments:

Participate in the discussions and complete your weekly assignment

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Week 8

To Do:

1. Intro, Chapter 1

Kasfir, Sidney. Contemporary African Art. New York: Thames & Hudson, 1999.

2. Chapter 2 – Kasfir

3. Slideshow: Cheri Samba

Assignments:

Participate in the discussions and complete your weekly assignments.

Week 9

To Do:

1. "Colonial Imaginary, Tropes of Disruption: History, Culture, and Representation in the Works of African Photographers" by Okwui Enzewor in Guggenheim Museum. "In/sight: African Photographers, 1940 to Present." 1996.

2. "The 1960's Bamako: Malick Sidibé and James Brown" by Manthia Diawara in Elam, Harry

and Kennell Jackson. Black Cultural Traffic: Crossroads in Global Performance and Popular Culture. Ann Arbor: U.Michigan Press, 2008.

3. Slideshow: Seydou Keita and Malick Sidibé

Assignments:

Participate in the discussions and complete your weekly assignment

Week 10 NO ASSIGNMENTS - SPRING BREAK

Week 11

To Do:

1. Contemporary African Artists (links and readings on Blackboard)

Assignments:

Participate in the discussions and complete your weekly assignment

Week 12

To Do:

1. Contemporary African Artists (links and readings on Blackboard)

Assignments:

Participate in the discussions and complete your weekly assignment

Week 13

To Do:

1. Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of required book Contemporary African Art Since 1980.

Enzewor, Okwui and Chika Okeke-Agulu. Contemporary Art Since 1980. Bologna:

Grafiche Damiani, 2009.

Assignments:

Participate in the discussions and complete your weekly assignment

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Week 14 To Do:  
1. Work on your final research papers.

Assignments:  
Participate in the discussions and complete your weekly assignment

Week 15 To Do:  
1. FINAL RESEARCH REPORT on one African contemporary artist.  
2. THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM FOR THIS CLASS.

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