



College of Visual Arts and Design, University of North Texas
Fall 2020

AEAH 4824.001: Topics in Asian Art

Modern Art of India, 1780s-1980s

Dr. Lisa N. Owen
email: through Canvas
office hours: Zoom appointment



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 identify and interpret artworks as objects that shape (and are shaped by) their larger socio-historical contexts
- (2) to identify select frameworks and paradigms employed in the study of modern Indian art
- (3) to identify and associate modern Indian artworks within the canon of global modern art

Course structure and materials: Delivery of course materials is through assigned readings, prerecorded lectures, and videos. There is no assigned textbook for this course—all readings are found on Canvas. As this course is asynchronous, students have the opportunity to complete the weekly coursework at their own time and pace. However, activities *need to be completed each week*. Through Canvas, I am able to track student activities in accessing, viewing, and/or downloading course material. In other words, I can verify that students are keeping up with the weekly scheduled readings, lectures and assignments. If I notice a period of inactivity, I will reach out to the student via their UNT email.

Technological requirements: Students will need to have access to a computer and to the internet. For best performance, according to CLEAR— “Canvas should be used on the current or first previous major release of Chrome, Firefox, Edge, or Safari. Because it’s built using web standards, Canvas runs on Windows, Mac, Linux, iOS, Android, or any other device with a modern web browser.” Students also should feel comfortable with working in .docx and .pdf for written assignments. Access to a printer might also be helpful in order to print out images for study. Learn more about how to be successful in a remote learning environment here: <https://online.unt.edu/learn>

Communication: I am always available to answer questions and/or concerns through the Canvas course email. Alternatively, you may email me at lowen@unt.edu but please identify this particular class in the subject line of your email (e.g., Modern Art of India). I am also happy to schedule a Zoom appointment with you!

Course requirements and grading criteria:

Essay Exams (3 @ 25% each).....	75%
Response Papers (3 @ 5% each).....	15%
Documentary film analysis.....	10%

Description of Essay Exams 1 and 2: One week before the exam, I will upload select images and an image list onto Canvas to help you focus your study on those specific artworks. At this point, all of the prerecorded lectures will still be available for review. However, upon uploading the actual exam on the exam date (highlighted in the schedule), I will remove the prerecorded lectures and you will need to rely on your notes from those lectures and the assigned readings to answer the exam questions. Typically there are 4 essay questions with the artworks identified for you and specific questions for you to answer. Although the exam is open book/note, I ask that you do not go beyond class materials in constructing your essays. Also, when citing directly or paraphrasing material from the readings, please record the author's last name and page # in parenthetical citation, e.g. (Mitter 200).

Grading scale for Essay Exams 1 and 2: Typically each exam has 4 essay questions with each question worth 25 points. ***ALL exams will be graded on content AND the quality of writing. Please refer to the grading criteria for written work at the end of this syllabus.***

Here is how points are distributed for each essay question with the corresponding letter grade:
25 = A+; 24 = A; 23 = A-; 22 = B+; 21 = B; 20 = B-; 19 = C+; 18 = C; 17 = C-; 16 = D+; 15 = D;
14 = D-; 13 and below = F

Description of Exam 3: For this last exam, you will need to construct a single essay based on a prompt that I provide. You will have access to your notes and the readings to complete this exam. All prerecorded lectures will be removed from Canvas at this point. Specific format and content guidelines will be uploaded at the appropriate time.

Description of response papers: Three response papers will be assigned at specific times during the semester (see schedule). These assignments will focus on key themes that are addressed in the prerecorded lectures and/or assigned reading(s). Specific format and content guidelines will be uploaded at the appropriate time. These assignments will be graded on both content and the mechanics of writing. See the Grading Criteria on the last page of this syllabus.

Documentary film analysis: During the semester, students are to turn in a completed worksheet that assesses the documentary film *The Day India Burned*. The due date for the film screening and worksheet is highlighted in the lecture schedule. The worksheet and guidelines will be uploaded at the appropriate time.

Late work: Late work is *not accepted unless there is a documented (and university sanctioned) emergency*. In this case, the student must notify me about the emergency prior to the posted deadline. If I agree to accept late work, it will be marked down 10 points per *day* (including weekends) that it is late.

Illness: If you are experiencing any [symptoms of COVID-19](#) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider. UNT also 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. Also, please communicate with me over email so that we may work together in regard to any potential missed work for this class. Please visit this link for more info and a scenario guide for UNT students: <https://healthalerts.unt.edu/symptoms-monitoring>

Posting of grades: Grades will be posted on Canvas. If you would like to discuss a grade with me, we can set up a Zoom appointment. Students have a window of two weeks to talk to me about a grade. In other words, at the end of the semester, I will not look over past material for you and/or re-grade any exams or assignments.

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, and/or being expelled from the University. Please 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 communicate with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu

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). Please make sure your information is current with this system.

Required readings on Canvas:

Section 1

- Partha Mitter, "Section ii. The Sublime, the Picturesque, and Indian Architecture," in Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992, 120-140.
- 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.
- Partha Mitter, "The Artist as Charismatic Individual: Raja Ravi Varma," in R. Brown and D. Hutton, eds. *Asian Art*. Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2006, 167-176.

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

- Saloni Mathur, "A Retake of Sher-Gil's Self-Portrait as Tahitian." *Critical Inquiry* 37/3 (2011): 515-544.
- Ella Datta, *Jamini Roy 1887-1972: Journey to the Roots*. New Delhi: National Gallery of Modern Art, 2013, 5-15 and 61-77.
- Yasmin Khan, "Introduction: The Plan," in Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1-10.
- Susan Bean, et. al. *Midnight to the Boom: Painting in India after Independence*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2013, 86-109.

Schedule

Please note: The professor reserves the right to alter this syllabus if necessary. © 2020 Lisa N. Owen

Section 1: Art and Colonialism

Welcome videos: Introduction to the course and overview of the syllabus

Week 1 (Aug 24-28)

Recorded lecture: The East India Company

Video link: *The Birth of Empire: The East India Company, Episode 1*

Week 2 (Aug 31-Sept 04)

Reading: Mitter 1; Video link: *William Hodges: The Art of Exploration*

Recorded lectures: Observing India: William Hodges; Observing India: Thomas and William Daniell

Response paper #1: Due Friday, Sept 04 by 5pm CST

Sept 07 Labor Day

Week 3 (Sept 08-11)

Recorded lecture: Observing India: The Art of Portraiture

Reading: Nevile; Recorded lecture: Documenting India: Company School Painting

Week 4 (Sept 14-18)

Video link: *The Birth of Empire: The East India Company, Episode 2*

Reading: Pelizzari; Recorded lectures: Documenting India: Photography, Parts 1 and 2

Video link: *Tipu's Tiger*

Response Paper #2: Due Friday, Sept 18 by 5pm CST

Week 5 (Sept 21-25)

Recorded lecture: The Raj and Art Academies

Reading: Mitter 2; Recorded lecture: The Rise of Independent Artists: Raja Ravi Varma

Week 6 (Sept 28-Oct 02)

Exam 1 uploaded on Monday, Sept 28 at 9am CST

Exam 1 due on Friday, Oct 02 by 5pm CST

Section 2: Art and Swadeshi

Week 7 (Oct 05-09)

Recorded lecture: Swadeshi and the Bengal School; Reading: Cohen

Recorded lecture: The Search for 'Indianness', Part 1; Reading: Mitter 3

Week 8 (Oct 12-16)

Recorded lecture: The Search for 'Indianness', Part 2

Response paper #3: Due Friday, Oct 16 by 5pm CST

Week 9 (Oct 19-23)

Reading: Mitter 4; Recorded lecture: Avant-Garde Art: The Tagores and Bauhaus

Reading: Das Gupta; Video: Shantiniketan: The Abode of Peace

Recorded lecture: The Search for the Universal: Santiniketan, Rabindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose

Week 10 (Oct 26-30)

Reading: Chandra and Quintanilla; Recorded lecture: The Art of Politics: Nandalal Bose and Gandhi

Video: Christie's Auctions *Gallery Talk: The Collection of Supratik Bose*

Week 11 (Nov 02-06)

Exam 2 uploaded on Monday, Nov 02 at 9am CST

Exam 2 due on Friday, Nov 06 by 5pm CST

Section Three: Art for a New Nation

Week 12 (Nov 09-13)

Recorded lecture: On the Eve of Independence: Amrita Sher-Gil; Reading: Mathur

Reading: Datta; Recorded lecture: On the Eve of Independence: Jamini Roy

Video: Exhibition on Kalighat painting (Cleveland Museum of Art, 2011)

Week 13 (Nov 16-20)

Reading: Khan; Recorded lecture: Intro to Partition and the film *The Day India Burned*

Video: *The Day India Burned*

Worksheet due on Friday, Nov 20 by 5pm CST

Week 14 (Nov 23-25)

Video: Christie's Auctions *Gallery Talk: Highlights from the South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art Sale* (2012); Reading: Bean; Recorded lecture: Art after Independence: Explorations in Figural Form;

Recorded lecture: Art after Independence: Explorations in Landscape

Thanksgiving Holiday (Nov 26-27)

Week 15 (Nov 30-Dec 03)

Exam 3 uploaded on Monday, Nov 30 at 9am CST

Exam 3 due on Thursday, Dec 03 by 5pm CST

Friday, Dec 04 Reading Day—No Classes/End of Class

Grading Criteria for Written Work:

A = Such a grade indicates that the student was able to execute the assignment/exam with rigor and clarity of thought. An 'A' grade 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 text. An 'A' grade also demonstrates that the student provided exceptional responses to the questions posed in the assignment/exam guidelines.

B = Such a grade indicates that the student was able to execute the assignment/exam with diligence and forethought, though some main issues 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 fully addressing the main questions posed in the guidelines. 'C' essays often contain too many quoted passages.

D = A grade of 'D' indicates that the student did a poor job in following the prompt and/or in answering questions to complete the assignment/exam. 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/exam 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 see the section on plagiarism in this syllabus.