

HAVC110
Visual Cultures of West Africa

Summer Session I, 2016
T/Th 1-4:30
Porter D248

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Course Objectives:

1. This course will introduce the student to the arts and visual cultures of west Africa, including permanent arts such as sculpture and architecture, and ephemeral arts, including masquerades, performances, and body arts.
2. This class will study the basic ideas (gender, visual cultures of political systems, spiritual/syncretic aspects of visual cultures, etc.) and cultural institutions (initiations, closed associations, kingship, title associations, etc.) around which the study of African visual cultures revolves.
3. Many different disciplines, including archaeology, art history, history, anthropology, literature, political science, economics, linguistics, and sociology, will be utilized to understand the relationships between peoples living in this complex area and the relationships of their visual culture.
4. No one lives in isolation or remains static through time. In this course, we will concentrate on how the dynamics between different peoples—African kingdoms and peoples, as well as European and Arab presence—has influenced visual systems of this area (and vice versa). We will also cover large spans of time (800 B.C. to the present), keeping in mind that so-called “traditional” or tradition-based arts were made alongside so-called “contemporary” arts, and that the imagined divide between them, as between the urban and the rural, may not be so clear cut.

Class Structure:

Class will be an active lecture and seminar-style discussion. Questions and discussions are encouraged both inside and outside of class. Because information is presented in class that is not available elsewhere, attendance in lecture is essential to success in this course. There is no section.

Textbooks:

All readings are posted on eCommons. In case of outings, I recommend downloading the entire course Reader ahead of time!

Course Requirements & Evaluations:

It is important for you, the student, to carefully consider the requirements for this course and the due dates of the assignments, quizzes, and final. Since it is the summer and you are now enrolled, you will be expected to complete all assignments in a timely fashion and be present at all classes, quizzes and the final. Be aware now that travel plans are not a valid reason for rescheduling the final or missing a quiz. Do not buy that ticket to travel until AFTER the final. If you are unable to fulfill a responsibility or be present in class for the final because of a valid emergency, you must contact me ASAP, if possible **before** the deadline or scheduled test.

Participation (20%)

Your participation will be judged on attendance (documented by daily sign in sheet) and on your active participation in the class itself. You will be given opportunities on a daily basis to contribute to the class. You will also be asked to present one of your critical reviews in class during weeks 2, 3 or 4 (Thursdays). More information will be given during the first class. To understand how participation will be evaluated, please see Grades & Evaluations below. Due to the compacted schedule of the summer sessions, any unexcused absence will result in a failing grade in the course.

Critical writing assignments (30%):

During the summer session, you will turn in three critical responses or reviews from the readings (10% each). One may be a review of a film (at least an hour long), or of additional, optional readings. Separate guidelines will be handed out on how to choose what to write about and what is expected in the critique.

Review/Response 1: June 30

Review/Response 2: July 7

Review/Response 3: July 14

Quizzes (30%):

Quizzes will be held weekly. The three quizzes will test your ability to organize the visual images with the concepts and ideas presented in class lecture, discussions, and readings. For the quiz, I will show you images and ask you to identify them, as well as discuss them, considering the major themes discussed in class. You will be evaluated on both your ability to identify the image and your ability to discuss the issues surrounding the image. The images you will be responsible for will be on eCommons following the week's lecture in which they are discussed. Each quiz only covers images and information presented after the previous quiz—the quizzes are not cumulative. Test dates are:

Quiz 1: June 28 (10%)

Quiz 2: July 5 (10%)

Quiz 3: July 12 (10%)

Final exam (20%):

The final will be a take-home exam due on the last day of class consisting of two short essay questions. During 4th week, you will be given a list of 2 to 3 essay questions that will cover basic issues discussed during the entire course, and 2 to 3 essay questions that cover the material covered during the last week and a half of class. You will choose ONE of each set of questions to answer, for a total of TWO answered essay questions. You will be evaluated on how you are able

to critically synthesize the information from all sources used throughout the class (readings, lectures, discussion, etc.) to address a particular issue, and on your ability to synthesize the last week and a half in a similar manner to the three quizzes. In answering your questions, you must incorporate at least 2 examples and images from class. The exam should be approximately 3 to 5 pages long in total.* **Date of final: Thursday, July 21, 1 p.m.**

Grades & Evaluations:

Performance translates into letter grades as follows:

- C Average performance. Presentation of a reasonable amount of substantially correct factual information relevant to the topic. In discussion, this means that you have looked at the reading before class and attend class regularly.
- B Above average performance. Demonstrated control of factual material in depth, clear exposition and coherent organization. For discussion, this means that your class participation demonstrates that you have done the reading (i.e. you can answer questions and refer to the readings).
- A Excellent performance. Comprehensive factual knowledge, well-organized and well-written, showing independent, critical thinking and originality of insight. For discussions, this means that your class participation shows a careful and critical reading of the text and that you have done some original research. For example, you have investigated the context of the reading, looked up difficult or unusual terms, etc. In addition, your participation in discussion encourages others to talk rather than monopolizing the discussion.

Schedule:

Although we will try to stick to the schedule as closely as possible, the instructor reserves the right to change the schedule.

Week 1A (June 21)

Ritual Reading of the Syllabus

Introduction to "Africa", Art, and Visual Culture

Readings (1): Kasfir "One Tribe, One Style?"; Abiodun and Blier Preface and Introduction to *A History of Art in Africa*

Break

Saharan Rock Art

(IN-CLASS) Readings (2): Lhote "Saharan Perspectives"; Haardt "The Rock Art of Tassili N'Ajjer"

Week 1B (June 23)

Ancient Nigeria

Readings (3): Garlake "The Niger River", pp. 105-115; AND Atwood "The Nok of Nigeria" OR Lamp "Ancient Terracotta Figures from Northern Nigeria" (CHOOSE Garlake and Atwood OR Garlake and Lamp; be prepared to discuss/present in class)

Benue (and Introduction to Islam)

Readings (4): Berns "Ceramic Clues: Art History of the Gongola Valley"; Berns "Ga'anda Scarification" (OPTIONAL)

Break

Kanuri and Hausa (Islam)

Readings (5): Prussin “The Conceptual Environment”

Fulani (Islam)

Readings (6): Prussin “Fulani-Hausa”

Fulani film footage (IN CLASS)

Week 2A (June 28)

QUIZ #1

Ancient Kingdoms (Mali)

Readings (7): Snelder “The History of the Great Mosques of Djenne; Garlake “The Niger River”

The Future of Mud (film, 1 hr) (IN CLASS)

Break

Bamana

Readings (8): Wooten “Bamana Ciwara Complex”

Week 2B (June 30)

REVIEW #1 DUE

Contemporary Mande Arts

Readings (9): Bigham “Issues of Authorship in the Portrait Photographs of Seydou Keita”

Tellem/Dogon

Readings (10): van Beek “Functions of Sculpture in Dogon Religion”; Visona “Dogon” (OPTIONAL)

Break

Senufo and Poro

Readings (11): Forster “Senufo Masking and the Art of Poro”; Gagliardi and Petridis “Senufo Unbound”

Week 3A (July 5)

QUIZ #2

Early Arts, Baga and Coastal Peoples, Nomoli

Readings (12): Lamp “The Welfare of the Clan and the Invention of God”; Lamp “House of Stones”

Sande and Poro

Readings (13): Phillips “The Masquerades of Sande”

Break

Dan and Guro to Contemporary

Readings (14): Adams “Women and Masks among the Western We of the Ivory Coast”

Week 3B (July 7)

REVIEW #2 DUE

Akan worlds

Readings (15): Ross “Come and Try” OR Tschumi “Ghana Fantasy Coffins” (CHOOSE Ross OR Tschumi; be prepared to discuss/present in class)

Baule and Lagoon Peoples (The View from the West)

Readings (16): Visona “View from Lagoons”; Vogel “Baule: African Art, Western Eyes”
Break

Yoruba

Readings (17): Drewel “The Splendor of Ancient Ife”; Thompson “Aesthetics of Cool”;
Readings (18): Enwezor: “Postcolonial Constellation” (OPTIONAL)

Week 4A (July 12)

TRIP TO DE YOUNG MUSEUM!

Readings (19): Berzock and Clark: “Representing Africa in American Art Museums”

Benin (great Benin pieces at the museum)

Readings (19): Perani & Smith “Ife and Benin” (pp. 126-130, 171-182)

Week 4B (July 14)

QUIZ #3, REVIEW #3 DUE

Dahomey

Readings (20): Monroe “Urbanism on West Africa’s Slave Coast”

Igbo & Igbo Ukwu

Readings (21): Derefaka & Anozie “Economic and Cultural Prehistory of the Niger Delta”; Hufbauer and Reed “Adamma”

Film (IN CLASS): Cole “Beauty and the Beast: Two Igbo Masquerades”

Break

Contemporary Arts in Nigeria and Beyond

Readings (22): Picton “Undressing Ethnicity”; Enwezor & Okeke-Agulu “Situating Contemporary African Art: Introduction”; Binder “El Anatsui” (OPTIONAL)

Week 5A (July 19)

Contemporary and Urban Arts

Readings (23): Oguibe “Art, Identity, Boundaries”; Grabski: “Visual Experience in Urban Africa”; Oguibe “In the Heart of Darkness” (OPTIONAL)

Urban Arts in Sierra Leone and Senegal; Transatlantic Dialogue

Readings (24): Okeke-Agulu in Galembo “Introduction to *Maske*”; Roberts “A Saint in the City”

Break

Readings (25): Nunley “Images and Printed Words in Freetown Masquerades.”
PAPER DISCUSSION

Week 5B (July 21)

Readings (26): Vogel, "African Sculpture: A Primer" and Vogel, "African Aesthetics" or
Yai, "In Praise of Metonymy" COMPARE TO AFRIPEDIA AND DISCUSS
FINAL EXAM DUE AND PARTY, AFRIPEDIA SPECIAL PRESENTATION

*If we decide as a class to take a field trip to view the African collection at the de Young Museum, we can alter the exam to be based off of this trip. In this case, in lieu of the second essay that covers the whole course material, you will choose an object and write a focused essay that deals with one or more themes discussed during the course, using three examples from readings.