Almost Ashore: Global Modern and Contemporary Indigenous Art

COURSE INFORMATION
5:00pm – 7:50pm Tuesday
3 hours; Synchronous Remote Delivery via Zoom

Professor Christopher Green - christopher.green@unt.edu (Please allow up to 24 hours for response)
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00pm – 2:00pm
Virtual via Zoom; join via the meeting code provided through Canvas.

Course Description
“We have always been global” the Anishinaabe curator Wanda Nanibush recently told a crowd in New York. This course will examine that claim through the site of artistic practice, taking art as a material form through which international relations and exchanges between Indigenous artists and cultural producers have been practiced since time immemorial. By considering what it means for Indigenous art to be “modern” and “contemporary,” we explore late-twentieth and twenty-first century art worlds from the perspective of Indigenous producers of visual and material culture who operate across regional contexts and national boundaries. This course examines how such art has taken up diverse modernist styles and idioms and engaged primitivist histories of art in order to express diplomatic, economic, kinship, cosmological, and place-based relations within and beyond the category of fine art. As Indigenous art comes “almost ashore” on the tides of modernity, as the cultural theorist Gerald Vizenor
has written, it lands in distant territories and museum collections, markets, and exhibitions while navigating the stylistic borders of authenticity and cultural heritage. With an emphasis on practices rooted in the landscapes and territories currently located in settler colonial nations in the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand, students will learn how Indigenous artists confound colonial and imperial dynamics and produce networks outside of the Euro-American-centric discourse. Students will come away with an understanding of and appreciation for the key issues that inform the reception, curation, and history of modern and contemporary Indigenous art, including the boundaries of gender, craft, and tradition; authorship and ceremony; interventions in archives, collections, and displays; sovereignty over self-representation, territory, and identity; ecocritical and land-based practice; and the impacts of commodification and nationalist exploitation.

Learning Objectives
By the end of the semester, a student who has satisfactorily completed the course will be able to:

1. Develop a critical art historical perspective to analyze historic and contemporary debates around contemporary Indigenous art, politics, and display;
2. Locate such debates in a historical and theoretical framework, prioritizing Indigenous perspectives, authors, and methodologies;
3. Describe the historical, social, and cultural context(s) of a work of contemporary Indigenous art;
4. Research the practices of Indigenous artists and write cogently in favour of a specific interpretation of their work supported by visual and historical analysis;
5. Articulate connections and relationships across different cultural, geographic, and historical boundaries, particularly between different Indigenous and non-Indigenous art styles and histories in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries;
6. Be able to visit museum collections, special museum exhibitions, galleries and other venues and demonstrate knowledge of visual literacy;
7. Be familiar with the major topics and issues surrounding the display and ownership of Indigenous art and cultural patrimony.

Materials
All required materials will be available online in PDF or readable form through Canvas, or through E-reserve at the UNT library. To access E-Reserves search for the course on the Library Course Reserves Portal: https://iii.library.unt.edu/search/p

For a background overview of historic Native North American art and survey of the major themes of the field, I recommend the following volumes:

Content Disclaimer
Art can sometimes include works, situations, actions, and language that can be personally challenging or offensive to some students on the grounds, for example, of sexual explicitness, racist or stereotypical representation, violence, or blasphemy. As the College of Visual Arts and Design is devoted to the principle of freedom of expression, artistic and otherwise, and it is not the college’s practice to censor
these works or ideas on any of these grounds. Students who might feel unduly distressed or made uncomfortable by such expressions should withdraw at the start of the term and seek another course.

**Technical Requirements and Assistance**

Because this course will take place online, access to hardware and software necessary for participation in synchronous lectures and discussion held over Zoom is required. This includes speakers or headset, microphone, keyboard, internet access, word processor, and Zoom-accessible device (desktop computer, laptop, tablet, or smart phone).

If at any time personal circumstances or working conditions make it impossible to access the minimum required hardware and software for participation, please inform the instructor as soon as possible to attempt to make alternative arrangements.

UIT Help Desk: [http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm)

The University of North Texas provides student technical support in the use of Canvas and supported resources. The student help desk may be reached at:

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu

Phone: 940.565-2324

**Student Academic Support Services**

- [Code of Student Conduct](#): provides Code of Student Conduct along with other useful links
- [Office of Disability Access](#): exists to prevent discrimination based on disability and to help students reach a higher level of independence
- [Counseling and Testing Services](#): provides counseling services to the UNT community, as well as testing services; such as admissions testing, computer-based testing, career testing, and other tests
- [UNT Libraries](#)
- [UNT Learning Center](#): provides a variety of services, including tutoring, to enhance the student academic experience
- [UNT Writing Center](#): offers free writing tutoring to all UNT students, undergraduate and graduate, including online tutoring
- [Succeed at UNT](#): information regarding how to be a successful student at UNT

**Attendance and Participation**

As a seminar, this class will consist of discussion classes delivered through the Zoom client in Canvas, as well as a mix of guest lectures, student presentations, and virtual collection and exhibit visits. Your participation in all and any discussion is assumed, and students are expected to come to class having completed all the required readings and prepared to discuss the material. Students are expected to be in virtual attendance for the entirety of the class meeting. Video is encouraged throughout our meetings but not required to be enabled at all times. Audio is required to be enabled at all times, but should be muted unless you are called upon to ask or answer a question or otherwise contribute to the discussion.

The participation grade will be negatively affected by disruptive or non-engaged behavior. Any student whose behavior is deemed disruptive or detrimental to the class will be asked to leave and marked
absent. Virtual attendance is reviewed at the conclusion of each class. All students are expected to be present for the duration of the class time. If you are either late to the class session or leave it early by more than ten combined minutes, you are responsible for explaining the missed time to the instructor or he will assume it is intentional. If you are late twice, it will count as an absence. Students are permitted four “no questions asked” absences. A fifth absence, for any reason, will result in your being withdrawn from the class.

All class absences are considered unexcused unless shown to be otherwise. If you know you are going to be absent from a class due to an unavoidable prior commitment and/or religious holiday, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor at least 24 hours in advance in order to make alternative arrangements.

Acceptable Student Behavior
Student behavior that interferes with the instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. This may include excess noise from students’ microphones, disruptive video or screen activity, or distracting background imagery or activity in a student’s video feed. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the virtual classroom or removed from the conference call by the instructor. The instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct.

Cheating, Plagiarism, and Academic Integrity Policy
Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. Any suspected act of dishonesty will result in a grade of “F” in the course. Further, the professor will write a letter to the Dean of the School of Visual Arts and the Dean of Students, who will pursue disciplinary actions at their discretion.

According to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, plagiarism is defined as “the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words or statements of another person as one’s own without acknowledgement” (www.unt.edu/csrr). Copying material from any source without providing a citation (footnote or endnote) is a form of plagiarism. Likewise, if you paraphrase another author’s words or ideas, you must credit that person with a citation. While most incidents of plagiarism at the graduate level are unintentional, it is your responsibility to ensure that you accurately indicate which words and ideas are those of others.

Assignments and Grading
Assignment Policy
Unless otherwise noted, assignments must be submitted by the beginning of the class on the date they...
are due. Assignments should be submitted as Word documents (.doc or .docx) with the student’s last name, course number, and assignment title in the document name (eg. “NAME_AEAH5819_Assignment 1.doc”. Assignments should be submitted via Canvas unless otherwise noted. If there are technical difficulties or server outages, students may submit assignments to the instructor via email listed above.

The University is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing an assignment on time, the instructor will extend the time windows and provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and contact the UNT Student Help Desk: helpdesk@unt.edu or 940.565.2324. The instructor and the UNT Student Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues.

Late Work
Late work will be accepted for completion until the conclusion of the semester. However, for each class period an assignment is late, a half letter grade will be deducted down to an ‘F’.

Assignments

1. **Reading Responses** (3-4pgs double-spaced) – Students will be assigned as discussion leaders for two class periods throughout the semester. Students will be expected to lead the discussion of the readings for the rest of the class, including guiding questions that tie together the class readings and orient the class. For the topic you are a discussion leader, you are required to submit written critical responses to the readings assigned for the class. Reading Responses should demonstrate an engagement with and critically respond to the assigned texts; they should not be summaries.

   **Due Date:** Beginning of assigned class

2. **Final Paper or Project** (10-12pg/15-20pg double-spaced or equivalent) – Students will write one longer research paper on the topic of their choosing, in response to a prompt provided by the instructor. At the mid-point of the semester, students must submit a written proposal for their research topic (1pg) and a working annotated bibliography (1-2pg). Students will present their research to the class with an oral presentation (15-20 minutes) conducted over Zoom and accompanied by a Powerpoint presentation or other visual aid. Final papers will be due at the end of the semester; length for undergraduates is 10-12pg and for graduate students is 15-20pg. In consultation with the instructor, the final paper may be substituted for a research-based creative project (art work, exhibition proposal, etc) that will have a written component.

   **Topic Proposal w/ Annotated Bibliography:** March 2
   **Oral Presentations:** April 13; April 20
   **Final Due Date:** April 27

Grading
Final grades are calculated by the following weighting:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Responses (2)</strong></td>
<td>100 points each</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is a living document that may be updated throughout the semester. Students are expected to keep track of all changes as communicated and/or updated through the course portal.

SCHEDULE

This schedule is tentative and is subject to change.

January 12 – Introduction: The Emergence of Global Indigenous Art

Recommended: Christine Lalonde and Candice Hopkins in Sakahan, 14-32.

January 19 –Internationalism, Globalism, and Political Sovereignty

Further reading:


January 26 – Inclusivity, Visual Sovereignty, and the Museum


Further reading:


February 2 – Expanding and Exhibiting the (Indigenous?) Americas


Further Reading:


February 9 – Battle for the Woodlands

*Guest lecture by Athena LaTocha (Hunkpapa Lakota/Ojibway)*
• Gerald Vizenor, “Aesthetics of Survivance,” in Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance (University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 85-103.


• Review artist website: https://athenalatocha.com/

February 16 – The Southwest as (Counter) Borderscape

• Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor (Duke University Press 2013), 1-25.


Further Reading:


February 23 – Arctic Circles of Affinity


Further reading:


• Bill Holm, “Art and Culture Change at the Tlingit-Eskimo Border.” In Crossroads of Continents, 281-93.
March 2 – The American Indian Movement and Cold War Cultural Diplomacy

*Topic proposals due*


**Further Reading:**


March 9 – Dreamings across Aboriginal Australia


**Further Reading:**

- Brenda Croft, in *Culture Warriors: Australian Indigenous Art Triennial* (National Gallery of Australia, 2009), xi-xxvi

March 16 – Unsettling International Exchanges on the Pacific Rim

**Guest lecture by Jackson Polys (Tlingit)**

- **Browse:** *Hitéemkiliiksix Within the Circle of the Rim: Nations Gathering on Common Ground.* (Olympia, WA: Evergreen State College Longhouse Education and Cultural Center, 2002), 9-81.
Further Reading:

March 23 – “Call Me in 1993” – The Columbus Quincentenary
- Read Richard Hill’s columns for *Canadian Art*:
  - “Was Indigenous Art Better in the 80s and Early 90s?”  
    https://canadianart.ca/essays/was-indigenous-art-better-in-the-1980s-and-early-90s/
  - “9 Group Exhibitions That Defined Contemporary Indigenous Art”  
    https://canadianart.ca/essays/9-group-exhibitions-that-defined-contemporary-indigenous-art/

Further reading:

March 30 – Indigenous Art at the Venice Biennale Across Time

Further reading:
April 6 – Criticism As/Beyond Resistance

Guest lecture by Demian DinéYazhi’ (Diné [Navajo])


April 13 and April 20 - Presentations

Final Paper due April 27, 11:59pm CST.

UNT POLICIES cont’d

ADA Policy
UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one’s specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Emergency Notification & Procedures
UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records
Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Blackboard online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student’s records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written
consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect
Students’ access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student’s Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

Student Evaluation Administration Dates
Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at http://spot.unt.edu/ or email spot@unt.edu.

Sexual Assault Prevention
UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT’s Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim’s compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

Online Exhibitions

https://www.sttlmnt.org/

https://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/native-women-artists/audio
https://iaia.edu/new-virtual-reality-vr-exhibition/

Art of Native America: The Charles and Valerie Diker Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art (2018-2021)

Nicholas Galanin: Carry a Song / Disrupt an Anthem, Peter Blum Gallery (2020)
https://eazel.net/exhibitions/426

Short Films

Ishi’s Return: “The Last Wild Indian” (2016)
https://www.kanopy.com/product/ishis-return

 Christopher Auchter, Now is the Time (2019)

Amanda Strong and Leanne Simpson, How to Steal a Canoe (2016)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1vCPVviNiY

Sky Hopinka, Visions of an Island (2016)
https://vimeo.com/146194849

Karrabing Film Collective, When the Dogs Talked (2014) and Wutharr, Saltwater Dreams (2016) (excerpts)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOnDyRSc3r8
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3ot-KKjJZA

https://vimeo.com/217342747

Almost Ashore
By Gerald Vizenor

winter sea
over my shoes
shadows
and bright
round stones
at san gregorio

every wave
turns a season
forests adrift
empty shells
memory of fire
so faraway
in the mountains
and canyons

silent pools
raise my faces
by early tide
slight my hand
shoulders
almost ashore

light breaks
over the plovers
certain steps
my traces
blood, bone, stone
turn natural
and heavy waves
rush the sand

Source: Almost Ashore (Salt Publishing, 2006)