

NATIVE AMERICAN ART
NAS 309A, FALL 2009, King 306, 5:30-8:20

Course Instructor

Kori Matthews Guy

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Course Overview

This course focuses on American Indian Art as sacred, historical, and utilitarian expressions of regional tribal differences and cultural interconnectedness. The course content and outline provides an opportunity for the study and exploration of ideas, values and attitudes that have shaped the art of the Indigenous Peoples of the United States. It will focus on the time frames of the various styles of art forms, the geographic differences, cultural attitudes and practices of indigenous artists. Moreover, the course examines how indigenous art evolved through the creation of the numerous Federal Indian policies. Examined more closely are the recurrent themes, imagery and forms that evolved within an historical timeline.

Required Texts

"The Changing Presentation of the American Indian, Museums & Native Cultures.
by National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Univ. of Washington Press; c. 2000

"Native American Art in the Twentieth Century. Edited by W. Jackson Rushing III, 1999

Course Grade

Evaluation will be based on the quality of class participation and attendance (20%); assignments consisting of quizzes and tests (40%); a research project that is comparative in nature (20%); and a final written project that may include a paper that examines some significant political, social and/or historical event and its impact on Native American Art and artist (20%); the instructor will decide which topic the student is most suited to examine.

COURSE OUTLINE

I. Introduction (Aug. 19-Sept. 2)

- A. Who are Native Americans?
- B. What is Art? What is NA art?
- C. The evolution of NA art starting from the Colonial period

READING: Rushing text: Introduction; Museum text Introduction, 184-188

FILM: Coming to Light

II. Native Art by Regions (Sept. 9 – Oct. 2)

- A. Eastern Nations
 - 1. Early Woodland art form, Mississippian art and culture
- B. Southwestern Nations
 - 1. The Anasazi, Pueblo, Navajo and Apache
 - 2. Navajo silversmith guest artist
- C. Nations of the Plains
 - 1. Lakota and other Plain tribes
 - 2. Development of commercialism and Powwows
 - 3. Denver Art Museum
- D. Western Nations of California and the Great Basin, Montana
- E. North and Northwest Nations (The Arctic)
 - 1. Mask and 'totem poles'
 - 2. Sub-arctic clothing, rituals and traditions

READING: Museum text: Chapters 1, 3 and 4; Rushing text: Chapters 1 & 3

FILM: 500 Nations; Southwestern Art as Spirituality; Arts and Traditions of the Northwest

III. The Twentieth Century: Trends in Modern Art (Oct 9 – 23)

- A. Installations and other forms of Native American art
- B. The common threads of cultural identity
- C. Defining contemporary NA art; Euro-American influence
- D. White shamanism, cultural appropriations and other challenges

READING: Rushing text: Chapter 6; Museum text: Chapter 3 revisited

FILM: Video Case Series: A Changing American Indian in a Changing America

IV. Art as political and social statements (Oct 30- Nov. 20)

- A. Questions, issues, and statements of community
- B. Contemporary issues facing Native Nations
- C. Indian Arts and Crafts Act 1990: the backlash

READING: Museum text: Chapter 6; current articles and handouts

FILM: Future Warrior (film by contemporary Native artists)
Beyond Traditions

V. The future of Native American Art (Dec. 2)

- A. Reports and presentations