ARTH 209: African Art
Instructor: Hilary R. Whitham hwhitham@sas.upenn.edu
Office Hours: Mon, 2:30-4:30 PM or by appointment, Jaffe Building, B-18

Summer Session I: May 21 - June 27, 2018
Course Meetings: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 5:00 - 7:30 PM

Course Description
This selective survey examines a variety of the circumstances of sub-Saharan African art, ranging from imperial to nomadic cultures and from ancient times to contemporary participation in the international market. Iconography, style, and materials will be considered, as will questions of religion, colonialism, and modernity. While the course is structured loosely chronologically, several other threads will be woven in throughout the semester, including an attention to historiography and development of the field as well as collections and collectors here in the city of Philadelphia.

Course Learning Outcomes
(1) Identify key artists and examples of art that fall in the category of sub-Saharan African arts from ancient to contemporary;
(2) Consider how the terms “African,” “historical,” “traditional,” and “contemporary” are applied to art and identify other approaches for categorizing such works;
(3) Expand knowledge of African art as a means to gain greater understanding of and appreciation for diverse artistic practices;
(4) Develop critical thinking and reading skills necessary to summarize information and arguments presented in course readings and discussions; and
(5) Refine skills necessary to be an active and engaged learner and researcher within the disciplinary parameters of art history, with an emphasis on visual analysis and historical contextualization.
Expectations
Attendance and participation in all meetings are fundamental to this course. Students must complete all assignments. No electronic devices are permitted in this class, including cell phones, laptops, or other technology with an on/off switch. Drinks are permitted, but no food.

Academic Integrity: It is your responsibility to be familiar with the University’s Code of Academic Integrity. Instances of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for adjudication. http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/

Student Disabilities Services: The University of Pennsylvania provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities who have self-identified and been approved by the office of Student Disabilities Services (SDS). Please make an appointment to meet with me as soon as possible in order to discuss your accommodations and your needs. If you have not yet contacted SDS, and would like to request accommodations or have questions, you can make an appointment by calling SDS at 215-573-9235. The office is located in the Weingarten Learning Resources Center at Stouffer Commons 3702 Spruce Street, Suite 300. All services are confidential. http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/

Assignments
Reading Assignments:
You are expected to complete each session’s assigned readings prior to that course meeting. Please read the assigned readings for each class meeting in the order listed.

Class Participation:
Class participation is a critical component of this course. You are expected to come to class prepared, meaning that you have read all the materials assigned for that day and are ready to engage in discussion. Attendance will be taken at all class meetings.

Written Assignments:
Visual Analysis Paper (due Friday, June 8)
Write a comparative visual analysis of two works of art in the Barnes Foundation and/or the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (4-5 pages).

Final Research Project (due Wednesday, June 27)
Your final research project can take one of two forms, but it must be 5-7 pages in length. You may prepare a proposal or design the promotional materials and label copy for a mock exhibition, focused on artworks discussed throughout the course of the semester.

Presentation and Critical Review of an Article
Present a summary of an assigned reading of your choice to the class. The summary should be concise yet detailed. Write a one-page critical analysis of the article. Construct a clear thesis statement that answers the question - why do you or do you not recommend this article?
Individual Conferences:
You must meet with me twice during the semester, once before the first assignment is due, and once afterwards. If you cannot see me during office hours, please contact me via email at least one week in advance so that we may determine a time that works for both of us.

Penn Museum
Every Wednesday we will meet in the African galleries of the Penn Museum, which has one of the nation’s most important collections of African objects. These meetings may also include special visits from Museum staff. More details forthcoming.

Course Materials
All readings will be posted to the course website. The asterisk readings for each course meeting are non-required supplemental reading, intended to be a source of clarification or review of lecture material. Important books will be placed on reserve, including A History of Art in Africa, 2nd edition (Monica Blackmun Visona, Robin Poynor and Herbert M. Cole, eds. New Jersey: Prentice Hall/Pearson, 2008); Photography and Africa (Erin Haney. London: Reaktion Books, 2010); Heroic Africans (Alisa LaGamma. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011).
Syllabus (subject to revision)

Mon., May 21: Introduction & Ancient Arts
* Textbook - Chapter 14, pages 464-476; Chapter 3, pages 77-81; Chapter 4, pages 105-111; Chapter 8, pages 228-234 (Nok, Greater Zimbabwe, Ile Ife)

Wed., May 23: Art of Empires I - Kongo
* Textbook - Chapter 11, pages 351-362

Fri., May 25: Art of Empires II - Lunda
* Textbook - Chapter 11, pages 363-378

Wed., May 30: Art of Empires III - Benin
* Textbook, Chapter 9, pages 272-283

Fri., June 1: Luba-ness

Mon., June 4: Ancestor Arts - Fang

Wed., June 6: Secrecy - Dogon-ness and Baule-ness
* Textbook - Chapter 5, pages 132-142

Fri., June 8: Power Associations - Bamana-ness/Senufo-ness
* Textbook - Chapter 5, pages 143-152
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/powe/hd_powe.htm

Mon., June 11: Photography I - 1839 - 1940


Fri., June 15: Art Schools II - Nsukka School, Nigeria

Mon., June 18: Ghana

Wed., June 20: Contemporary Masquerades - Pende and Yoruba

Fri., June 22: Photography II - 1940 to present

Mon., June 25: South Africa
Watch - Kentridge’s History of the Main Complaint (1996)