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.

This is a Discipline-specific Global Learning course that counts toward your graduation requirement.

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.

Readings available on the course site, unless listed as part of the three required texts:


COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

GLOBAL LEARNING 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.

ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

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

Discussion boards will be central to maintaining an active learning environment in this 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 and students will be encouraged to share their research with their peers in the discussion forums.

COMMUNICATING WITH INSTRUCTOR

All messages should be sent through the Blackboard system. I will respond to messages quickly, so please do not hesitate to contact me. My virtual office hours are from 3pm-7pm each Monday evening, when I will be available for live chat to answer any of your questions. If you would like to meet with me in person, please send me a Blackboard message and we can arrange for this.
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 quizzes.

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.

GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Type</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>12 Weekly Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 discussion points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Global Learning Essay</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>710 - 739</td>
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QUizzes

Students will have 12 weekly assignments, make up of short essay questions 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 weekly 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.

GLOBAL LEARNING ASSESSMENTS

Students will write a final Global Learning essay over the course of the semester using either MLA or Chicago style, depending on the student’s discipline. The essay will assess: 1) global awareness 2) global perspective 3) global engagement.

In addition, weekly assignments will have at least one question that will assess student’s global awareness, global perspective, and global engagements.

Being that the content of the course is very much aligned with global learning initiatives, students will have ample opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of the principles of global learning throughout the semester.
COURSE CONTENT

Module 1: Traditional Arts of Africa

Week 1: This week we will explore an overview of Africa and African art.
1) View slideshow on African geography.

Week 2: Focused on the foundation, this week we will read a foundation text on African art, as well as a text on mitigating the common blindspots many have when thinking about Africa.
2) “Africans Live in Tribes, Don’t They?” in Keim, Curtis.
Weekly assignment and discussion due by Sunday 11pm.

Week 3: Book will provide a visual reference for traditional African art.
Required book – you must read this entire short, art-filled book each week.
Weekly assignment and discussion due by Sunday 11pm.

Module 2: Colonialism, Modernity, Anthropology, and ‘Authenticity’

Week 4: Better understanding the role that colonialism played in Africa will help students understand the role that art played in context.
2) African Slave Trade – African Holocaust slideshow
Weekly assignment and discussion due by Sunday 11pm.

Week 5: This week we will read inspired essays that bring to light new ways to think about African art.
3) “Introduction to Art/Artifact: African Art in Anthropology Collections” Susan Vogel
   Morphy, Howard and Morgan Perkins. The Anthropology of Art: A Reader.
4) Slideshow: Picasso and Matisse – African Influences.
Weekly assignment and discussion due by Sunday 11pm.
**Week 6:** Understanding the links between the disciplines of art and anthropology is of critical importance to understanding African art - this week we explore further.
1) “The anthropology of African art in a transnational market” and “The quest for authenticity and the invention of African Art” by Christopher Steiner.
Weekly assignment and discussion due by Sunday 11pm.

**Module 3: Post-Colonial African Art**

**Week 7:** Looking at African independence movements, we will analyze how postcolonialism had major effects on African societies, including their art.
1) Introduction to “The Short Century” by Okwui Enwezor
2) Olu Oguibe. “Into the Heart of Darkness.”
3) Lumumba – a film by Raoul Peck
Weekly assignment and discussion due by Sunday 11pm.

**Week 8:** This week we will better understand African contemporary art through case studies of artists.
1) Intro, Chapter 1
2) Chapter 2 – Kasfir
3) Slideshow: Chéri Samba
Weekly assignment and discussion due by Sunday 11pm.

**Week 9:** This week, we will look at the role that photography played in the postcolonial imagination.
3) Slideshow: Seydou Keita and Malick Sidibé
Weekly assignment and discussion due by Sunday 11pm.

**Module 4: Black (American) Art**

**Week 10:** Understanding that Black American art is also a part of African diaspora art, we will learn more about developments on this side of the Atlantic.
1) Intro – Chapter 4 in required book
2) Slideshow: Barkley Hendricks
3) Film by Tamara Davis: Radiant Child, Jean Michel Basquait  
Weekly assignment and discussion due by Sunday 11pm.

**Week 11: Continuing our analysis of Black American art, we will look at artist case studies.**  
1) Chapter 5 – conclusion of Black Art: A Cultural History.  
2) Fred Wilson profile on PBS Art 21  
3) Kara Walker profile on PBS Art 21  
Weekly assignment and discussion due by Sunday 11pm.

**Module 5: Contemporary African Art**

**Week 12: This week we will focus squarely on contemporary art on the African continent.**  
Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of required book Contemporary African Art Since 1980.  
Weekly assignment and discussion due by Sunday 11pm.

**Week 13: This week we will continue our focus on contemporary art on the African continent.**  
Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 of required book: Contemporary African Art Since 1980.  
Weekly assignment and discussion due by Sunday 11pm.

**Week 14:**  
Work on final Global Learning Essays

**Week 15:**  
Final Global Learning Essay due  

**THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM FOR THIS CLASS.**