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A PROPOSAL FOR A SURVEY OF AMERICAN ART HISTORY COURSE:
AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH

by

Fernando Mejia

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of

Arts in

Art History and Visual Culture

at

Lindenwood University

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A PROPOSAL FOR A SURVEY OF AMERICAN ART HISTORY COURSE: AN
INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Art and Design Department
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
at
Lindenwood University

By

Fernando Mejia

Saint Charles, Missouri

May 2022

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: A Proposal for a Survey of American Art History Course: An Intersectional Approach

Fernando Mejia, Master of Arts/Art History and Visual Culture, 2022

Thesis Directed by: Matthew Bailey, PhD.

The purpose of this project is to propose and create a course surveying American art history that currently is not offered at the Los Angeles Community College (LACCD). The creation of this course is important because it will fill a void within the curriculum in art history at LACCD. Most importantly, however, the course will offer students interested in American art an opportunity to take this course at the community college, which will prepare them for upper-division coursework before transferring, allowing them to focus on upper-division courses in the field. The Thesis Project addresses the state-of-field in the teaching of American art history in the Literature Review section. Additionally, the Literature Review discusses ways to create art history courses that are viable, engaging, and inclusive at the community college. This Thesis Project also includes a course proposal, a course outline, and a syllabus.

Acknowledgements

Graduate school is hard. It is demanding and at times exhausting. I would never have completed my graduate degree at Lindenwood University without the help and support of professors, family, and friends. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all.

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Introduction

This Thesis Project for the Master of Arts in Art History and Visual Culture consists of a course proposal for a survey of American art history that currently does not exist in any of the nine community colleges within the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD). The course's inexistence is why this project is innovative. The project includes a course outline and a syllabus suggesting potential readings, resources, and assignments. The proposed course surveys the history of American art from pre-Columbian times to the present. The fact that a course of this nature does not exist at LACCD is surprising and worthy of development as a project, since it will bridge a gap in course offerings, and offer an intersectional approach to the teaching of American art history.

The project developed through several stages. The idea to work on this project came about during the research phase for a paper focusing on creating inclusive American art history courses for the Research and Scholastic Writing seminar, in 2020. A look at the schedule of classes at LACCD indicated that a survey of American art was not part of the art history curriculum. This revelation was both surprising and disappointing.

Part of the project involved discussions with community college administrators in the field of art history and inquiring about the possibility of offering a survey of American art history at their colleges. Initially, there was little support due to concerns over the viability of the course. During a second conversation at another sister college within LACCD, however, there was interest to develop it, provided that the course fit within the Guided Pathways curriculum for art history transfer degrees. Additionally, there were strong recommendations to create a course that is representative of current pedagogical approaches in teaching American art history with an emphasis on intersectionality and student engagement.

The deliverable for the Research and Scholastic Writing seminar was a paper addressing the state-of-field pertaining to creating viable, engaging, and inclusive art history courses. The findings of that paper are summarized in the Literature Review section.

In Directed Thesis I, the focus of the project shifted to researching various methods of writing new course proposals. The information was extensive. However, there were few course proposals available specifically in the field of art history in research databases. The information was nevertheless useful in drafting a course proposal for a survey of American art history.

In the final stage of the project, in Directed Thesis II, the focus was to draft a course outline and a syllabus, along with recommended readings and potential assignments. The search for a textbook made it clear that textbook options correlated closely with the direction of American art history scholarship emerging from the 1960s onward. The current trends in teaching American art history are also reflected in journals and articles written by scholars addressing the state-of-field. These trends illustrate that the field of art history is currently undergoing changes that move the discipline toward reframing art history courses within Guided Pathways¹ for the survival of the discipline at community colleges. The literature indicates that diversifying teaching methods to reach the 21st century student is important to keep student interest in the discipline. Current academic discourse also shows that art historians need to make a concerted effort at presenting an art history that is relevant and inclusive of diverse voices. Finally, the literature reveals that American art history specifically is no longer isolated; it is global. The course I have created for this project reflects these current trends.

Literature Review:

¹ Guided Pathways will be discussed in the Literature Review.

In addressing the state-of-field of the art history discipline, it is vital to first discuss the importance of art history's survival considering Guided Pathways at the community colleges. Simply put, Guided Pathways is a nation-wide reform movement that attempts to facilitate a student's academic college career by providing them with a more structured selection of courses, advising support, and clearer learning outcomes to assist them in completing their academic goals. Supporters of the reform movement argue that the traditional self-serve model led students to "dead ends or unforeseen detours" by allowing them to take too many units unrelated to their majors, thus inhibiting or prolonging their academic career.² Current academic discourse, however, also warns about the dangers of community colleges embracing Guided Pathways, as this streamlined academic plan removes "inessential" classes—and in some cases entire disciplines—in social science and humanities.³

One of the solutions to mitigate the disappearance of art history and allied disciplines is to elevate them to a prominent position within Guided Pathways. In art history, for example, a survey of American art with an intersectional approach can meet not only traditional areas that art history courses meet, but also the "cultural diversity" area that many community colleges in California have adopted recently.⁴

² Meacie Fairfax, "What Is Guided Pathways-and Why Are We Still Talking About It?," *EAB* (blog), April 30, 2020, <https://eab.com/insights/blogs/community-college/what-is-guided-pathways-and-why-are-we-still-talking-about-it/>.

³ "Stevens Point Proposes Adding, Cutting Programs to Prepare for Future," University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, March 3, 2018, <https://www.uwsp.edu/ucm/news/Pages/Repositioning18.aspx>.

⁴ "West Valley College Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum," West Valley College, January 1, 2020, https://www.westvalley.edu/documents/schedules/2021/Winter-Spring/General_Education_Grading_Systems_and_Advertisements.pdf.

But why is art history worth saving in the first place? Why is studying art history important? Most defenders of the discipline, not surprisingly, are art historians and college departments that offer degrees in the discipline. The value of studying art history, for example, is presented to potential students by Lindenwood University's Art History and Visual Culture Department. At Lindenwood University, students learn how to analyze works of art "as products of the cultures in which they were created and to explore such questions as why the object was created, how it was made, who might have seen and appreciated it, and what it may mean to its owners and audiences."⁵ These are important questions to keep in mind as national discussions about decolonization become more prominent. Students of art history are taught to understand the meaning of decolonization in the context of art. They are taught to understand that art history is a powerful medium that is open to interpretation and re-evaluation. They become aware that art history correlates to historical movements that shaped society at one point or another.⁶ Students of art history are taught to be conscious that one way of decolonizing art to redress the past can be done by including "multiple narratives so that it's about different histories and not a story that becomes *the* canon," as curator David A. Bailey has recently declared in a discussion to decolonize art history.⁷

⁵ "Art History and Visual Culture," Lindenwood University, accessed April 6, 2022, <https://www.lindenwood.edu/arts-and-humanities/art-history-and-visual-culture/>.

⁶ Julia Wolkoff, "Three Ways Art History Can Be More Inclusive in 2019," Artsy, January 10, 2019, <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-three-ways-art-history-change-2019>.

⁷ Catherine Grant and Dorothy Price, "Decolonizing Art History," *Art History* 43, no. 1 (February 22, 2020): 10, accessed March 3, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8365.12490>.

Art historians can teach about the importance of art history by engaging students inside and outside the classroom. The general sentiment in pedagogical literature suggests that students need to be drawn to the discipline organically and not by students seeking to meet a requirement in their academic plan alone. For this to happen, the discipline needs to be presented in a way that is student-centered and relevant, as current discussions focus on moving away from the traditional lecture to engage rather than alienate students. While most faculty worry about covering class material through lecture alone, the traditional lecture can include student discussions without worrying about covering everything that the course outline dictates. This method of teaching fosters power sharing between faculty and students to engage in meaningful discussions about art.⁸ In-class discussions can also allow students to reclaim their capacities to think critically when they can interpret artworks according to their perceptions first and then through different methodologies that they learn in class.⁹

Another method to engage students is to teach students skills and concepts that allow them to investigate and represent their own experiences that generate both a personal, relevant, and shared meaning.¹⁰ A potential assignment can include having students write a short research paper about a local artist and presenting their findings to the class for a more relevant and meaningful student experience and “active process” of discovery.¹¹

⁸ Maryellen Weimer, *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2013), 123-124.

⁹ Olivia Gude, “Principles of Possibility: Considerations for a 21st-Century Art & Culture Curriculum,” *Art Education* 60, no. 1 (January 2007): 8, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2007.11651621>.

¹⁰ Gude, “Principles of Possibility,” 7.

Object-based learning has also been highlighted recently in academic discourse to engage students when teaching art history. Nicholas Grindle and Ben Thomas, in “Curating Connections in Art History Curriculum,” suggest that object-based learning is an effective tool for turning an isolated, individual learning experience into a social one that fosters close observation and deep critical thinking. A museum visit offers a suitable avenue to apply object-based learning. Students can, as a formal assignment or extra credit, be encouraged to visit a museum individually or with other students and faculty to experience a work of art in person. A painting’s formal properties like brushstrokes, line, design, and color, for example, can be viewed better in person, offering students a more engaging, concrete, and deeper understanding of the work of art.¹²

Student engagement in art history can also occur when there is an effort to present an art history that is relevant. The surveyed literature for this project revealed that art history courses are questioning the traditional canon and are moving toward reformatting courses that uncover diverse perspectives through diversity and inclusion, paving the way for an art history that is more reflective of the peoples of the United States.

The movement towards diversity and inclusion came from self-reflection and re-examination of the discipline by art historians and scholars in allied fields. In a 2005 round-table discussion about teaching art history, for instance, art historian Irina D. Costache reminded scholars that surveys of art history have remained largely unchanged, focusing mostly on the

¹¹ Thomas Grindle and Ben Thomas, “Curating Connections in the Art History Curriculum,” in *Developing the Higher Education Curriculum Research-Based Education in Practice*, ed. Daily Fung (UCL Press, 2017), 111.

¹² Thomas Grindle and Ben Thomas, “Curating Connections in the Art History Curriculum,” 111.

Western art perspective, and including only sporadic discussions about other cultures throughout.¹³

The re-evaluation of art history has exposed that diversity and inclusion in the discipline is paramount to inviting students to feel welcome and part of the academic discourse within the classroom. Art educator Olivia Gude, for example, argues that diversity and inclusion in art history introduces students to see the world through the eyes of others, understanding the meaning of artworks “in terms of the complex aesthetic, social, and historical contexts out of where they emerge.”¹⁴ She argues further that faculty should represent other cultures and groups of people in classes as dynamic, exploring the multifaceted complexities of ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, and class.

An excellent method to facilitate representations of difference, Gude argues, is by inviting a diverse group of guest speakers throughout the term, using relevant, contemporary media and written materials to include first-hand artist accounts about the reasons why they produce art, and how they developed their artistic methods. The goal of diversity in art history, Gude suggests, “is to effectively encounter other points of view in order to question the centrality of normativeness of one’s own (also culturally specific) point of view.”¹⁵

Another way to redress the lack of diversity in art history and moving toward inclusivity is to introduce voices that have previously been left out of the traditional canon, as Christopher O. Adejumo and other scholars have proposed. These scholars suggest that at the core of a

¹³ Peggy Phelan et al., “Art History Survey: A Round-Table Discussion,” *Art Journal* 64, no. 2 (January 2005): 47, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20068381>.

¹⁴ Gude, 13.

¹⁵ Gude, 11.

movement towards greater diversity, inclusion, and intersectionality, is the eradication of discrimination and prejudice against minorities in public educational institutions in the United States¹⁶ through decolonizing the curriculum by urging practitioners of Western and predominantly white perspectives to make a concerted effort to decenter those perspectives to embrace true inclusion.¹⁷

American art history's movement towards inclusion, diversity, and intersectionality was apparent in reviewing potential textbooks for the course proposal. In the early 2000s, for instance, there was a significant rise in academic discourse focusing on the proliferation of American art history survey scholarship and textbooks. It made sense that American art history textbooks would be more available at the turn of a new century because, as Wanda Corn stated, "the astonishing growth and maturation of American art scholarship since the early 1960s."¹⁸ In her discussion of the state-of-field pertaining to surveys of American art history textbooks, Cynthia Mills pointed out that even though American art history was relatively young compared to other more established specialties, that textbooks like Frances K. Phol's *Framing America*, Angela Miller's *American Encounters*, discussed in Mills' article in 2002 and published in 2008, and David Bjelajac's *American Art* were welcomed additions. Since 1998, Mills mentions, there have been several books focusing on intersectionality and gender diversity.

¹⁶ Christopher O. Adejumo, "Considering Multicultural Art Education," *Art Education* 55, no. 2 (2002): 2, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3193988>.

¹⁷ Richard Hylton, "Decolonising the Curriculum: Art History Lags behind Other Disciplines in Incorporating Art by Black and Ethnic Minorities," *Art Monthly*, no. 426 (May 2019): 12, <https://doi.org/https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A673083221/PPFA/u=sain20269&sid=blookmark-PPFA&xid=e72afba9>.

¹⁸ Cynthia Mills, "Introduction," *American Art* 16, no. 2 (2002): 2, <https://doi.org/http://www.jstor.org/stable/3109379>.

American Encounters by Angela Miller is especially a good option for a survey of American art with an intersectional emphasis now that the textbook is offered free of charge.¹⁹ More importantly, however, is Miller's "organizing theme of historical encounters among diverse cultures," which highlights multiple voices in American art.²⁰ One of the diverse artworks that Miller includes, for instance, is by Jose Benito Ortega, a late 19th century *santero* artist whose work illustrates the rich religious traditions of saint production for domestic and communal use in New Mexico.²¹ The inclusion of Ortega's work is significant. His work provides students a window through which to understand the interconnectedness and transition of Santa Fe first when it was part of the Spanish empire, later when it became a Mexican territory, and finally a state within the Union. Ortega's work illustrates cultural continuity between these periods to the present, as expressions of *santero* imagery are still prevalent in New Mexico and parts of the Southwest.

Even with the rise of American art history scholarship with a focus on inclusion and diversity, however, art historians like Angela Miller and Frances K. Phol faced challenges in deciding which artists to include and which ones to exclude. It is, after all, impossible to cover all American artists in one survey course. This is a reality. "Despite the inevitable omissions," Phol reasons, "I believe that survey texts are still valuable, for they function as effective vehicles

¹⁹ Angela L. Miller et al., *American Encounters: Art, History, and Cultural Identity*, Washington University Open Scholarship, December 12, 2017, <https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/books/39/>.

²⁰ Angela L. Miller, "Honoring a Range of Voices," *American Art* 16, no. 2 (2002): 14, <https://doi.org/10.1086/444664>.

²¹ Angela L. Miller et al., *American Encounters Art, History, and Cultural Identity* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2008), 310.

not only for introducing a broad range of creative expression, but also for addressing the complexity of historical change.”²²

While selecting a textbook that covers everything is seemingly impossible, there are resources that teachers of American art history can use to supplement the main textbook. The Smithsonian American Art Museum, for instance, published a dedicated page for faculty, which provides them with teaching guides and other important resources that are reflective of current academic discourse.²³ Art History Teaching Resources (AHTR) also features a plethora of teaching resources and peer-reviewed articles addressing the state-of-field.²⁴ One of the most innovative resources is offered through Smarthistory. This resource offers short videos about specific works of art that are discussed by experts in the field, often providing students with different perspectives and information that is not included in textbooks. The Center for Public Art History has also recently published *Seeing America*, an Open Educational Resource (OER) textbook “created by Smarthistory with 17 leading museum collections” that examines the history of the United States through visual culture from pre-Columbian times to the modern era.²⁵ *Seeing America* will be used in the course syllabus as a resource to complement readings.

With the expansion of the canon in American art history to include diverse voices, there is also a noticeable increase in scholarship in global art history. The renowned art historian

²² Frances K. Pohl, *Framing America: A Social History of American Art* (New York, NY: Thames & Hudson, 2017), 10.

²³ “Teacher Guides and Resources,” Smithsonian American Art Museum, accessed April 7, 2022, <https://americanart.si.edu/education/k-12/resources>.

²⁴ “Art History Teaching Resources,” Art History Teaching Resources, accessed April 7, 2022, <https://arthistoryteachingresources.org/>.

²⁵ “Seeing America,” Smarthistory, accessed April 7, 2022, <https://smarthistory.org/seeing-america-2/>.

Wanda Corn, speaking in a 2006 symposium focusing on American art in a global context, defined what is meant by globalization. Broadly speaking, Corn states, globalization can be defined by “expanding the canon to include artists of foreign birth or heritage, immigrant artists who are bi or tri cultural, borderland artists, and artists who hop from culture to culture.”²⁶ This definition, according to Corn, is not new. Rather, it is a continuation of the maturation of American art history since 1960s when the so-called “new art history” began to embrace diversity and inclusion. Interest in seeing American art history through the lens of globalism is evident in survey courses at colleges and universities. De Anza College, a community college in California, for instance, offers a course in Multicultural Arts in the United States that encourages students to demonstrate “critical analysis based upon social constructs of race, class, ethnicity, gender and other factors of identity to gain cultural competence in a local, national and global context” at the conclusion of the course.²⁷

Seeing American art history through a global perspective illustrates that American art is no longer thought of as contained only within the borders of the United States. There is now more than ever an international presence of artists and scholars writing about the subject. In fact, the diversity of paper topics presented at the Smithsonian American Art Museum’s symposium, *American Art in a Global Context*, in 2006, revealed the changing tide with topics such as “Narratives about American Art: A View from Abroad” and “The Global Within: Dialogism and Asian American Art,” providing excellent windows to the changing state-of-field. The

²⁶ “American Art in a Global Context,” Smithsonian American Art Museum, accessed April 7, 2022, <https://americanart.si.edu/research/symposia/2006>.

²⁷ Catie Cadge-Moore, “Multicultural Arts in the United States” (syllabus, De Anza College, Cupertino, CA, 95012).

significance of globalism in recent academic discourse indicates that a course surveying American art history should also address this not-so-new, but re-emerging interest in globalism, and the interconnectedness between the United States and different parts of the world.

In conclusion, the completion of this project is the first step towards a more well-rounded curriculum at LACCD. This new art history course will ultimately help students with foundational knowledge in American art history when they transfer and beyond. The objective from the beginning of this project was to create a course that was reflective of current pedagogical methods in teaching art history. To realize the project, it was necessary to investigate the process of new course proposals in higher education, finding along the way, diverse methods that are not standardized, as each campus varies in its proposal approach. However, even with a diversity of course proposal processes, there were common parts in each that can be used to create a generic one. The next step was to research course objectives, learning outcomes, assignments, and textbooks, which was found in similar art history courses at different colleges and surveyed relevant literature. All the gathered information was compiled and presented in the course proposal, the course outline, and syllabus. The surveyed literature addressing the state-of-field suggested that a successful course in American art history is one that can survive within established Guided Pathways guidelines. A successful course is also one that is engaging and inclusive of diverse voices in American art. The course proposal, course outline, and syllabus were created with the research findings in mind.

Project Part I: The Course Proposal

Recent conversations with some art history chairs and other allied disciplines at Los Angeles Community College advise that there is simply little interest in American art history,

and the course now would not be viable within the current Guided Pathways.²⁸ These concerns can be mitigated with the creation of survey of a intersectional American art history course that is essential for foundational knowledge—a course that is also viable, engaging, diverse, and beneficial for students’ success.

An inclusive course surveying the history of American art is important at any community college. It is important because community college students are new to higher education. Students are new to independent critical thinking and the search for knowledge. Their minds are on the brink of seeing and exploring the world for themselves. However, understanding their cultural, social, and political environments requires foundational knowledge. Students’ understanding of the world around them can be discovered through an intersectional survey of American art history.

While some students are exposed to art history generally through a world or Western survey course in high school, a survey of American art history is traditionally not an option.²⁹ The lack of course availability leads directly to a deficiency of foundational knowledge after students leave high school. The need for American art history exposure and knowledge was starkly apparent in a group discussion in 2018, while serving as an academic counselor. At that time, the counseling division at UCLA welcomed a group of twenty first-year community college students, during a time when serious discussions about the removal of Confederate monuments were taking place nationally. Upon questioning students about these important art

²⁸ Marcel Morales (Chair of Social Sciences) in a discussion with the author, November 2021.

²⁹ Donna Howard and Virginia B. Spivey, “AHTR Reports on AP Art History (Part I),” Art History Teaching Resources, March 21, 2015, <https://arthistoryteachingresources.org/2015/03/ahtr-reports-on-ap-art-history-part-i/>.

history issues, very few showed an understanding of the national discourse. They were directed to a more local matter—the removal of a Christopher Columbus bronze statue from Downtown Los Angeles—and received a similar outcome.³⁰ Students were encouraged to search for, and enroll in, a course focusing on American art for a richer and meaningful discussion contextualizing Confederate and controversial monuments within their political, social, and cultural backdrops. However, upon further investigation, a course surveying American art was still not an option at LACCD. The proposed course will bridge the gap of knowledge between high school to community college and beyond.

The viability of a course is a great concern. Can this new course survive? It can survive if it is placed in an important position by making it a required core course for the Transfer Associate of Arts in Art History. The content of the course will be flexible to satisfy areas in Arts and Humanities within the transfer degree. Naturally, the course will also satisfy electives within the art history transfer degree and general education.

The new course will be engaging, and the content will be flexible for faculty to apply diverse pedagogical approaches to engage the 21st century student. Various pedagogical approaches have been discussed in addressing the state-of-field, which highlighted the importance of facilitating student-centered teaching, object-based learning, and out-of-classroom experiences that will promote a deeper learning by involving students in the discovery process of art and its history. For example, faculty can make connections between classroom material and the outside world by incorporating a voluntary trip to the museum, like the Autry Museum of the

³⁰ Pamela Avila, “Downtown L.A.’s Christopher Columbus Statue Is Being Removed for Good,” Los Angeles Magazine, October 12, 2020, <https://www.lamag.com/citythinkblog/los-angeles-columbus-statue/>.

American West in Los Angeles. Virtual tours to local and nationwide museums make trips more feasible and accessible.

The course content will also be inclusive and diverse to redress the history of artists that have been left out of American art history previously. Current pedagogical discourse about intersectional education in art history illustrates the importance of including the work of marginalized groups, as “the canon” emphasizes the Western art history perspective.³¹ It is important to point out that this new course will not attempt to erase the prominent voices that are emphasized in American art. Rather, this course will enrich those voices by allowing students to see the world through the eyes of others, understanding the meaning of artworks, as art educator Olivia Gude explains, “in terms of the complex aesthetic, social, and historical contexts out of where they emerge.”³² One of the fundamental goals of this new intersectional American art history course is to eradicate discrimination and prejudice that minority students face in public educational settings, and to show them that artists of similar cultural backgrounds, too, are represented and important.

The strongest compelling reason to offer this course is to benefit students. California public universities require “geographic/region” art history coursework for art history transfer majors. Other courses satisfy this requirement, but students who are interested in American art history and want to pursue a degree with a specialization in this subject are disadvantaged when they transfer. This proposed course would meet that requirement and remedy that disadvantage.

³¹ Peggy Phelan et al., “Art History Survey,”³⁴.

³² Olivia Gude, 13.

Project Part II: The Course Outline

Section I: Basic Course Information

- I. Subject: Art History
- II. Course Title: A Survey of American Art History: An Intersectional Approach
- III. Units: 3
- IV. Catalog and Course Description: This course surveys the visual arts of the United States from Pre-Columbian times to the present. The class will examine artworks produced in a variety of mediums, including painting, sculpture, photography, prints, installations, and performative art. The approach is both chronological and thematic. We will explore portrayals of race, class, gender, and ethnicity in American art. The art of women, Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Asian Americans, and Euro-Americans will be included.
- V. Class Hours: Lecture: 3 hours per week based on a 16-week schedule; Total hours per term: 54. Students will complete 6 additional hours of learning activities per week outside the scheduled contact hours.

Section II: Course Content and Objectives

<p>COURSE CONTENT AND SCOPE - Lecture: Outline the topics included in the lecture portion of the course (<i>Outline reflects course description, all topics covered in class</i>).</p>	<p>COURSE OBJECTIVES - Lecture: Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to... (<i>Use action verbs - see Bloom's Taxonomy for 'action verbs requiring cognitive outcomes.'</i>)</p>
<p>Introduction to the Class. Overview of American Art Within its Broad Cultural, Historical, and Social Backdrop.</p>	<p>Explain the cultural, political, historical, and economic relationships between the Americas, Europe, and</p>

	Africa, paying close attention to the intersectional context.
American Art and Conquest.	<p>Discuss the influence of the Spanish conquest on Aztec civilization. Analyze the pyramids of Tenochtitlan, as well as monumental structures created by both Europeans and indigenous peoples. Explain the influence of Spanish exploration on indigenous populations of the Southwest. Analyze artworks produced by Pueblo Native Americans, as well as the artworks created by Native Americans in Spanish California. Discuss the role of art production as record keeping in North American indigenous traditions. Evaluate European representations of Native Americans. Analyze the impact of European exploration upon indigenous populations. Discuss burial mounds and effigy vessels prominent in Mississippian Culture. Analyze the power of portraiture to display power in colonial New England and the colonial South. Discuss needlework as part of women's larger contributions to colonial society.</p>
The Early Republic and Defining American Culture and Traditions.	<p>Analyze historical paintings in the context of the War of Independence. Discuss the work of women artists like Sibyl Huntington May, Patience Lovell Wright, and Prudence Punderson during colonial times. Analyze different artistic architectural styles like Gothic Revival, and California Spanish Colonial. Interpret representations of Native Americans before and after the War of Independence in art. Discuss portrayals of African Americans in art before and after the War of Independence. Assess the work of artists from the American Romantic movement. Explain the development</p>

	of still life painting and early American sculpture.
Nature and Nation: The Jacksonian Era.	Explore the relationship between art and sacredness in Native American art in the Northwest Coast. Analyze the symbolism of creation imagery and vision quest in Native American art. Evaluate the rise of landscape painting as a genre. Discuss Thomas Cole and the founding of the Hudson River School and its influence on American landscape painting. Examine the role of Luminism in landscape painting and its influence on Tonalism. Explore scenes of everyday life in American Genre painting. Evaluate portrayals of Native Americans as “nature” and images created by Frontier artists. Analyze the role of women in 19 th century America and the representation of women’s “nature” as wives, mothers, and domesticity in painting.
Art Between the Wars.	Discuss the relationship between art and empire during the Mexican-American War and the portrayals of American identity in art. Identify representations and stereotypes of African-Americans and slavery before, during, and after the American Civil War and Reconstruction periods. Explain the importance of photography within the context of the Civil War as a documentary tool. Explain the rise of Freedom Monuments and their symbolic meaning to American culture. Identify the role of Native American Ledger Art and its centrality to recording history. Analyze images, textiles, and symbols of the Ghost Dance.
Painting During the Gilded Age.	Discuss American painters studying abroad and artistic influences they brought to the U.S. Trace the

	development of American Realism, the Munich School, American Impressionism, and New Romanticism, and their influence on American art. Examine art depictions of the Mythic West. Analyze the rise of Confederate monuments in relation to the rise of Jim Crow laws.
Art and Work Redefined.	Examine artists depicting the working class in art. Discuss the portrayal of women and women's rights. Analyze the evolving portrayal of women as domestic servants.
The Art of Mechanical Reproduction, the Primitive, and the Modern.	Trace the development of the Ashcan School, Modernism, and the Avant-Garde in visual culture. Analyze government-sponsored propaganda created during World War I for the American public. Explore the relationship between Modernism, gender, and sexuality in artistic expressions. Examine the emergence of the Mural Movement, and the lives and arts of American artists in search of the exotic in Mexico. Summarize the emergence of art of the American Southwest. Review the importance of the Harlem Renaissance and its influence on expression in the arts within and outside the black community. Analyze the connection between urban photography and the portrayal of daily life in American society. Discuss women's changing roles as architects and patrons in the domestic sphere.
Art for the People and Art Against Fascism.	Explain the role of the Federal government in funding programs for the arts during the Great Depression. Compare and contrast the use of photography before and after the Great Depression as a means of documenting American life. Examine the portrayal in visual culture of American urban life, the industrial worker, women at work, and rural

	<p>life. Address the rise of art against fascism in the context of the American Artists' Congress. Discuss images of Japanese American internment and American patriotism during World War II. Analyze the impact of social surrealism, and abstraction to promote freedom in visual culture.</p>
<p>From Culture Wars to the 21st Century.</p>	<p>Examine the role of abstract expressionism art as a new form of American art and freedom of expression during the Cold War. Explore the differences between pastiche and parody in visual art expression. Explain the development of popular art and its connection to the consumer revolution. Analyze visual culture from the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War as it relates to protesting through the medium of art. Discuss feminist art of the 1970s in the context of what is personal is political. Discuss feminist art history theorists and how they addressed women's underrepresentation in art history. Explain the social and political background of activism in Chicano/a murals in the 1980s. Compare and contrast Modernism and Postmodernism critical theories in expressions of art. Provide examples of art as activism in the fight against AIDS, racial inequality, and political disenfranchisement. Discuss societal attacks and controversies about public funding for the arts. Discuss the work of contemporary artists like Kerry James Marshall, Kara Walker, Maya Lin, Lorna Simpson, Roger Shimomura, Kiki Smith, Jay Lynn Gomez, and others.</p>
<p>Final examination.</p>	<p>Final examination.</p>

Section III: Suggested Texts

- a. Berlo, Janet Catherine, and Ruth B. Phillips. *Native North American Art*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- b. Bjelajac, David. *American Art: A Cultural History*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2005.
- c. Chang, Gordon H. *Asian American Art: A History, 1850-1970*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008.
- d. Farrington, Lisa. *African-American Art: A Visual and Cultural History*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- e. Gonzalez, Jennifer A., Terezita Romo, Chon Norriega, and C. Ondine Chavoya. *Chicano and Chicana Art a Critical Anthology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019.
- f. Miller, Angela L., Janet Catherine Berlo, Bryan Jay Wolf, and Jennifer L. Roberts. *American Encounters: Art, History, and Cultural Identity*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2008.
- g. Pohl, Frances K. *Framing America: A Social History of American Art*. New York, NY: Thames & Hudson, 2017.
- h. "Seeing America." Smarthistory. Accessed March 16, 2022.
https://smarthistory.org/seeing-america-2/?fbclid=IwAR2WzRk51Ja0nNR1bETXZhJ0VOQ9MuHsYuF_cSkPd-P1nv-IREdB0d2LAXI.

Section IV: Examples of Suggested Representative Assignments that Encourage Critical Thinking

- a. When people outside an indigenous community attempt to describe or understand indigenous arts, it is sometimes through misconceptions like referring to indigenous arts as "primitive," unrefined, and uninteresting. How do these points of view reflect the colonial past? What do these misconceptions tell students about Western European perspectives of indigenous arts? How do these views differ from indigenous understanding of their art objects?

- b. “American” art refers generally to artwork produced by the peoples of those who came to, became part of, or were indigenous to portions of the North American continent that eventually became the United States. When Western Europeans, however, exercised power and cultural dominance after the 15th century, they categorized art produced by minorities to the status of folk or primitive art, as art produced by minorities was viewed through the Western perspective.

Unfortunately, this point-of-view remained dominant until the 20th century. First, select a work of art from before the 20th century that illustrates depictions of Native Americans, Mexican-Americans, African-Americans, or Asian-Americans. What is the artist communicating? How does the artist portray people of non-European descent? Next, select a work of art produced by any of the groups above that was rendered during the 20th through the 21st century. What is the artist communicating? How does this artist’s representation differ from the first?

- c. Scholars often ask, why have women artists been excluded from mainstream art history? While the answer to this question is complex, you may begin by analyzing the lives and works of three female artists. Focus your discussion on these artist’s backgrounds, the obstacles they overcame, and how social, cultural, or political values of their time affected their content and style.

Project Part III: The Syllabus

Course Title: A Survey of American Art History: An Intersectional Approach

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: N/A

Course Description: This course surveys the visual arts of the United States from Pre-Columbian times to the present. The class will examine artworks produced in a variety of mediums, including painting, sculpture, photography, prints, installations, and performative art. The approach is both chronological and thematic. We will explore portrayals of race, class, gender, and ethnicity in American art. The art of women, Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Asian Americans, and Euro-Americans will be included.

Student Learning Outcomes: At the conclusion of this course students will be able to:

- Demonstrate foundational knowledge in intersectional American art history.
- Analyze works of art within their social, economic, political, cultural, ethnic, and historical contexts.
- Examine diverse scholarly perspectives in intersectional art history within a local, national, and global context.

Text and Readings:

Miller, Angela L., Janet Catherine Berlo, Bryan Jay Wolf, and Jennifer L. Roberts. *American Encounters: Art, History, and Cultural Identity*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2008.

Additionally, videos from Smarthistory, *Seeing America* will be assigned. *Seeing America* can be accessed at https://smarthistory.org/seeing-america-2/?fbclid=IwAR2WzRk51Ja0nNRlbETXZhJ0VOQ9MuHsYuF_cSkPd-P1nv-IREdB0d2LaxI

Grading and Assignments:

Assignment	Points Possible
3 Take-Home Essay Exams @ 50 points each	150 pts.
1 Museum Experience Paper	50 pts.
Total	450 pts.

At the end of the course, grades will be computed according to the usual percentage:

90-100% = A	80-89% = B	70-79% = C	60-69% =D	0-59% = F
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Take-Home Essays:

Students will write three take-home essay exams through the end of the term. Each essay should be between 3-5 pages in length, excluding images, title page, and bibliography, formatting it according to the Chicago Manual of Style.

Take-Home Exam #1

Art can serve many purposes. Sometimes art can be purely expressive, but it can also be didactic or propagandistic. When art is didactic or propagandistic, some artists reframe the focus to express positive characteristics about the subject. Idealization of American political and historical identity, for instance, is especially prevalent in the 18th century in American painting.

Select a work of art expressing an idealized American national political identity by Emanuel Leutze, Benjamin West, or John Trumbull, and analyze the aspect or “face” of American identity that is presented. Analyze whether these artistic presentations are historically accurate, and address whether rendering an idealized political identity is ethical in your opinion.

Take-Home Exam #2

Art throughout American history has been used as a medium for political activism. For this essay, analyze two works of art, one from before the 20th century, and one created in recent times. Discuss how these works of art reflect their social and political environments, and how the artists complemented or opposed a social, cultural, political, or economic movement. What did the artists’ work communicate to the public? Was it effective in bringing attention to the issue or issues? How did the public respond to both the artist and artwork that they produced?

Take-Home Exam #3

Art history scholarship has been moving toward diversity and inclusion. In recent decades, for instance, artists of racial minorities, women, and the LGBTQIA community have been elevated and included in art history academic discourse. Discuss the lives and work of two artists whose art has been neglected by mainstream art history and examine how and why their art was dismissed or neglected. In your discussion, be sure to evaluate at least one artist from before the 1970s and one from the 1980s through contemporary times.

Museum Experience Paper:

For this paper, students are expected to visit a museum focusing on American art. The visit can be done virtually or in person.

Next, write an essay (3 to 4, double-spaced pages, excluding title page, images, and bibliography) discussing the museum that you visited. Write about where the museum is located, the exhibits that caught your attention, and the kind of art exhibited in that museum. Be sure to focus on one or two works of arts (paintings, sculptures, or other mediums) that you find most interesting and that show diversity in American art. Tell me about the works of art that you selected. Why did that/those objects interest you? Who is/was the artist (if known)? Tell me about his or her personal background (you might need to use outside sources for this part). Be sure to include the historical frame of reference for the artworks that you selected. What are your perceptions about this art and how do these artworks show diversity in American art? You can include, if applicable, political, economic, religious, social, and intellectual factors that contributed to the production of the artwork that you chose.

Course Outline:

These are the following topics and corresponding assignments:

Week 1

- **Topics:**
 - Discuss the art of the Eastern Woodlands, Alaska, the ancient Southwest.

- Examine European images of North America, the arts of Eastern North America, and Northern New Spain.
- **To do:**
 - Read *American Encounters*, Chapters 1 and 2.
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[America before Columbus.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Mesa Verde: a home in the cliffs.](#)”

Week 2

- **Topics:**
 - Examine Hispanic, and British patterns of settlement, Early colonial arts, 17th century painting, Spanish village arts and architecture.
 - Examine early representations of race and slavery.
- **To do:**
 - Read *American Encounters*, Chapter 3
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Thought the Puritans were dour?](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Europe’s earliest views of America.](#)”

Week 3

- **Topics:**
 - Discuss late colonial encounters between, North America, Africa, Asia, and Europe.
 - Examine 18th century landscape art, Gregorian building, the Missions in Texas, Arizona, and California.
 - Discuss artists, painting, portraiture, and representations of race.
- **To do:**
 - Read *American Encounters*, Chapter 4.
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Benjamin West, Penn's Treaty with the Indians.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[The triangle trade.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Copley's portrait of the Miffins.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Juana Basilia Sitmelelene, Presentation Baske \(Chumash\).](#)”

Week 4

- **Topics:**
 - Discuss the War of Independence in print, paint, and action.
 - Examine portraiture, representations of citizenship, myth, eroticism, and early Romanticism.
 - Discuss American sculpture, folk art, quilts, and genre painting.
- **To do:**
 - Read *American Encounters*, Chapters 5 and 6.
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[A Jewish Family in Early New York.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Casta painting in the Spanish Americas.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Sculpting an American hero.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Global trade and an 18th-century Anishinaabe outfit.](#)”

- From Smarthistory: Watch “[The battle that turned the War of 1812 Thomas Berch.](#)”

Week 5

- **Topics:**
 - Examine images of the mythic Frontier, representations of Plains indigenous peoples, and the art of women from the Plains.
 - Discuss the art of Aleut, Yupik, and Inupiaq.
- **To do:**
 - *American Encounters*, Chapter 7.
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Tlingit mortuary and memorial totem poles.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Bentwood Boxes of the Northwest Coast peoples.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Haida potlatch pole.](#)”

Week 6

- **Topics:**
 - Contextualize the tradition of landscape painting.
 - Discuss the development of the Hudson River School of Painting, and Luminism.
 - Discuss the representation of the War with Mexico in painting and other mediums.
 - Analyze early photography and photojournalism images of the Civil War.
- **To do:**
 - Read *American Encounters*, Chapter 8
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Wilderness, settlement, American identity.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[The Mexican-American War.](#)”

Week 7

- **Topics:**
 - Examine visual culture representing race during the Civil War and Reconstruction periods.
 - Analyze Monuments to Freedom. Discuss landscape art, photography, and post-war national identity.
 - Explore images of the “noble” Indian.
- **To do:**
 - Read *American Encounters*, Chapter 9
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[The Civil War, liberty front and center.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Science, religion, and politics Church’s Cotopaxi.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[John Quincy Adams Ward, The Freedman.](#)”

Week 8

- **Topics:**
 - Discuss representations of the cosmopolitan spirit in American art.

- Examine Japonisme, American Impressionism, and the lives and work of artists living abroad.
- Contextualize Tonalism and early Modernism.
- Discuss the mechanization of the arts. Discuss representations of gender in late 19th century arts. Examine the use of photography in social reform movements.
- **To do:**
 - Read *American Encounters*, Chapter 10 and 11
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[John Brown, Martyr or murderer?](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[The 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[The closing of the frontier.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[The Reliance Building Chicago.](#)”

Week 9

- **Topics:**
 - Discuss urban realism, modernism, the Ashcan artists, the road to abstraction.
- **To do:**
 - Read *American Encounters*, Chapter 12
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Monument Avenue and the Lost Cause.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[The first modern photograph?](#)”

Week 10

- **Topics:**
 - Examine American Modernity in the context of European influences.
 - Discuss Primitive and Modern sculpture.
 - Discuss American Architecture.
- **To do:**
 - Read *American Encounters*, Chapter 13
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Going to the movies in 1913.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Who belongs in the art world.](#)”

Week 11

- **Topics:**
 - Examine skyscraper in architecture and the arts. Discuss Cubism, Precisionism, and urban/industrial imagery.
- **To do:**
 - Read *American Encounters*, Chapter 14
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Beyond New York, Bellows & World War I](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: [Watch “Celebrating the modern city.”](#)

Week 12

- **Topics:**
 - Discuss regionalist philosophy, Pueblo arts, The “New Negro” Movement and Black Art.

- **To do:**
 - Read *American Encounters*, Chapter 15
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[A Beacon of hope](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Painting the Great Migration.](#)”

Week 13

- **Topics:**
 - Examine the work of Mexican Muralists and public art.
 - Explore Abstraction and Social Surrealism.
 - Discuss federal patronage, and images of the Great Depression.
- **To do:**
 - *American Encounters*, Chapter 16
 - From Smarthistory: “[The Case for Abstraction.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: “[Diego Rivera in Depression-era New York.](#)”

Week 14

- **Topics:**
 - Discuss the origins of Abstract Expressionism.
- **To do:**
 - *American Encounters*, Chapter 17
 - From Smarthistory: Read “[Abstract Expressionism, an introduction.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Jackson Pollock, Cathedral.](#)”

Week 15

- **Topics:**
 - Explore performance, Pop, and Minimalism as expressions of American culture.
 - Examine the role of museums and challenges they face as keepers of cultural foreign property.
 - Discuss Postmodernism, Feminism, and the visual culture of the Culture Wars.
 - Discuss contemporary American art and Globalization.
- **To do:**
 - *American Encounters*, Chapters 18 and 19
 - From Smarthistory: Read “[An introduction to Minimalism.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[The Vietnam Veterans Memorial.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Superman, WWII, Japanese Americans.](#)”
 - From Smarthistory: Watch “[Dorica Jacson, Diving Whale Chilkat Robe.](#)”
- **Final Take-Home Exam**

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