

ANTHROPOLOGY AND ART - ANTH 2996-501/UNMV

SYLLABUS (Online 8-week session, Fall 2023/H2)

Instructor: Dr. Tressa Berman

Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom. Please email me for appointment.

Contact: tberman@unm.edu



Required Textbooks and Course Materials (Textbooks are available in UNMV bookstore and UNMV Library Reserve or can be purchased online, e.g., “Used” via an online vendor. Some materials, including the Svasek text will also be available as PDFs or online links to be posted, per course announcements.)

Required Textbooks:

1. *Anthropology, Art and Cultural Production*. Maruska Svasek. London: Pluto Press, 2007
2. *Between Anthropology and Art. Contemporary Ethnographic Practice*. Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright. Oxford and New York: Berg Publishers, 2010

Additional articles, films and case studies to be posted online in Canvas course and/or made available on library reserve, as assigned

Course Content

This course introduces core concepts in the anthropology of art from contemporary global frames, from anthropological perspectives of ethnography, intercultural exchanges, cultural expression and ritual, and impacts of colonization on art production and circulation. Historically, anthropology looked at tribal societies as cultural “isolates,” where material culture (objects and expressive arts) were considered aspects of cultural holism. This course will look at that historical approach as the foundation for a more complex and nuanced understanding of the global art market, cross-cultural aesthetics, and the relational and exchange values of art in contemporary cultural contexts.

Course Learning Objectives

CO1: To understand how the discipline of anthropology approaches the study of art in society

CO2: To contextualize “world arts” in both western and non-western contexts by applying anthropological concepts and ethnographic methods

CO3: To become familiar with and conversant in fundamentals of visual anthropology, ethnographic analyses in the study of material culture (objects), film and performance as forms of cultural expression

Requirements: 100 points

1. Online Discussions and observations, as assigned: 25 pts. total
2. Midterm Exhibition Essay: 25 pts.
3. Two Quizzes (Terminology and concepts referenced in readings): 15 pts each = 30 pts.
4. Final Reflection Paper (To be assigned): 20 pts.

Course Schedule and Topics

Module 1/Topic 1: Introduction to Art and Anthropology (Weeks 1–3)

Week 1:

Introduction to Class and the Ethnography of Art

Reading: Chapter 1, Schneider and Wright (pages as assigned)

Week 2:

Reading: Introduction and Chapter 2, Part I, "Theorizing Art" in Svasek (pp. 1-37)

Selection from James Clifford on "The Art-Culture System," in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (to be posted to Canvas)

Week 3:

Schneider and Wright: Chapter 5: "In the Thick of It, Notes on Observation and Context" (Wright)

Schneider and Wright: Chapter 6: "Fieldwork as Artistic Practice," Inagaki

Module 2/Topic 2: Objects and Exhibitions (Weeks 4-5)

Week 4:

Schneider and Wright: Chapter 8: "Show and Tell: Weaving a Basket of Knowledge"

Svasek, Part 2, Objects, Transit and Transition, Chapter 5, pp 88-122

Optional: Chapter 12 in Schneider and Wright: Morgan Perkins, "Cultural Knowledge on Display: Chinese and Haudenosaunee Fieldnotes"

Week 5:

Chapter 6: Museums, Space, Materiality and the Politics of Display pp. 123-153

Berman and Centin, in *No Deal! Indigenous Arts and the Politics of Possession*, Chapter 11: Exhibition "Cultural Copy": Visual Conversations Indigenous Arts and Cultural Appropriation" (on reserve, and to be posted)

****MIDTERM EXHIBITION ESSAY DUE AT CLOSE OF MODULE 2****

Module 3/Topic 3: The Image and Performance in Visual Anthropology (Weeks 6-7)

Week 6:

Classic text: Introduction to John Collier, Jr. *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method* (excerpt)

“Whose Photographs? Native American Images on the Internet,” Nancy Parezo (in Berman, chapter 2)

Week 7

“Convergence: A Reconsideration of Some Aspects of Contemporary Western (Southern California) Art,” Zena Pearlstone in *Art as Technology* (to be posted)

Kenneth Guest: Chapter 17, Art and Media in *Cultural Anthropology: A Toolkit for A Global Age* (On reserve; chapter to be posted)

Module 4/Topic 4: Artist as Social Performer and Cultural Critique (Week 8)

Schneider and Knight: Walters, Chapter 3: “The Artist as Shaman”

Chapter 7: Marcus “Fieldwork in Anthropology Today and the Ethnographic in Art”

Optional: Chapter 14, “Fairytale” in *1000 Years of Joys and Sorrows*, Ai Weiwei (to be posted)

Final Reflection Essay Due