

**Art of the United States: A Diverse History  
College of Marin Spring 2018  
Syllabus Part 1: Policies and Procedures**

NOTE: For schedule of lecture topics, readings, assignments, and exams, see part two of this syllabus.

Art 107 CRN: 12150 Units: 03

Class Location: FA 102 Time: T/Th 11:10 am – 12:30 pm (Holidays: 3/19, 3/21)

**Instructor: Kevin R. Muller, Ph.D.**

Office phone/voicemail: 415-457-8811 ext. 7492

Email: [KEMuller@marin.edu](mailto:KEMuller@marin.edu) (preferred communication over voicemail)

Office Hours and locations:

**In-Person: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1-2 pm @ FA 105**

(my office in the Fine Arts building, behind the front desk to the right)

**Online (via email): Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8-9 pm**

(At this time only will I respond more or less immediate. I will answer email at other times during the day, but not necessarily immediately.)

If you send me an email, please do so using the account which you use and check regularly.

Please make sure you update your preferred/personal email address through the College. Should I need to contact you via email, I will use the email addresses that are on file. You are responsible for their accuracy.

Also, update Canvas to forward emails to the appropriate email address (the one you check).

By enrolling in this course, you assume full responsibility for reading the syllabus in its entirety, understanding its content, and abiding by its terms.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

A historical and comparative survey of Euro-American, Native American, African-American, Asian American, and Hispanic/Latino male and female art and artists working in the United States. Examines how artists and artisans from these diverse groups have used various art forms to speak to specific historical, social, and political circumstances and values within their community from 1800 to the present. Emphasis placed on developing and enhancing student ability to understand works of art in their original social and historical contexts.

**Prerequisites: None**

Transferability: AA/AS Areas C and G, CSU Area C-1, IGETC Area 3A

Minimum course grade required to obtain GE credit for this course: C

This course is designed to prepare students to succeed in upper division coursework at CSU and UC (regardless of the major). Therefore, exams and assignments will be similar to those at a four-year university than to those found at the high school level.

**BOOKS/READINGS/MATERIALS:**

There is no book to purchase for this class. Assigned readings from a variety of sources can be found on the course Canvas site.

**IMPORTANT DATES:**

Last day to add: In-person: Feb. 9; Online: Feb 11

Last Day to Drop a Full-term class without a "W": Feb. 15

Last Day to Change Grading Option: Feb. 26

**OUTCOMES:**

Success in education requires a commitment by both instructor and student. Throughout the term I will work hard to make sure the material is presented in a clear and dynamic manner that opens your eyes to new ways to see art and history. With a firm commitment to learning the material on your part, you can expect to leave this class with both the ability to think and speak in an informed manner about the course material and its broader intellectual context. With this in mind, by the end of the semester you should be able to...

Analyze and interpret the visual elements of art and visual culture produced by artists of diverse ethnic, gender, and class backgrounds working in the United States between 1800 and the present.

Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which Native American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian American, and African American artists have used art to assert his or her community's place in the social, political, or economic landscape.

Analyze the ways in which Native American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian American, and African American have employed art to contest the values and priorities of the dominant culture.

Demonstrate an understanding of the ways art made by artists from a specific community (for example, Native American) has changed over time in relation to the community's overall position within American political, cultural, and social life.

Demonstrate critical thinking and visual literacy skills through oral and written assignment that addresses artwork made by artists of diverse backgrounds.

**CLASS FORMAT:**

Emphasis in this course will be on critical thinking, not rote memorization. I want you to learn ideas in this class, and to be able to apply them. Therefore, emphasis will be on developing your ability to

analyze and interpret works of art. To achieve this goal, we will have extensive and intensive class discussions.

Discussion has a purpose. First, talking is a way to come to a richer understanding about an object or topic, especially the visual arts. Second, discussion is a way we can all learn from each other. Everyone, regardless of their prior knowledge of the subject, will have something to contribute. I will work hard so that each of you feels comfortable about contributing. Keep in mind that participation means telling us what you know or think, but also asking questions. If you are confused or do not fully understand someone's statement (including mine), ask for a clarification.

If you are student who is uncertain and hesitant to speak in class, don't worry. I will offer you some specific "how-to" guidelines, and do everything I can to make the classroom environment a safe, comfortable, and non-intimidating place in which to explore new concepts and ideas. Conversely, if you are the type who likes to talk in class, please be sure to show courtesy and allow those in the class who are more hesitant to gain their confidence.

Generally speaking, we are all responsible for creating a semester-long collaborative and productive learning community. If I find that class is generally unprepared or unwilling (not enough participation or the same people carrying the discussion), I may institute pop quizzes and/or assign formal homework.

In order to have healthy and fruitful class discussions, I propose the following as ground rules.

- Equal participation.
- Respect toward all members of the class.
- No sleeping, texting, surfing, or doing work for another class.
- **Absolutely no checking phones during class. If you do, I will ask you to put your phone on the table in front of the room for the remainder of the class session.**

**NOTE: The content of discussions will appear on the exams. Therefore, you should take notes during discussions.**

#### **DEDICATED CLASS NOTEBOOK:**

You are required to have a spiral or tape-bound notebook dedicated solely to this class. In this notebook you will take notes on each week's readings as well as the content of lectures, discussions, and in-class activities. You may also, if you wish, paste or tape into your notebook reproductions of key works of art analyzed in class. You will be allowed to consult your notebook – and only this notebook – during exams.

#### **ATTENDANCE, TARDINESS, AND ABSENCES:**

You are expected to attend each and every class session. Please arrive at the classroom before the scheduled start time. I often make announcements at the beginning of class. If you arrive late, do not ask me to repeat them; get the information from a fellow student.

In the beginning of the term, I will take attendance, but once I know you by name, there will be no formal role taking. Instead, I will simply mark you present or absent in my grade book.

If a significant number of students are absent on any given day, I may (at my discretion) schedule a pop quiz. If you have been attending class regularly, taking notes, and keeping up with the reading, you'll have nothing to worry about when it comes to such a quiz.

#### LATE TO CLASS

Repeated lateness or leaving class early will be noted and may be calculated as absences (possibly leading to dropped course or reduced course grade).

#### ABSENCES

Be aware that missing class will impact your grade drastically. Tests will require that you know material covered exclusively in lecture, and nowhere else. In fact, tests are written specifically to reward good attendance, close attention, and good note-taking.

Anyone absent for a total of four consecutive or six cumulative instructional sessions and/or two consecutive weeks of instruction **may** be dropped from the class. This action will constitute an official termination of class enrollment and will be recorded in the office of Admissions and Records.

If circumstances arise in which you find yourself needing to drop the class, for example due to excessive absences, etc., it is your responsibility to do so.

#### IF YOU MISS A CLASS

1. If you know you will miss a class, **send me a courtesy email in advance**. I appreciate knowing.
2. **If an emergency occurs, please notify me sooner than later** (via email). You need not provide personal details, just some appropriate level of information (see below).
3. When you return to class, get notes from a fellow student. Befriend your classmates so you can ask for notes should you need them (and as a courtesy, be sure to offer to reciprocate). Emails sent to me asking for a summary of what was covered during days you missed will not receive a reply. However, you may come to my office hours to ask for clarification about missed course material. That said, I will not go over the content of an entire class.

#### LATE POLICIES:

All papers and assignments are due in class by the end of the class session on the due date. Papers submitted after the end of class will be marked late and penalized as follows:

One (1) full grade when submitted anytime within a 24 hour window after the end of class on the due date. One third (1/3) of a full-grade for each subsequent day.

Example: Gary Gooffoff's paper was due on Monday. He turned it during class on Wednesday. His grade will be reduced by 1 and 1/3rd grades. Meaning, if he earned a B on the paper, his final grade on the assignment will be C-.

No assignments will be accepted more than one week late.

No assignments accepted via email unless I have given you permission to do so in advance.

No make-up quizzes or exams will be given without verified and legitimate documentation (see below). Therefore, be sure to arrive on time so that you do not miss any part of an exam.

**EMERGENCIES:**

The unexpected often happens. I understand that these can be major, but also minor. If an emergency occurs that prevents you from attending class, completing an assignment on time, or taking a quiz or exam, notify me via email ASAP.

Get documentation of your emergency. Ideally, this is written documentation, but not all emergencies warrant written documentation. Photographs can fill the gap. If you are in an auto accident, take a picture of yourself and your car next to the side of the road. With your little brother at the nurse's office? Take a picture of yourself in the waiting room. Sick in bed with a fever? Take a photo of the thermometer reading of your fever. Document your circumstances and send me the documentation.

**Understand that I must have documentation in order to grant you an extension. No documentation means no extension or make-up. No exceptions.**

Note: Going out of town for personal, family, or professional business does not count as an emergency.

**GRADING:**

Exam 1: 150 points

Exam 2: 275 points

Contemporary Art Responses: 375 points (5 x 75 points each)

Confederate Monuments Position Paper: 100 points

Participation: 100 points

Total possible points: 1000

At the end of the semester, if your total points for the above assignments fall anywhere from 900 to 1000, you will receive an "A range" grade (A+, A, or A-) for the course; if they fall anywhere from 800 and 899, you will receive a "B range grade" (B+, B, B-), and so on. Your final grade is based on the numerical total of all your points; letter grades are never "averaged" to determine your final grade. As per College regulations, there is no final grade of C-.

If at any time you would like to know how you stand with respect to your grade in the course, please speak to me after class or during office hours.

Note: Regular and consistent participation in discussions and class activities can help boost your grade up in borderline circumstances, and therefore participation is always in your interest.

**PLAGIARISM:**

I have a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism and cheating. All cases of plagiarism will result in an automatic zero for the assignment and the case will be sent to the administration for further disciplinary action. For further information, consult the “Student Conduct Regarding Academic Honesty” section of the hardcopy/pdf versions of this semester’s schedule of classes.

**ADA NOTICE:**

Students with physical, sensory, emotional or medical impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Please meet with the instructor in the first week of classes to make arrangements. All accommodations must be coordinated through the SAS.

**DISCLAIMERS:**

The course schedule is subject to change. It is the student’s responsibility to attend class and pay attention to announcements. If a class meeting is missed, it is the student’s responsibility to not only get class notes from a fellow student, but also get any announcements and stay informed for changes in the course schedule, including changes to exam dates, reviews, etc.

The history of art does include many images of nude or partially-nude figures, as well as images and texts with other content that some may find offensive in language or subject matter. Students who feel that viewing or reading such material is not an option for them should enroll in a different course to meet their requirements.

**USE OF RECORDING DEVICES:**

Lectures may not be audiotaped, videotaped, or otherwise electronically or digitally recorded without a special accommodation permit from the SAS and/or prior permission from the instructor. If you will record lecture in any way, please speak to me in advance.

# **Art of the United States: A Diverse History**

## **College of Marin (Spring 18, TR) - 12150**

### **Syllabus Pt. 2: Schedule of Lecture Topics, Readings, Exams, and Assignments**

**Instructor: Kevin R. Muller, Ph.D.**

For class policies and procedures, see part one of the syllabus.

Note: All readings (pdfs and links) and videos (links) posted on course Canvas page except those assigned from Janson. Readings subject to changes as needed to meet the needs of students enrolled in course.

#### **1/23 Introduction**

### **Unit One: The Dominant Narrative**

#### **1/25 The Nineteenth Century: Picturing Bodies**

For Today:

READ: Post-Revolutionary America: 1800-1840 (MMA)

READ: American Scenes of Everyday Life, 1840–1910 (MMA)

READ: John van Whye, History of Phrenology

#### **1/30 The Nineteenth Century: Landscape Painting**

For Today:

READ: Hudson River School (MMA)

VIEW: Excerpt from Robert Hughes, American Visions eps. 3 1/3

#### **2/1 Modernists I**

For Today:

READ: Precisionism (MMA)

VIEW: Excerpt from Robert Hughes, American Visions eps. 5 3/5 (start 2:00)

#### **2/6 Modernists II**

For Today:

READ: Modern Art (The Art Story)

READ: Abstract Expressionism (The Art Story)

VIEW: Abstract Expressionism (MOCA LA)

#### **2/8 NO CLASS**

#### **2/13 Postmodernists/Contemporary Art**

For Today:

READ: Postmodernism (The Art Story)

READ: Pop Art (The Art Story)

VIEW: Excerpt from Robert Hughes, American Visions eps. 7 3/5 (start 0:24)

View Excerpt from Robert Hughes, American Visions eps. 7 5/5 (start 2:51)

## **Unit Two: A History of Women's Art and Artists**

### **2/15 The Nineteenth Century**

For Today:

READ: Sarah Miram Peale (blog)

READ: American Quilts and Coverlets (MMA)

READ: Excerpt from A Social History of Women, 1978

### **2/20 Modernists**

For Today:

READ: Georgia O'Keeffe (MMA)

READ: Mary Stevenson Cassatt (MMA)

READ: Lee Krasner (The Art Story)

### **2/22 Activists**

For Today:

READ: Feminist Art Movement (The Art Story)

READ: Cindy Sherman (The Art Story)

### **2/27 Postmodernists/Contemporary Art Response #1 DUE**

### **3/1 Supplemental Case Study: Art and Community Engagement**

For Today:

READ: Christo (The Art Story)

### **3/6 Midterm Exam Review**

### **3/8 Midterm Exam**

### **3/13 Supplemental Case Study: Outsider Art and Artists**

For Today:

VIEW: What is Outsider Art (Christie's)

READ: The Rise of Self-Taught Artists (The Atlantic)

## **Unit Three: A History of African-American Art and Artists**

### **3/15 The Nineteenth Century**

For Today:



READ: Joshua Johnson (SAAM)

READ: "African-American Quilts: Two Perspectives," 1993

### **3/20 & 22 NO CLASS**

#### **3/27 Modernists**

For Today:

READ: Excerpt from Richard J. Powell, Black Art: A Cultural History, 2002

VIEW: Revisiting Abstract Artist Normal Lewis (CBS)

#### **3/29 Activists**

For Today:

READ: Excerpt from Elsa Honig Fine, The Afro-American Artist: A Search for Identity, 1973

READ: Street Story Quilt MMA

VIEW: Amiri Baraka Describes the Emergence of the Black Arts Movement in Newark (The North)

#### **4/3 Postmodernists/Contemporary Art**

**Response #2 DUE**

## **Unit Four: A History of Native-American Art and Artists**

#### **4/5 The Nineteenth-Century**

For Today:

READ: Marsha Clift Bol, "Lakota Women's Artistic Strategies in Support of the Social System," 1985

#### **4/10 Negotiating Modernity**

For Today:

READ: Excerpt from Janet Berlo, Plains Indian Drawings, 1865-1935: Pages from a Visual History, 1996

#### **4/12 Modernists**

For Today:

READ: Mark Andrew White, "Oscar Howe and the Transformation of Native American Art," 1997

Oscar Howe, Encyclopedia of the Great Plains (U Nebraska)

#### **4/17 Postmodernists/Contemporary Art**

**Response #3 DUE**

## **Unit Five: A History of Latinx Art and Artists**

#### **4/19 The Nineteenth Century**

For Today:

READ: José Rafael Aragón (Office State Historian, New Mexico)

VIEW: Retablo Reveals Old, Secret Painting (KRQE)

**4/24 Moderns**

For Today:

READ: Mexican Muralism Movement (The Art Story)

**4/26 Activists**

READ/VIEW: Aesthetic Alternative: The Los Angeles Chicano Poster Movement, Exhibition Guide (CSPG)

VIEW: Royal Chicano Airforce

**5/1 Postmodernists/Contemporary Art**

**Response #4 DUE**

## **Unit Six: A History of Asian-American Art and Artists**

**5/3 Modernists**

For Today:

READ: Henry Sugimoto (Densho Encyclopedia)

VIEW: Henry Sugimoto Collection (Japanese American National Museum)

READ: Isamu Noguchi (The Art Story)

**5/8 Postmodernists/Contemporary Art**

**Response #5 DUE**

## **Unit Seven: Confederate Monuments in Perspective**

**5/10 Recent Controversies**

For Today:

READ: TBA

VIEW: TBA

**5/15 Recent Controversies Continued**

**5/17 Final Thoughts/Final Review**

**Due: Recent Controversies Assignment**

**No course work accepted after the end of class today.**

**FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 22, 11:10 am – 12:30 pm**