

**Occidental College ARTH 190  
American Indian Art History**

Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:30 PM to 2:55 PM  
Choi Auditorium (Johnson 200)

**Fall 2014**

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Office hours: Mondays 9:30 to 11:30 AM, 115 Weingart

**Course Description:** This course provides a thematic introduction to contemporary (1960 to present) forms of Native North American Indian Art drawing from historic (pre and post-contact) precedents. Thus, while a broad geographical frame of reference is addressed and specific historic eras identified, course discussion and lectures are generated from the conceptual themes of contact, conflict, exchange, appropriation and re-appropriation of American Indian imagery, materials, and ideas, rather than from the more descriptive and abstract categories such as Southwest painting or Plains beadwork.

A concern with the social production of art in specific episodic contexts serves as a means of critically examining the circulation and appreciation of American Indian arts and material culture as fine art, commodity, political critique, social marker, religious icon, and physical landmark. Contested notions of authorship, originality, individualism and communalism will productively inform the theoretical work pursued in student research and writing projects. Artist profiles and websites will engage the visual analysis of specific works informed by symbolic and aesthetic considerations.

**Learning Outcomes:** Students will learn to identify select visual referents, tools and materials specific to Native North American contexts, while also acquiring an appreciation of tribal diversity, sovereignty and contemporaneous identity. Critical thinking, visual literacy, and creative use of multidisciplinary sources will be enhanced through course writing exercises via the web, original research (**Research Paper**) and group discussions on the web (**Class Forum**). Evaluations will be also conducted via the format of three **Response essays**. The course will strengthen student skills in writing, speaking

and reading critically and effectively in peer group and independent projects.

**Teaching Philosophy and Strategies:** I strive to create a participatory learning setting in which students model for their peers a spirit of intellectual inquiry and where current knowledge is constantly examined and expanded, based on new knowledge. Active learning is sought, meaning honest self-reflection, questioning and real-world application grounded in careful reading and examination of the required texts, web references and films.

*Please note that the course addresses painful and sensitive issues of racism, sexism and genocide. In order for the course to be successful, students will be expected to exercise a high degree of intellectual and emotional maturity, respect for others and tolerance for diverse opinions. Civil discourse skills are required.*

Students wishing to explore more fully the issues of cultural competency and building inclusive environments may find resources with Occidental's Office of Intercultural Affairs. Contact: <http://www.oxy.edu/intercultural-affairs>, phone (323) 259-2522, location 1501 Campus Road.

Students seeking support for processing painful issues raised may call, email or visit the Emmons Student Wellness Center (323) 259-2657, [oxywell@oxy.edu](mailto:oxywell@oxy.edu). A **24/7** hotline is available for students to gain immediate counseling and resources - **(323) 341-4141**.

**Assessment:** Three Class Forums (5% each or 15%) Three Response Essays (15% each or 45%); Midterm (15%), Final Research Paper (20% final submission, 5% proposal or 25%). **Guidelines for all assignments are available online.** There is no final exam for this course.

*Each student will be expected to attend all classes and participate in class discussions. **Two or more absences will be grounds for subtracting points from your overall average.** As a rule, I do not accept late work. In the rare and extenuating instance in which I may accept late work, the paper will be marked down accordingly. Extra credit is not offered.*

**Course resources:** All course readings and materials are available on the Moodle homepage. All technical problems should be reported to [helpdesk@oxy.edu](mailto:helpdesk@oxy.edu).

*Access to RESERVES is restricted to students in this course. Students may not copy, share, distribute or otherwise allow or facilitate any unauthorized access to the content or the passwords issued. Individuals who violate this provision will be subject to disciplinary action under the Occidental Academic Misconduct guidelines.*

**Research Paper Style:** I am not wedded to any specific style guideline (Chicago, MLA or APA) as long as students are consistent in their usage. Style guidelines may be accessed here:

[http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.htm](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.htm)  
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>  
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>

Film Review Response papers do not require a formal bibliography, although you should indicate the author's name and title of work referenced. Final research papers do require citations of sources and a bibliography.

**Academic Ethics:** Please review Occidental College's Statement on Academic Ethics found in the Student Handbook and here: <https://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics/academic-ethics>. RE: "Academic misconduct occurs when a student misrepresents others' work as her/his own or otherwise behaves so as to unfairly advantage her/himself or another student academically."

**Digital Etiquette:** My classroom laptop and electronic device usage policy is that technology is OK as long as you are actively engaged with the course materials and do not distract your fellow classmates. I reserve the right to ban electronics if classroom respect is jeopardized by over-usage or abuse of laptop privileges.

While I do not prohibit laptop or I pad use in the classroom, I expect that when I am lecturing, presenting a powerpoint or using a film clip, that students are engaged with me and each other in this exercise, not surfing the web, texting or communicating on Facebook. I may often ask that students turn off or put away their electronics when we are engaging together in group discussions.

Classroom time is an occasion to think together about a particular problem or text. Because we need to be able to engage with each other, it matters how you treat other people and how you focus.

I am aware that students with differently-abled learning styles may have accommodations that require the use of a laptop, tape-recorder, or other technological tool for note taking. These students must also, however follow the guidelines set above for respectful use of their computer.

**Electronic communication policy:** Although I typically respond to student emails within a 24 hour period, students shouldn't expect to get a response from an email query for 48 hours. This standard response time is only operable during the weekdays and before 9 PM. If you have an emergency that needs immediate attention, label the subject line - emergency issue.

Emails should open with a salutation (Nancy, Professor Mithlo) and the body of the message should convey the student's full name and class title. To make email communication more productive, I encourage you to be specific about your inquiry or request and to keep the communication thread brief. I encourage students to take advantage of office hours for longer communication needs. Because my classes may be scheduled back to back, I am not always available for one on one in person communication directly before or after class.

**Student Services:** Students who are differently abled have certain rights and responsibilities, as do their professors. Please review the college's guidelines here: <https://www.oxy.edu/disability-services/rights-responsibilities/students>.

If you are eligible for services or have questions, please contact the Accessibility office on campus, phone: (323) 259-2969, [accessibility@oxy.edu](mailto:accessibility@oxy.edu), location: Arthur G. Coons Building, Room 111. Students who are requesting accommodations should present me with their documentation of need within the first two weeks of class.

The Center for Academic Excellence offers faculty writing specialists and student writing advisors. Please visit

their website here: <https://www.oxy.edu/center-academic-excellence/three-guidelines-10-tips>. Phone: (323) 259-2545, Location: Academic Commons, Ground Floor.

### **Technical Questions?**

Contact the Information Technology Help desk: [helpdesk@oxy.edu](mailto:helpdesk@oxy.edu), or call 323-259-2880.

### **Web resources:**

Aboriginal Curatorial Collective:  
<http://www.aboriginalcuratorialcollective.org/>

Native American Art Studies Association:  
<http://nativearts.org/>

Autry National Center collections:  
<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=ks>

National Museum of the American Indian:  
<http://nmai.si.edu/home/>

Native American and Indigenous Studies Association:  
<http://www.naisa.org/>

Santa Fe Indian Market: <http://www.swaia.org/>

Indigenous Fine Arts Market: <http://www.indigefam.org/>

Manifestations: New Native Art Criticism:  
<http://www.iaia.edu/museum/vision-project/manifestations/>

Native America Calling:  
<http://www.nativeamericacalling.com/>

Indian Country Today:  
[indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com](http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com)

**Course schedule:** This course is organized into seven two-week learning modules. Each learning module contains an introduction to the learning focus of the module, reading assignments, links to online learning activities, assignment directions and due dates.

The first week of each learning module is time for you to watch the films, read, prepare for online activities, and work on assignments. The second week of each learning module will usually be the time when we interact through in class discussion, interactive activities, short writing assignments and critical cumulative assessment.

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**Module #1: August 28, September 2, 4: What is Native art?**

First day of class August 28<sup>th</sup> - *For a Love of His People: The Photography of Horace Poolaw* showing at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, NYC:  
<http://nmai.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/item/?id=899>

**\* Class Forum #1 online discussion due September 7th by midnight** Discussion guidelines provided in Moodle online under Forum.

- **Required reading:**

**Tremblay, Gail.** "Issues in Contemporary American Indian Art: An Iroquois Example"  
<http://nativecases.evergreen.edu/collection/cases/issues-contemporary-american-indian-art.html>

**National Museum of the American Indian,** "Infinity of Nations," online exhibit  
<http://nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/infinityofnations/introduction.html>

Review of "Infinity of Nations" by Holland Cotter:  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/06/arts/design/06infinity.html? r=1>

- **Recommended reading:**

**Morphy, Howard and Morgan Perkins.** "The Anthropology of Art: A Reflection on its History and Practice." In *The Anthropology of Art: A Reader*, eds. Howard Morphy and Morgan Perkins, 1-32 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

**Parezo, Nancy J.** "The Challenge of Native American Art and Material Culture." *Museum Anthropology* 14, Issue 4 (November 1990): 12 - 29.

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**Module 2: September 9, 11, 16, 18: An Art Market Born:  
Tourist Arts and the Notion of Craft**

**\* Class Forum #2 due September 21<sup>st</sup> by midnight** Discussion guidelines provided in Moodle online under Forum.

**Artist Profiles:** Virgil Ortiz, Rose Simpson, Roxanne Swentzell

- **Required reading:**

**Batkin**, Jonathan. "Tourism is Overrated: Pueblo Pottery and the early Curio Trade, 1880-1910." In *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, eds, Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner, 282-300 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

Santa Fe Indian Market:

<http://0-americanindian2.abc-clio.com.oasys.lib.oxy.edu/Search/Display/1699272?terms=santa+fe+indian+market>

Native American Pottery:

<http://0-americanindian2.abc-clio.com.oasys.lib.oxy.edu/Search/Display/1463425?terms=native+american+pottery>

**Mithlo**, Nancy Marie. "Inside Out: How Art Defines Us." In *Clay People*, 11-19 (Santa Fe: Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, 1999).

**Heard Museum.** "Mothers and Daughters; Stories in Clay: Gallery Guide, 2009.

**Virgil Ortiz**

<http://www.virgilortiz.com>

**Rose Simpson:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpwy2old8us>

**Roxanne Swentzell**

<http://www.roxanneswentzell.net/>

- **Recommended reading:**

**Hutchinson**, Elizabeth. "Handicraft, Native American Art, and Modern Indian Identity." In *Seeing Art High and Low: Representing Social Conflict in American Visual Culture*, ed

Patricia Johnston, 194-209 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

**Nadelman**, Cynthia. "Tribal Hybrids." *ARTnews*, 106, no. 6 (Jun 2007): 122-127.

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**Module #3: September 23, 25, October 7, 9: Intersections and Confluences: Indigenous Comic Arts**

**\* Class Forum #3 due October 12<sup>th</sup> by midnight**

*Discussion guidelines provided in Moodle online under Forum.*

**Artist Profiles:** Diego Romero and Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas

- **Required reading:**

**Museum of Indian Arts and Culture**, New Mexico Museum, "Comic Art Indigène." Online exhibit:  
<http://www.indianartsandculture.org/ComicArt/?q=comicart>

About the curator

[http://media.museumofnewmexico.org/audio/chavarria\\_gallerytalk\\_080511.mp3](http://media.museumofnewmexico.org/audio/chavarria_gallerytalk_080511.mp3)

**Royal**, Derek Parker. "Introduction: Coloring America: Multi-ethnic Engagements with Graphic Narrative." *MELUS* 32, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 7-22.

- **Web resource:**

<http://www.psmuseum.org/palm-springs/exhibition/comic-art-indigene/>

Blue Corn Comics

<http://www.bluecorncomics.com/>

Diego Romero

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vWPWoKmqYY>

Haida Manga:

<http://mny.ca/en/red-book.html>

Recommended Sources:

**Native American Mascots:** <http://0-americanindian2.abc-clio.com.oasys.lib.oxy.edu/Search/Display/1647408?terms=mascot>

<http://nativecases.evergreen.edu/collection/cases/should-indian-sports-mascots-be-repealed.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40SFgadRTQ0>

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**Module #4 October 16, 21, 23 The Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 – Government Regulation and Protest**

**\* Midterm in class October 16**

**\* Response Essay #1 due October 26<sup>th</sup> by midnight**

Review and respond to "Who Qualifies as Native? How is this determined?" <http://0-americanindian2.abc-clio.com.oasys.lib.oxy.edu/Ideas/Display/1521176>

**Artist Profile:** Fritz Scholder

- **Required reading:**

**Kuckkahn, Tina,** "Indian Identity in the Arts"  
<http://nativecases.evergreen.edu/collection/cases/indian-identity-in-arts.html>

U.S. Department of the Interior Indian Arts and Crafts Act  
- Case Studies

**Sims, Lowery Stokes.** "Scholder's Figuration: Art and Culture in American Art." In *Fritz Scholder: Indian Not Indian*. eds, Lowery Stokes Sims, Truman T. Lowe & Paul Chaat Smith, 77-101 (New York: Prestel, 2008).

- **Recommended reading:**

**Dubin, Margaret.** "Commodities Controlled: Legislating the Trade of Native American Art." In *Native America Collected: The Culture of an Art World*, 27-47 (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 2001).

**Finkel**, Jori. "Is Everything Sacred? A Respected Art Dealer is Busted for Selling a Cheyenne War Bonnet." *Legal Affairs* (July/August 2003).  
<http://www.legalaffairs.org/prINTERfriendly.msp?id=424>  
November 29, 2009.

- **Web resource:**

Fritz Scholder  
<http://fritzscholder.com>

<http://www.nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/scholder/introduction.html>

The Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990  
<http://www.doi.gov/iacb/act.html>

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**Module #5: October 28, 30, November 4, 6: American Indian Art and American Abstraction: A Cross-Cultural Dialogue**

**\* Research Paper Proposal due November 4th**

**\* Response Essay #2 due November 9<sup>th</sup> midnight**

Review and respond to "Should non-Natives be allowed to appropriate Native culture/ceremonies?"

<http://0-americanindian2.abc-clio.com.oasys.lib.oxy.edu/Ideas/Display/1611390>

- **Required reading:**

Native Appropriations: <http://nativeappropriations.com/> AND <http://nativeappropriations.com/2014/07/shes-so-pale-the-good-and-bad-of-national-exposure.html>

**Schneider**, Arnd. "On 'Appropriation'. A Critical Reappraisal of the Concept and Its Application in Global Art Practices." *Social Anthropology*, 11, no. 2 (June 2003): 215-229.

**Belgrad**, Daniel. "The Avant Garde and the American Indian." In *The Culture of Spontaneity: Improvisation and the Arts in Postwar America*, 44-77 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

**Rushing**, W. Jackson. "Jackson Pollock and Native American Art" In *Native American Art and the New York Avant-garde: A History of Cultural Primitivism*, 169-194 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).

- Recommended Reading:

**Danto**, Arthur C. "Defective Affinities "Primitivism" in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Art." *The Nation* 239 (December 1, 1984).

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**Module #6: November 11, 13, 18, 20: Markings on the Land: From Petroglyphs to Canvas**

**\* Response Essay #3 due November 23<sup>rd</sup> at midnight**

Review and respond to "What is the impact of migration/displacement of American Indians on traditional culture?" <http://0-americanindian2.abc-clio.com.oasys.lib.oxy.edu/Ideas/Display/1707954>

**Individual meetings with professor on research paper**

**Artist Profiles:** Harry Fonseca and Rick Bartow

- Required reading:

**Dobkins**, Rebecca J. "OHS Exhibits: Tears and Rain: One Artist's View from Sea Level," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 107, no. 3: (Fall, 2006): 445-453.

**Sandos**, James A. "Between Crucifix and Lance: Indian-White Relations in California, 1769-1848." *California History*, 76, no. 2/3 (Fall, 1997): 196-229.

**Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian.** *Harry Fonseca: Earth, Wind, and Fire*, (Santa Fe, NM: Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, 1996).

- Web resource:

Harry Fonseca  
<http://www.harryfonseca.com>

Rick Bartow  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1238373>

<http://www.froelickgallery.com/Artist-Detail.cfm?ArtistsID=227>

- **Recommended reading:**

**Craven**, David. "Abstract Expressionism and Third World Art: A Post-Colonial Approach to 'American' Art." *Oxford Art Journal*, 14, no. 1 (1991): 44-66.

**Lippard**, Lucy. "All Six Legs." In *[Re]inventing the Wheel: Advancing the Dialogue on Contemporary American Indian Art*. ed. Nancy J. Blomberg, 127-143 (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2008).

**Module #7: November 25, December 2: The Modernity of Traditional Dress: The Aesthetics of Powwow Culture**

**\* Final Research Paper due December 3<sup>rd</sup> midnight**

- **Required reading:**

**DesJarlait**, Robert. "The Contest Powwow versus the Traditional Powwow and the Role of the Native American Community." *Wicazo Sa Review*, 12, no. 1 (Spring, 1997): 115-127.

**National Museum of the American Indian**, "Identity by Design: Tradition, Change and Celebration in Native Women's Dresses." Online exhibit:  
[http://www.nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/identity\\_by\\_design/IdentityByDesign.html](http://www.nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/identity_by_design/IdentityByDesign.html)

Powwow

<http://0-americanindian2.abc-clio.com.oasys.lib.oxy.edu/Search/Display/1500188?terms=powwow>

- **Recommended reading:**

**Ellis**, Clyde. "We Don't Want Your Rations, We Want This Dance: The Changing Use of Song and Dance on the Southern Plains." *The Western Historical Quarterly*, 30, no. 2 (Summer, 1999): 133-154.

- **Web resource:**

Gathering of Nations: Miss Indian World

[http://www.gatheringofnations.com/miss\\_indian\\_world/index.htm](http://www.gatheringofnations.com/miss_indian_world/index.htm)

Ramilda Cody

<http://www.radmillacody.net>

*When Your Hands are Tied:*

[www.whenyourhandsaretied.org](http://www.whenyourhandsaretied.org)

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There is no final exam for this course.