

ARH-399-001: Special Studies-Issues in Contemporary African Art

4 Credits
Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:00PM-8:20 PM
6/21/11-8/11/11
Art Building: Room 200
Professor: Greg Stuart
Email: gstuart@pdx.edu
Office Hours: By appointment

Syllabus

Course Description:

A thematic investigation into the history of contemporary African art focusing primarily on works made after 1960, the year that many African nations gained independence. This course considers the role that formal and informal institutions, such as museums, biennials, and workshops have had on art produced by those living on the continent and in the Diaspora. Other topics include craft, post-consumer production, archives, and technology in African art. Through a focused examination of this body of work, the course will introduce students to broader concepts of postcolonialism, hybridity, and globalism.

Readings:

There are no required texts for this course. As this is an emerging field of scholarship, I wanted to provide viewpoints from multiple authors on the subjects presented in this class. As such, all readings will be posted in pdf format on the D2L site (<https://d2l.pdx.edu/>).

However, if you would like to purchase a textbook for the course, I recommend the following:

Enwezor, Okwui and Chika Okeke-Agulu. *Contemporary African Art Since 1980*. Bologna: Damiani, 2009.

I also recommend the following as a guide to writing art history papers:

Barnet, Sylvan. *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*. 9th ed. The short guide series. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Pearson, 2008.

Grading/Assignments:

Your grade for this class will be based on your participation in class, weekly written responses to the assigned readings, and a final research assignment, which is broken up into parts.

The breakdown of grading percentages is as follows:

30% Participation and Attendance: As this is a seminar, your participation is crucial to the function of the class. You get 10% of this grade by showing up on time every day. One missed class does not affect your grade. Two missed classes will reduce the 10% grade to a 5%. Three unexcused missed classes and you get 0% and your grade drops a half of a letter for every class after two missed. Tardiness will also affect this portion of your grade, especially if it is frequent. If you miss half or more of the class, it counts as an absence.

In addition, the remaining 20% of your participation will be based on thoughtful class discussion, and note taking.

20% Reading responses: With the exception of the first and last weeks of class, you will have a reading response due every Thursday. These need not be formal papers, but they must demonstrate that you are engaged with the reading. You may ask questions or comment on the readings. We will have small group

discussions of the readings based on your responses every Thursday, so be prepared. Responses should be about a half to a full page and must show that you are doing the reading and thinking critically about what the authors have to say.

50% Final Research Paper: A 6-8 page research paper on the topic of your choice. You will write this in stages as the class progresses. Each student will present on their topic during the last week of class. Sharing research is important! This 50% is broken down as follows:

10% Paper topic proposal and initial bibliography
10% First draft
10% Presentation
20% Final Paper

PSU's policy on plagiarism:

“Plagiarism is the act of claiming someone's work as your own through copying it without giving the creator of the work credit. Plagiarism can also include using another person's theories, ideas, or phrases without proper attribution. The simplest way to avoid plagiarizing is to always cite the sources from which you gather information or develop arguments. Plagiarism is a serious issue and is a violation of the PSU Student Conduct Code http://www.ess.pdx.edu/OSA/osa_b.htm.”

Work not meeting these important guidelines will not receive credit and cannot be made up. ***Be careful. Plagiarism could cause you to fail the course.***

Additional Help

PSU Writing Center (<http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu/index.php>)
Located in Cramer Hall, room 188.
P: 503.725.3570
E: writingcenter@pdx.edu.

Schedule of Classes

NOTE: Readings are listed for the day they are due

WEEK 1: “Mapping” African Art and the (Post)Colonial Workshop

6/21/11
Introductions

6/23/11:
Oguibe, Olu, “In the Heart of Darkness” (abridged) in *Art in Theory, 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2003. pp. 1170-1175.

Kasfir, Sidney Littlefield, “Transforming the Workshop” and other sections. *Contemporary African Art*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2000. pp. 48-63, 68-78.

WEEK 2: Nationalism and Modernism(s) in Postcolonial Africa. Case Studies: Senegal and Nigeria

6/28/11:
Harney, Elizabeth, “Rhythm as the Architecture of Being: Reflections on un Ame Negre” *In Senghor's Shadow: Art, Politics, and the Avant-Garde in Senegal, 1960-1995*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004. pp. 19-48.

Senghor, Léopold Sédar, and George Keithley. “Congo.” *The Massachusetts Review* 15, no. 3 (July 1, 1974): 508-510.

6/30/11: **Reading Response due**

Okeke-Agulu, Chika. "Nationalism and the rhetoric of modernism in Nigeria: The Art of Uche Okeke and Demas Nwoko, 1960-1968" *African Arts* (Spring, 2006). pp. 26-37, 92-93.

WEEK 3: Global Exhibitions and Globalism in Contemporary African Art

7/5/11:

Buchloh, Benjamin. "The Whole Earth Show." *Art in America* (May 1989). pp. 150-159, 211-213.

Hassan, Salah M. and Chika Okeke-Agulu. "The 21st Century and the Mega Shows: A Curator's Roundtable." *Nka Journal of Contemporary African Art* (Spring/Summer 2008). pp. 152-188.

7/7/11: **Reading Response due**

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "A Case for Contamination." *New York Times Magazine* (January 1, 2006). pp. 1-14.

Jameson, Frederic. "Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue." *The Cultures of Globalization*. Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi, eds.. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998. 54-77.

WEEK 4: The African City and the Public Sphere

7/12/11: **Proposal and Initial Bibliography due**

Enwezor, Okwui and Olu Oguibe "Lagos: 1955-1970." *Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis* exh. cat. London, England: Tate Modern, 2001. pp. 44-67.

FILM (in class): Van der Haak, Bregtje M, Pieter van Huystee, and Rem Koolhaas. "Lagos Wide and Close: An Interactive Journey into an Exploding City," 2003.

7/14/11: **Reading Response due**

Rabbat, Nasseer. "Circling the Square." *ArtForum* (April, 2011). pp. 182-191.

WEEK 5: Race and the "African Body"

7/19/11:

Fanon, Frantz. "The Fact of Blackness." *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press, 1967. pp. 109-140.

7/21/11: **Reading Response due**

Enwezor, Okwui, "Reframing the Black Subject: Ideology and Fantasy in Contemporary South African Visual Culture." *Reading the Contemporary: African Art from Theory to the Marketplace*. 1st ed. London: Institute of International Visual Arts, 1999. pp. 376-399.

Bick, Tenley. "Horror Histories: Apartheid and the Abject Body in the Work of Jane Alexander." *African Arts* (no4 Winter 2010). pp. 30-41.

Week 6: Photography and the Archive

7/26/11: **Draft Due**

Enwezor, Okwui, and International Center of Photography. *Snap Judgments: New Positions in Contemporary African Photography* exh. cat. 1st ed. Goettingen: Steidl, 2006. pp. 1-34.

Firstenberg, Lauri. "Representing the Body Archivaly in South African Photography." *Art Journal* 61, no. 1 (April 1, 2002): 59-67.

TBA: Guest Speaker Sarah Farahat.

7/28/11: **Reading Response due**

Kreamer, Christine Mullen, Mary Nooter Roberts, Elizabeth Harney, and Allyson Purpura. "Exhibition Preview: Inscribing Meaning-Writing and Graphic Systems in African Art" *African Arts* (Autumn 2007). pp. 78-91.

WEEK 7: Recyclia, Post-Consumer Production, and Trash in Contemporary African Art

8/2/11: **Meet individually with me to talk about your research project**

NO READINGS

8/4/11: **Reading Response Due**

Binder, Lisa M.. "El Anatsui: Transformations." *African Arts* 41 no. 2 (Summer 2008): 24-37.

Seriff, Suzanne. "Recycled, Re-Seen: Folk Art from the Global Scrap Heap." *African Arts* 29, no. 4 (Autumn 1996): 42-94.

WEEK 8: Final Presentations

8/9/11: **Pt. 1 of class presentations**

NO READINGS

8/11/11: **Presentations Pt. 2**

FINAL PAPERS DUE