**ARH 797-A81(54681) – Special Problems in Latin American Art**

Lehman College/CUNY

Fall2020

The class will be presented on Blackboard (BB) asynchronously – but should be “imagined” as taking place on Thursdays - 6:00-8:40 P.M.

Instructor: Horacio Ramos

Email: hramos@gradcenter.cuny.edu

Online Office Hours: 5:00-6:00 P.M. – I will be online at these times to receive & send email responses - If there are pressing issues needing attention at other times, please email me.

**Course Description:**

This course examines various artistic trends developed in Latin America and the Caribbean. Because this is a graduate-level seminar, we will focus specifically on issues of race, racism, and ethnicity. Since colonial times, *casta* paintings and *costumbrista* illustrations gave visual form to racial categories and theories that enforced social hierarchies in the so-called New World. During and in the midst of the nineteenth century independences, Latin American elites posited racialized images as national symbols. Later on, modernist trends such as *indigenismo* and *afro-cubanismo* put pressure on Euro-centric theories and artistic output. In the post-war period, a diverse range of art and cultural movements seek to represent and empower disenfranchised communities of color across the Americas.

**Course Objectives:**

Students who successfully complete this course will:

* identify canonical works of Latin American and Caribbean painting, sculpture, architecture, and dematerialized art.
* offer interpretations of art objects concerning their formal qualities, historical context, and social function from a critical race theory perspective.
* develop research and exhibition projects collaboratively.

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**Course Requirements:**

**Grade**

Attendance (via Zoom): 10%

Weekly Posts (via Blackboard): 25%

Exam 1 (October 22): 20%

Exam 2 (December 17): 20%

Exhibition Project (Oct 22 *and* Dec 10): 25%

Grades for this course will correspond to the following scale:

98 - 100: **A+**  93 - 97.9: **A** 90 - 92.9: **A-**

88 - 89.9: **B+**  83 - 87.9: **B**  80 - 82.9: **B-**

78 - 79.9: **C+**  73 - 77.9: **C** 70 - 72.9: **C-**

60 - 69.9: **D** | Below 60, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct: **F**

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All assignments are due on the day noted on the syllabus. **I do not accept late assignments.**

**\*\*All written assignments must be typed, double spaced, and include page numbers and a title page with your title, name, course number, and date\*\*.**

**Blackboard Website:**

* **It is CRUCIAL that you check your Lehman College email and Blackboard regularly since you will regularly find important announcements and the handouts for the class**. You are responsible for any emails I send and any announcements posted on BB.
* Make sure that you have registered a valid email address with Blackboard. You are responsible for the contents of any and all communication that I send through Blackboard to students enrolled in the course**.**

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**Attendance, via Zoom (10% of final grade):**

* The classes are comprised of three parts:
  + 6:00-6:40 pm. You will use this time (or any time *before* the lecture time) to watch a short, pre-recorded lecture by the instructor
  + 6:50-7:40 pm. We will have group Zoom meetings to discuss the lectures and readings.
  + 7:40-8:40 pm. Under the supervision of the instructor, you will use this time (or any time *after* the lecture time) to work in groups to develop your weekly posts and your exhibition project.
* Please arrive to our Zoom meetings on time. Late arrivals or early departures will be noted and will negatively affect your grade.
* Three or more unexcused absences result in an automatic failure of the class. Excused absences include illness, family emergencies, childcare emergencies, and religious holidays, if discussed in advance. Unexcused absences include appointments and regular job demands.

**Weekly Posts, via Blackboard (25% of course grade):**

On weeks with required readings, you will be asked to work in groups and turn in a reading guide on Blackboard.On your reading guide, you will respond to key questions about the required reading and lecture. To such aim, you will use the final part of the lecture (6:50-7:40 pm), and will work under the supervision of the instructor.

* Reading guides should be approximately 350-500 words in length.
* **Extra Credit:** In addition to the group reading guides, individual students may turn in "extra" reading guides for extra credit. Please contact the instructor if you are interested in submitting one or more “extra” reading guides.

**Exams 1 and 2, via Blackboard (40% of your final grade, 20% each):**

* There will be two short exams, each approximately 1 hour in length. Each exam will involve short essay questions. You will need to use and explain at least **three artworks and two of the readings**.
* To alleviate stress and encourage productive studying, I will hand out a review guide with material that may appear on each exam. Make-up exams will only be given if you inform me at least two weeks beforethe exam date that you have a serious, unchangeable conflict. Otherwise, if you miss an exam, you will receive a “0”.

**Exhibition Project, via Blackboard (25% of course grade):**

The final course project will ask you to design an art **exhibition** building upon or responding to the online exhibition *Popular Painters and Other Visionaries*, currently on view at El Museo del Barrio’s webpage (https://popularpainters-elmuseo.org/). You will use the final part of the lecture (7:40-8:40 pm) to work in groups and develop this assignment, under the supervision of the instructor.

* This is a long-term, group project. You will be expected to use our discussions on race, ethnicity, and racism in this project. The assignment will require substantial research and writing, as you will write a **curator’s statement** about the exhibition and a label with information on each of the artworks. Strong writing requires revision.
* This project consists of: 1 progress report (due Oct 22), 1 final project (due Dec 10). If an emergency arises, please contact me as soon as possible. All other late assignments will lose one half letter grade (3 points) per day late (an A paper on Thursday becomes an A- on Friday, etc.).
* *A detailed assignment sheet will be handed out early in the semester.*

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**CUNY Policy Statement**

It is the policy of the City University of New York and the constituent colleges and units of the university to recruit, employ, retain, promote, and provide benefits to employees and to admit and provide services for students without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, legally registered domestic partnership status, disability, predisposing genetic characteristics, alienage, citizenship, military or veteran status, or status as a victim of domestic violence. Sexual harassment, a form of sex discrimination, is prohibited under the university's Policy Against Sexual Harassment.

**Schedule of classes**

All readings will be made available as links or as PDFs on Blackboard and are to be completed before the class they are assigned for. Assigned materials will appear in the folder corresponding to the class date under the “Course Materials” section.

**Thu, Aug 27:** Course Introduction | What is Latin American Art?

*Suggested readings:*

* Héctor Olea, Mari Carmen Ramírez, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, “Resisting Categories,” in *Resisting Categories: Latin American and/or Latino?* (Houston, The Museum of Fine Arts, 2012), 40-48.
* James Oles, “Art in Latin\_America: Filling the Blanks” (section “A Curatorial Model”), in *Art\_Latin\_America: Against the Survey* (University of Texas Press, 2019), 8-12.

**Colonial Art**

**Thu, Sep 3:** Race in modern Latin America | *Casta* Paintings in Mexico and Peru

*Required reading*:

* Marisol de la Cadena, “Reconstructing Race: Racism, Culture and Mestizaje in Latin America,” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 34, 6 (2001).

*Suggested reading*:

* “Cumbre Aconcagua. Part Three. La memoria del agua (Talk between artista Cecilia Vicuña and scholar Marisol de la Cadena),” Wed, Sep 9, 5:00 p.m., https://www.moma.org/calendar/events/6682
* James Oles, “Casta paintings,” in Art and Architecture in Mexico (Thames and Hudson, 2014), 114-121.

**Thu, Sep 10**: Before the Fine Arts: Afrodiasporic and Indigenous *Artesanos*

*Required reading*:

* Alejandro de la Fuente, “AfroLatin American Art,” in *Afro-Latin American Studies: An Introduction* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), selection of intro.

**19th Century Art**

**Thu, Sep 17:** Blackness andThe Haitian Revolution

*Required reading*:

* Gérald Alexis, “The Caribbean in the Hour of Haiti,” in *Caribbean Art at the Crossroads of the World*, ed. Deborah Cullen (El Museo del Barrio, 2012), 107-23.

**Thu, Sep 24:** Race and Neoclassical Art in Mexico and the U.S.

*Required reading*:

* Stacie Widdifield, “Dispossession, Assimilation, and the Image of the Indian in Late-Nineteenth-Century Mexican Painting,” *Art Journal* 49, 2 (Summer 1990), 125-132.

*Suggested reading*:

* Natalia Majluf, “‘Ce n'est pas le Pérou,’ or, the Failure of Authenticity: Marginal Cosmopolitans at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1855, *Critical Inquiry* 23, 4 (Summer, 1997), 868-893.

**Thu, Oct 1:** Putting Race in its Place: Landscape and Academic Painting

*Required reading*:

* Edward J. Sullivan, *From San Juan to Paris and Back: Francisco Oller and Carribean Art in the Era of Impressionism* (2014), chap. 2.

**Modernismos**

**Thu, Oct 8:** Tarsila do Amaral: Gender and Race in 1920s Brazil

*Required reading*:

* Maria Castro, “Both Paulista and Parisian: Racial Thinking in *A negra*,” in *Tarsila Popular,* ed. Adriano Pedrosa (São Paulo: Museu de Arte de São Paulo, 2019).

*Suggested reading*:

* Gillian Sneed, “Anita Malfatti and Tarsila do Amaral: Gender, ‘Brasilidade,’ and the Modernist Landscape,” *Woman’s Art Journal* 34, n. 1 (2013).

**Thu, Oct 15:** *Mestizaje* and Blackness in Cuba, the D.R., and Haiti

*Required reading*:

* Terri Geis, “Myth, History and Repetition: André Breton and Vodou in Haiti,” *South Central Review* 32, n 1 (Spring 2015), 56-75.

*Suggested reading*:

* Gerardo Mosquera, “Africa in the Art of Latin America,” *Art Journal* (Winter 1992), 30-38.

**Thu, Oct 22:** **First Exam** (same time than lecture)

***On this day, you will submit your Progress Report for the Exhibition Project***

**Thu, Oct 29:** *Los Tres Grandes:* *Indigenismo* and the Mexican Revolution

*Required reading*:

* Adriana Zavala, *Becoming Modern, Becoming Tradition: Women, Gender, and Representation in Mexican Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), chapter 5.

**Thu, Nov 5:** Arte versus Arte Popular: *Indigenismo* in the Andes

***Guest lecturer: Gabriela Germaná***

***Readings TBD***

**Post-War Art**

**Thu, Nov 12:** Performances of Race in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru

*Required reading*:

* Vivian Crocket, “War Heroes: Toward a Poetics of Blackness in Hélio Oiticica,” in *Hélio Oiticica: Dance in My Experience* (Museum of Art of Sao Paulo, 2020).

**Thu, Nov 19: Embodying the Caribbean: Performances in the Public Sphere**

* Abigail Lapin Dardashti, “Embodying Hispañola: Urban Performance and Around the Dominican-Haitian Borderland,” *Public Art Dialogue* 6:2, 253-272.

**Thu, Nov 26:** Holiday

**Thu, Dec 3:** Race in U.S. Latinx and Chicanx Art

***Guest lecturer: Sonja Gandert***

***Readings TBD***

**Thu, Dec 10:** Reading Day

***On this day, you will submit the Final Version of your Exhibition Project***

**Thu, Dec 17: Second Exam** (same time than lecture)