



College of Visual Arts and Design, University of North Texas
Spring 2017

AEAH 4824: Topics in Asian Art

Modern Art of India, 1780s-1980s
MW 9-10:20

Dr. Lisa N. Owen

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Office Hours: MW 10:30-11 and W 1:30-3:30



Course Description: This course explores selected artworks produced during India's colonial and postcolonial periods through the frameworks of modernity, nationalism, urbanization, and religious identity. While the class will briefly explore the introduction of photography in the subcontinent and developments in architecture and urban planning, most of our attention will be spent on the medium of painting. We will discuss the formation of major schools of painting, the role(s) of the art academy and other institutions in India, and the rise of the independent artist.

Course Content & Objectives: This course is designed to familiarize students with selected examples of modern Indian art created between 1780 and 1980. The course is divided into three chronological sections: (1) Art and Colonialism, (2) Art and Swadeshi, and (3) Art for a New Nation. By engaging in the visual cultures of India, students can cultivate a thorough knowledge of this important specialization within the discipline of art history, and, at the same time, foster the essential skills of critical looking, reading, and writing about art.

Goals of the course include:

- (1) to enhance critical reading skills
- (2) to refine writing skills
- (3) to recognize a variety of approaches and paradigms employed in the study of art

There is no textbook for this class. All readings are found on Blackboard Learn (learn.unt.edu).

Required readings

Section 1

Mildred Archer, "The Picturesque and the Sublime," in Mildred Archer and Ronald Lightbown, *India Observed: India as Viewed by British Artists, 1760-1860*. London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1982, 8-14.

Pran Nevile, "Advent of Company Painting," in Pran Nevile *Marvels of Indian Painting: Rise and Demise of Company School*. New Delhi: Nevile Books, 2007, 23-44.

Maria Antonella Pelizzari, "From Stone to Paper: Photographs of Architecture and the Traces of History," in Maria Antonella Pelizzari, ed. *Traces of India: Photography, Architecture, and the Politics of Representation, 1850-1900*. Montreal, QC: Canadian Centre for Architecture and Yale Center for British Art, 2003, 22-57.

Tapati Guha-Thakurta, "The Museum in the Colony: Collecting, Conserving, Classifying," in Tapati Guha-Thakurta *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004, 43-84.

Partha Mitter, "The Artist as Charismatic Individual: Raja Ravi Varma," in Partha Mitter *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 179-218.

Section 2

Jasmin Cohen, "Nationalism and Painting in Colonial Bengal," Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection. Paper 1646. (2012) http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/1646

Partha Mitter, "How the Past was Salvaged by Swadeshi Artists," in Partha Mitter *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 267-89.

Partha Mitter, "The Formalist Prelude," in Partha Mitter *The Triumph of Modernism: India's artists and the avant-garde, 1922-1947*. London: Reaktion Books, 2007, 15-27.

Uma Das Gupta, "In Pursuit of a Different Freedom: Tagore's World University at Santiniketan," in Geeti Sen, ed. *India: A National Culture?* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 25-38.

Pramod Chandra and Sonya Rhie Quintanilla, "Nandalal Bose and the History of Indian Art," in Sonya Rhie Quintanilla et. al. *Rhythms of India: The Art of Nandalal Bose*. San Diego: San Diego Museum of Art, 26-41.

Section 3

Ella Datta, *Jamini Roy 1887-1972: Journey to the Roots*. New Delhi: National Gallery of Modern Art, 2013, 5-15 and 61-77.

Saloni Mathur, "A Retake of Sher-Gil's Self-Portrait as Tahitian." *Critical Inquiry* 37/3 (2011): 515-544.

Kavita Singh, "The Museum is National," in Geeti Sen, ed. *India: A National Culture?* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 176-196.

Yashodhara Dalmia, *The Making of Modern Indian Art: The Progressives*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001, 37-51.

Susan Bean, et. al. *Midnight to the Boom: Painting in India after Independence*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2013, 77-113, 123-137, 154-159, 166-169.

Tapati Guha-Thakurta, "Lineages of the Modern in Indian Art: The Making of a National History," in Kamala Ganesh and Usha Thakkar, eds. *Culture and the Making of Identity in Contemporary India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 71-108.

Course Structure: This is a lecture course that meets two times a week for one hour and twenty minutes. Reading assignments for the course are listed below in the lecture schedule. In order to fully prepare for lecture, the student should complete the reading assignment *before* the scheduled class.

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria:

Exams (2 in-class; 1 take-home final; @ 25% each).....	75%
Writing Assignment.....	15%
Attendance.....	10%

Description of In-Class Exams 1 and 2: There will be a total of 2 in-class essay exams. Dates for these exams are highlighted in bold in the lecture schedule. At least one week prior to each in-class exam, 20-25 images will be available on Blackboard Learn for review. For the in-class exam, I will select 6-8 images. On the exam, I will provide the relevant information of each artwork (artist, title, date), but you will need to answer specific questions relating to the images (either as a pair or individually). You will have approximately 15 minutes to write a response to each of the questions. It is imperative that you arrive to class on time, as I will not re-show the images once the exam is in progress.

In addition, ***there will be no make-ups for the in-class exams***. If you miss an exam, you will receive a **zero** on that test unless you provide proper documentation for a University-sanctioned absence (e.g., documented illness, team event, family emergency, etc.). You must contact me within 24 hours of the

missed exam. If, after reviewing your documentation, I agree to schedule a make-up exam with you, it must be taken within one week of the missed test.

Description of Take-Home Final: The final exam will be distributed as a take-home exam and **due on our scheduled final date and time for this class—Wed. May 10th 8-10am**. The dates for distribution and submission are highlighted in bold in the lecture schedule. You will be able to access the class readings and your notes for this exam that will require computer-generated essay responses. The take-home final (and the Writing Assignment below) will be graded on content *and* the quality of writing.

Description of Writing Assignment: During the semester, students are to turn in a short paper that assesses one of the assigned readings. The assigned reading and date of discussion are highlighted in bold in the lecture schedule. Specific content guidelines will be distributed at the appropriate time. Check the lecture schedule for discussion and due date and read over the Grading Criteria on the last page of this syllabus. *The paper must be turned in at the beginning of class* and the student must stay for the lecture. In other words, do not simply drop off your paper and leave. If you do so, I will not accept the paper. In addition, *emailed submissions are not accepted under any circumstances*.

Late work is also not accepted unless there is a documented emergency. As with the exams, the student must notify me about the emergency within 24 hours of the due date of the assignment. If I agree to accept a late assignment, it will be marked down 10 points per *day* (not class) that it is late.

Posting of Grades: Grades will be posted on Blackboard Learn one day after exams or assignments are handed back. It is your responsibility to verify that the posted grade corresponds with the grade recorded on the assignment/exam. If you are not satisfied with the grade you earned, you can come and see me for a re-grading. However, you must realize that a re-grading can either raise or lower your original score. Once the assignment or exam is passed back, you have a window of two weeks to talk to me about your grade. In other words, at the end of the semester, I will not look over past material for you. I would also suggest that you hold onto all of your graded work until you receive the final grade for the class.

Attendance Policy: Attendance will be taken via a sign-up sheet that is passed around during each class. It is up to you to make sure that you have signed the roster. You are allowed two absences without penalty. After that, your attendance grade (which is initially recorded as 100% A) will be lowered by half a letter grade for each absence over those three. It is also important for you to attend class as the exams are based on lectures and the visual material presented. In many cases, I do not completely agree with the information provided in the readings and so I will offer alternative interpretations of selected artworks and include supplemental visual comparisons during lecture. Since you will be responsible for this material when preparing for and taking exams, it is imperative that you come to class and participate fully if you wish to do well. Should you miss a class lecture, it is up to you to get notes from a classmate. I do not respond to emails asking "what did I miss" nor do I repeat entire lectures during my office hours.

Student Behavior in the Classroom: Student behavior that interferes with an 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. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and 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

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences: According to UNT Policy 18.1.16, 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.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism necessitates that I file an incident report to the appropriate authorities and this may result in your failing the assignment, failing the course, or being expelled from the University. Please consult the University's Code of Student Conduct or ask me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism and how you should give proper acknowledgement to your sources in your written work.

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, and Assault: UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

ADA Accommodation Statement: 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*

Course Risk Factor: According to University Policy, this course is classified as a category 1 course. Students enrolled in this course will not be exposed to any significant hazards and are not likely to suffer any bodily injury. Students in this class 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.

Emergency Notification and 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.

Schedule

Please Note: The professor reserves the right to alter this syllabus if necessary. © 2017 Lisa N. Owen

Section 1: Art and Colonialism

Jan 18 (W): Introduction to the course; discussion of the East India Company

Jan 23 (M): Observing India: European Artists in Residence—Reading: Archer

Jan 25 (W): Documenting India: Company School Painting—Reading: Nevile

Jan 30 (M): Documenting India: Company School Painting—class contract due

Feb 01 (W): Documenting India: Photography—Reading: Pelizzari

Feb 06 (M): Collecting India: The Colonial Museum—Reading: Guha-Thakurta 1

Feb 08 (W): From Colony to Crown: The Raj and Art Academies

Feb 13 (M): The Rise of Independent Artists: Raja Ravi Varma—Reading: Mitter 1

Feb 15 (W): The Rise of Independent Artists

Feb 20 (M): EXAM 1

Section 2: Art and Swadeshi

Feb 22 (W): Bengal and the Calcutta Art School—Reading: Cohen

Feb 27 (M): Swadeshi and the Tagores

Mar 01 (W): The Search for 'Indianness': Abanindranath Tagore—Reading: Mitter 2

Mar 06 (M): The Search for 'Indianness'

Mar 08 (W): Avant-Garde Art: Gaganendranath Tagore and Bauhaus—Reading: Mitter 3

Spring Break Mar 13—Mar 19

Mar 20 (M): The Search for the Universal: Santiniketan, Rabindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose—
Reading: Das Gupta

Mar 22 (W): The Search for the Universal—Reading: Chandra and Quintanilla

Mar 27 (M): The Art of Politics: Nandalal Bose and Gandhi

Mar 29 (W): The Art of Politics

Apr 03 (M): EXAM 2

Section Three: Art for a New Nation

Apr 05 (W): On the Eve of Independence: Jamini Roy and Amrita Sher-Gil—Reading: Datta

**Apr 10 (M): On the Eve of Independence—Reading: Mathur
Writing Assignment distributed and discussed in class**

Apr 12 (W): On the Eve of Independence

Apr 17 (M): Independence and Partition; **Writing Assignment due at the beginning of class**

Apr 19 (W): The Making of a National Museum—Reading: Singh

Apr 24 (M): Art after Independence: Explorations in Figural Form—Reading: Dalmia; Bean 77-81 and 86-103

Apr 26 (W): Art after Independence: Explorations in Landscape and Abstraction—Reading: Bean 82-85 and 104-113

May 01 (M): Art after Independence: Explorations of Local Realities and Narratives—Reading: Bean 123-137, 154-159, and 166-169; **Take-Home Final distributed and discussed in class**

May 03 (W): Last class

May 10 (W): Take-Home Final due in my office (ART 210) by 10am

Grading Criteria for Written Work:

A = Such a grade indicates that the student assessed the reading(s) and did so with rigor and clarity of thought. An ‘A’ paper means that there were little to no errors in grammar/spelling and that the introduction and conclusion were clear as was the development of the body of the paper. An ‘A’ paper also demonstrates that the student not only carefully read the *entire* assignment, but thought about the larger issues and considered the author's use of evidence.

B = Such a grade indicates that the student was able to execute the assignment with diligence and forethought, though some main issues in the reading(s) were not addressed fully by the student. A grade of ‘B’ also usually indicates that there were limited structural, spelling, or grammatical problems.

C = This is similar to the ‘B’ description, but the number of problems is more extensive. These may include significant grammatical or structural problems, adding irrelevant material or new material inappropriately, too many generalities, and/or not addressing the main issue(s) in the assigned reading(s). ‘C’ papers often contain too many quoted passages.

D = A grade of ‘D’ indicates that the student did a poor job in demonstrating that s/he read the assignment. Further, grammatical/structural problems make a ‘D’ essay quite difficult to follow. There are usually far too many generalities and a lack of analysis.

F = This either indicates that the assignment was not done or what was done was simply unacceptable for any number of reasons. This includes any indication of plagiarism, which may entail further academic penalty.

Please fill out the following and return it to me by Monday, January 30th

I _____ (print name) acknowledge that I have read the course syllabus. I understand the course structure, criteria for grading, attendance policy, scheduled dates for exams and assignments, expected academic integrity standards and behavior in the classroom. I also understand the risk factor rating of 1 for this class. I hereby agree to the syllabus and its provisions.

Topics in Asian Art: Modern Art of India, 1780s-1980s AEAH 4824 Risk Rating Category 1

Student email address

Signature

Date