Course Syllabus

Spring 2022. Monday and Wednesday, 2:00-3:20pm, ART 280

UNT CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

4817 Topics in American Art - Selected topics in American art from the 15th century to the present, with emphasis on new perspectives and current scholarship. Prerequisite(s): ART 2350, ART 2360 and ART 2370; or consent of instructor. May be repeated for credit as topics vary.

Face Coverings

UNT encourages everyone to wear a face covering when indoors, regardless of vaccination status, to protect yourself and others from COVID infection, as recommended by current CDC guidelines. Face covering guidelines could change based on community health conditions.

Communication

- Instructor: Professor Way, contact me at jennifer.way@unt.edu
- Office Hours: All office hours will take place online through Zoom. I can meet most times according to your needs. However, please write me to schedule an appointment in advance. Jennifer.Way@unt.edu
- I read email during business hours on weekdays

TOPIC: African American Art—De-centering Whiteness in American art history

Course Description

In this course we aim to de-center the Whiteness that narrates the history of American art by exploring published and exhibited efforts on this topic and researching and writing case studies as chapters (or parts of chapters) that tell an art history from a multicultural perspective emphasizing diversity in African American experience, art objects, and texts, and focusing on the agency African American artists have exercised in improving their lives and communities and shaping the course of United States history and visual culture. Our study of African American art since the late 19th century will pay attention to relevant legal, political, economic, and social history contexts as they relate to art history concerns including style, subject matter, context, and meaning.
Course Objectives

• Comprehend the history and significance of repression and discrimination that resulted in the profound disruption of African traditions in America and in systemic social injustice
• Interrogate the meaning of “African American” in light of past and present constructions of this term
• Identify in what ways a major text of American art history engages with White privilege and the narrative place and roles it assigns to African American art
• Demonstrate an understanding of the work of African American artists, including many who actively reflect on and critique historical experience, identity, racialism, racism, and the possibility of post-racism, as well as those who exercise their right to engage more purely formal concerns
• Intervene in the history of American art by researching and writing about one artist, work of art, or exhibition, using course concepts and approaches to interpret and contextualize material in a specific historical period since 1900, explaining how the material helps to de-center the focus on Whiteness at the heart of the text’s narrative and represent and discuss African American presence and experience
• Develop critical thinking skills through the exploration of complex topics throughout the semester

Assignments and grades

Assignments are organized on a scale of 100 possible points to earn this semester.

Unless told otherwise, please submit all work as a Word document on Canvas. Do not submit pdfs.

Extra Credit

You will receive from 1-4 points extra credit if you consistently participate in class in ways that demonstrate you have read the material and you are able to make comparisons with what we’ve already learned or bring reflective, thoughtful reflection to the material.

Required Texts

If you have problems accessing material, please contact the professor at Jennifer.Way@unt.edu.
These two required books are ordered for you to purchase. Or, you can use the one copy of each book on reserve at Willis Library:


Many required texts are short and available online. A few are provided for you in the course modules.

Some readings are available to you online, through UNT Library Course Reserves. Access them here:

1. To access online readings for the course through Willis Library, you need this link: https://iii.library.unt.edu/search/r?SEARCH=arth+4817 (Links to an external site.)
2. And, you need this password AfAmArt22

Two of your assignments require you to reference (and therefore, cite) at least two books on reserve for this course. The books are located in Willis Library, and you can check them out for a two-hour period. See the list, below.

Resources

Your professor is your best resource for the course. Schedule online office hours. Ask for guidance. Get to know other professors in the art history program, too.

The Art Collection [of books] is now located on the 3rd floor of the Willis Library. All art books of all art disciplines are together with the rest of the humanities in one library that is open 24/7.

Research Help at CVAD Your UNT Art Reference Librarian is Rebecca Barham: (940) 565 - 4405, Rebecca.Barham@unt.edu. It is your responsibility to know how to use the UNT Libraries and access information relevant to your coursework. As early in the semester as possible, you are strongly encouraged to work with Rebecca to identify secondary and primary resources for
your assignments, such as journal articles, exhibition and collection catalogs, auction records, books, encyclopedias, and databases. The earlier you begin, the more time you will have to digest what you learn and make choices in your process.

University of North Texas Libraries, https://library.unt.edu/ (Links to an external site.)
online catalog search

African American Studies https://guides.library.unt.edu/africanamerican (Links to an external site.)

Social Justice and Racial Inequality study guide https://guides.library.unt.edu/racism (Links to an external site.)

Portal to Texas History https://texashistory.unt.edu/ (Links to an external site.)

Course reserves- 2 hours use in Willis Library

- *The Routledge Companion to African American Art History* by Eddie Chambers (Editor) (Links to an external site.)
- *American encounters: art, history, and cultural identity*, Angela Miller and others
- *Visualizing Equality: African American rights and visual culture in the nineteenth century*, Aston Gonzalez
- *Pictures and Progress: early photography and the making of African American Identity*, Maurice O. Wallace et al
- *Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers, 1840 to the Present*, Deborah Willis
- *Posing for Beauty: African American Images from the 1890s to the Present*, Deborah Willis
- *A History of African-American Artists: From 1792 to the present*, Romare Bearden and Harry Brinton Henderson
- *The Image of the Black in Western Art*: The twentieth century: the impact of Africa, V. 5 Part 1, David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates,
- *The Image of the Black in Western Art*: The twentieth century: the rise of Black artists, David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates,
- *Exhibiting Blackness: African American and the American Art Museum* by Bridget R. Cooks
- *African American Art and Artists* by Samella S. Lewis
- *Black Art: A Cultural History* by Richard J. Powell
- *Black Art and Culture in the 20th Century* by Richard J. Powell
- *The Black Female Body, A Photographic History*, Deborah Willis, Carla Williams
- *Creating Black Americans* by Nell Irvin Painter
- Distinction and Denial: race, nation, and the critical construction of the African American artist, 1920-40 by Mary Ann Calo
- Harlem on My Mind: Cultural Capital of Black America, 1900-1968, Metropolitan Museum of Art
- African American Art: Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights, and Beyond, by Richard J. Powell
- Art and Civil Rights of the Sixties by Kellie Jones
- For all the world to see: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights by Maurice Berger
- Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power by Mark Benjamin Godfrey and Zoe Whitley
- The Black Arts Movement and the Black Panther Party in American Visual Culture by Jo-Ann Morgan
- Double Consciousness: Black Visual Art since 1970
- Derek Conrad Murray, Queering Post-Black Art: Artists Transforming African American Identity after Civil Rights
- Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies and Travel & See: Black Diaspora Art Practices since the 1980s by Kobena Mercer
- Freestyle by Thelma Golden
- Frequency by Thelma Golden
- Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary Art by Thelma Golden
- Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art by Jennifer A. Gonzalez
- Krista Thompson, Shine: The Visual Economy of the Light in African Diasporic Aesthetic Practice

- Black Post-Blackness: The Black Arts Movement and Twenty-First-Century Aesthetics by Margo Natalie Crawford

Examples of online resources outside of the University of North Texas

On some you will find images, on others, texts or exhibitions, and on still others, references to additional resources.

- African American Studies, Oxford Bibliographies, Gene Andrew Jarrett, editor, (Oxford University Press, 2016) [https://discover.library.unt.edu/catalog/b6087718](https://discover.library.unt.edu/catalog/b6087718) (Links to an external site.)
- Artist Archives Initiative, New York University [http://artistarchives.hosting.nyu.edu/Initiative](http://artistarchives.hosting.nyu.edu/Initiative) (Links to an external site.)
- Bard Graduate Library, online catalog search [https://www.bgc.bard.edu/library/2/overview](https://www.bgc.bard.edu/library/2/overview) (Links to an external site.)
- Bibliography, [https://nasher.duke.edu/reading/](https://nasher.duke.edu/reading/) (Links to an external site.)
• Black Artists and Modernism  http://www.blackartistsmodernism.co.uk/black-artists-in-public-collections/ (Links to an external site.)
• Black Craftspeople Digital Archive  https://blackcraftspeople.org/bcda-syllabus/ (Links to an external site.)
• Black Cultural Archives  https://artsandculture.google.com/project/black-cultural-archives (Links to an external site.)
• Black Portraiture(s), exhibition archive  https://www.blackportraiture.org/ (Links to an external site.)
• British Library, online catalog search  http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/catblhold/all/allcat.html (Links to an external site.)
• Chicano and Latino Collections, University of California Santa Barbara Library  https://www.library.ucsb.edu/special-collections/cema/chicano-latino-collections (Links to an external site.)
• Craft as social justice  https://sites.google.com/cca.edu/craft-as-socialjustice (Links to an external site.)
• Dallas Museum of Art, online collections search  https://collections.dma.org (Links to an external site.)
• Decentering Whiteness in Design History Resources  https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KiW2ULDFeIm_OuvwhM2lygxwhoNddrEFk5YI9zbdw/edit (Links to an external site.)
• Dictionary of Art Historians  https://dictionaryofarthistorians.org/index.htm (Links to an external site.)
• Digital Photography Collections, National Archives  https://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/photography (Links to an external site.)
• Fashion and Race Database  https://fashionandrace.org/database/ (Links to an external site.)
• Fashion Design Collections in the Kellen Design Archive, The New School Libraries and Archives  https://guides.library.newschool.edu/kellen_fashion_design (Links to an external site.)
• Gordon Parks Foundation, Archives  http://www.gordonparksfoundation.org/gordon-parks/photography-archive (Links to an external site.)
• Heilbrunn Timeline of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art
• Indigenous Digital Archive, Museum of Indian Arts & Culture  http://www.indianartsandculture.org/indigenous-digital-archive (Links to an external site.)
• Library of Congress, online catalog search  https://catalog.loc.gov/ (Links to an external site.)
• Making Progress: Resources for social justice in craft  https://www.craftandactivism.com/ (Links to an external site.)
• National Museum of the American Indian, Archive Center  https://americanindian.si.edu/explore/collections/archive (Links to an external site.)
• New York Public Library, online catalog search  https://catalog.nypl.org/ (Links to an external site.)
• Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture  https://archive-it.org/home/schomburgcenter (Links to an external site.)
Class meetings and topics

The modality of our classes-- in other words, how it is offered, whether online through Canvas and Zoom, or face to face in a classroom--may change due to the virus, illness, or unforeseen factors.

On most Mondays, we will use class time to read and watch material listed in our module for the week. We will also have brief class reports that identify major issues and themes for us. On Wednesdays, we will situate art in relation to these issues, themes and contexts.

- Week 1 - Jan 17 and 19 – Introduction: Where are the artists? Imperatives for American art history Jan 19 likely online
- Week 2 - Jan 24 and 26 - Theories, Concepts and Intervention Strategies in our Toolbox Jan 24 and 26 possibly online
- Week 3 - Jan 31 and Feb 2 - Late 19th and early 20th centuries
- Week 4 - Feb 7 and Feb 9 - Migration and Harlem Renaissance
- Week 5 - Feb 14 and Feb 16 - New Negro and Harlem Renaissance
- Week 6 - Feb 21 and Feb 23 - Interwar and Depression
- Week 7 - Feb 28 and March 2 - WW2
- Week 8 - March 7 and March 9 - Civil Rights at mid-century
- Week 9 - March 14 and March 16 - spring break
- Week 10 - March 21 and March 23 - Harlem on my Mind (1969 exhibition) March 21 and March 23 possibly online
- Week 11 - March 28 and March 30 - Black Power Movement/ Black Arts Movement
Course Policies

Academic integrity expectations and consequences (UNT Policy 06.003) http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003.pdf (Links to an external site.)

ADA accommodation statement (UNT Policy 16.001)

“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."

American Disabilities Act

The College of Visual Arts and Design is committed to full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. In keeping with this commitment and in order to facilitate equality of educational access, faculty members in the College will make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with a disability, such as appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methods when doing so does not fundamentally alter the course. If you have a disability, it is your responsibility to obtain verifying information from the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) and to inform me of your need for an accommodation. Requests for accommodation must be given to me no later than the first week of classes for students registered with the ODA as of the beginning of the current semester. If you register with the ODA after the first week of classes, your accommodation...
requests will be considered after this deadline. Grades assigned before an accommodation is provided will not be changed.

Information about how to obtain academic accommodations can be found in UNT Policy 18.1.14, at www.unt.edu/oda, and by visiting the ODA in Room 321 of the University Union. You also may call the ODA at 940.565.4323. **Please email documentation to Apply.ODA@unt.edu or upload documentation via AIM Student Portal (Links to an external site.).**

**Assignment policy**

For all assignments, instructions are distributed prior to the due date. It is up to you to understand the assignment fully and seek assistance when needed. Please speak to the professor if you are unclear about an assignment, or if you miss a deadline. No late work is accepted. **Make up work is not available.**

**Attendance -- COVID-19 impact on attendance (UNT Policy 06.039)**

Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course, and 3 absences are permitted. It is important that you communicate with the professor and the instructional team prior to being absent, so you, the professor, and the instructional team can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform the professor and instructional team if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community.

**However, do not come to class if you feel ill or if you are sick. While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19.** Please contact me if you are unable to attend class because you are ill, or unable to attend class due to COVID-19 including symptoms, potential exposure, pending or positive test results, or if you have been given specific instructions to isolate or quarantine from a health care provider or a local authority. It is important that you communicate with me prior to being absent so I may make a decision about accommodating your request to be excused from class.

If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (Links to an external site.) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. **UNT requires you to contact the UNT COVID Hotline at 844-366-5892 or COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.**
Campus Health and Safety

Emergency: Dial 911

UNT Police: 940-565-3000

Denton Police: 940-349-8181 (non-emergency)

Denton County Sheriff's Office: 940-349-1600 (non-emergency)

Student Health and Wellness Center: 940-565-2333

Counseling and Testing Services: 940-565-2741

Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities

The following statement reminds students of their rights and responsibilities within the academic community – “Each University of North Texas student is entitled to certain rights associated with higher education institutions. See www.unt.edu/csrr (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.) for further information.”

Class materials for remote instruction

This course is taught in person. For any classes held on Zoom, students will need access to a webcam and microphone to participate in the class, and students are expected to be present, on camera, during the duration of the class.

Class recordings

Class recordings are the intellectual property of the university and professor, and they are reserved for use only by students in this class and only for educational purposes. Students may not post or otherwise share the recordings outside the class, or outside the Canvas Learning Management System, in any form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and will lead to disciplinary action.

Contesting a grade
If you are not happy with your grade, or if you feel there has been an error or oversight, write up a clear, full explanation of what you feel is wrong. Also, provide clear, full evidence supporting your suggestion for a change of grade. This material is due three days after you received the grade.

**Course Risk Factor**

According to University Policy, this course is classified as a category one course. Students enrolled in this course will not be exposed to any significant hazards and are not likely to suffer any bodily injury. Students will be informed of any potential health hazards or potential bodily injury connected with the use of any materials and/or processes and will be instructed how to proceed without danger to themselves or others.

**Evaluation for Assignments:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>100 Point Scale Grade</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93-96</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53-59</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluation range for course grade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>100-91</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-81</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-70</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69-60</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59-0</td>
<td>F Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Late policy

Assignments are due when the syllabus says they are due. No makeup assignments are offered. In general, late work is not permitted. That said, if you are having difficulties submitting your work due to illness, or injury, please reach out to the professor.

NOTE: Professor Way retains the right to change the syllabus with or without notice.