

ARTH 376: Twentieth-Century Latin American Art

Class time: Monday and Wednesday 10:30-11:45

Location: Art and Design Building 2026

Professor: Michele Greet

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Office Hours: Wednesday 1:00-2:00, Friday 2:00-3:00 or by appointment

Course Description: Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, Wifredo Lam—the names are familiar, yet why are these influential artists frequently omitted from twentieth-century art curricula? This course will provide an in-depth discussion of these and other pivotal Latin American artists, in order to establish an alternative vision of modernism. Twentieth-century Latin American art evolved through a complex relationship with the European avant-garde. Some artists re-appropriated European trends and transformed them into a uniquely Latin American idiom, whereas other artists reacted against international modernist tendencies and developed unique expressions of national identity. This course will address issues such as the relationship between social realism and politics, the expression of specific national identities versus the adoption of universal trends, the creation of an avant-garde in post-colonial societies, and the perception of the “fantastic” in Latin American art. Key figures in Latin American modernism from the Mexican muralists to the artists of the Taller Torres-García will be discussed, as well as the numerous women artists (Frida Kahlo, Maria Izquierdo, Remedios Varo, Amelia Pelaez, and Tarsila do Amaral) who made a unique contribution to Latin American art.

Course Format: The classroom experience is the core of the course. Class sessions comprise lecture/discussions on selected aspects of material introduced in that day’s reading assignment. Tests and quizzes derive from both what we cover in class and the readings, thus **careful note taking** is essential to your success in the course.

Objectives:

- To become familiar with the major movements in twentieth-century Latin American art
- To learn about these movements in their historical context and to recognize their formal/stylistic traits
- To develop analytical and interpretive skills and use them to discuss and write about works of art

Course Requirements:

- **Readings:** complete all reading **before** the class. If a reading is listed under February 13, for example, it should be completed **before** class on the 13th.
- **Participation:** (10% of your grade) Participation refers to both the content of your verbal contributions as well as your attention and response to others’ comments. The GMU catalogue reads: “Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register...instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as *de facto* evidence of non-participation.” Everyone starts with a B as a participation grade.

You will maintain that grade by simply coming to class (missing no more than 3 classes over the semester). To get an A for participation you need to actually contribute to class discussions. Your participation grade will be reduced according to attendance after 3 absences. You will not pass the class if you miss more than 50% of the class sessions no matter how well you do on other assignments.

- **Museum Paper 1:** (20% of your grade) 4-5 pages. Specific assignment to be posted on blackboard.
- **Museum Paper 2:** (20% of your grade) 4-5 pages. Specific assignment to be posted on blackboard.
- **Quiz:** (10% of your grade)
- **Mid-term:** (20% of your grade)
- **Final:** (20% of your grade)

Grading Standards:

C is the average expected performance of a college Student. To receive a C you must complete all readings and assignments on time, demonstrate a basic knowledge of the material, and write competently (all assignments must be well organized and have correct spelling and grammar). To receive a B your work must be substantially better than average and to receive an A truly exceptional. A work is meticulously researched, well written, and imaginative and goes above and beyond the assignment.

A+	98-100	C+	77-79
A	93-97	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D	60-69
B	83-86	F	59 and lower
B-	80-82		

Technology Requirements:

- GMU requires you to activate your GMU e-mail account to receive official campus communications. If you prefer to use another address, you must activate the e-mail forwarder. I will use GMU addresses exclusively.
- Web access and searching ability
- All written work must be word-processed, spell-checked, and printed on a quality printer

Policies:

- Students are responsible for all material covered in class (announcements, lectures, discussions) whether you are present or not.
- Late assignments are not acceptable. Any work turned in late without a valid written excuse (i.e. doctor's note) will be graded down 10 points per week late. If an assignment is not turned in by the last day of class you will be given a 0 for that assignment. If you

are having difficulty completing an assignment please see me well before the assignment is due. If I am aware of your circumstances I am more than willing to work with you.

- Make-up exams or extensions will be granted only in the case of documented emergencies.
- GMU operates with an **Honor Code**. It is clearly defined in the catalogue (<http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/>) **Plagiarism** (presenting someone else's ideas or words as your own without proper acknowledgement) violates the Honor Code. I will notify the Honor Committee concerning possible infractions.
- Cell phones must be **turned off** during class.
- Accommodations will be made for students with documented disabilities, in accordance with law and university policies. Students requiring accommodations must register with the University's Disability Resource Center and produce documentation <http://ds.gmu.edu/documentation/> . Please do this well **before** the first test or presentation in case alternate arrangements need to be made.
- If English is your second language, I encourage you to turn in a rough draft of your paper at least one week before it is due. If needed I will recommend that you work with the Writing Center. **All papers must be in good standard English.**

Other important resources:

- Diversity
 - Mason values diversity; through the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Multicultural Education (ODIME), Mason seeks to create and sustain inclusive learning environments where all are welcomed, valued, and supported
- Religious holidays
 - University Life religious holiday calendar <http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/> it is the obligation of students, within the first two weeks of the semester, to provide faculty members with the dates of major religious holidays on which they will be absent due to religious observances
- Student privacy
 - student privacy and student rights under FERPA <http://registrar.gmu.edu/ferpa/>
- Student services
 - Online Education Services, University Libraries <http://library.gmu.edu/for/online>
 - Writing Center <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>
 - Counseling and Psychological Services <http://caps.gmu.edu/>

Important dates:

Jan. 30	Last day to add classes
Feb. 15	No class (I'm at a conference)
Feb. 22	Quiz
Feb. 24	Last day to drop classes
Mar. 6	Museum paper 1 due
Mar. 13, 15	Class does not meet (Spring Break)
Mar. 22	Mid-term exam
Apr. 24	Museum paper 2 due
May 3	Last day of class
May 10	Final Exam: 10:30-1:15

Required Text Books:

Barnitz, Jacqueline and Patrick Frank. *Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America*. Austin: University of Texas Press, (2015). 2001 edition ok.

Frank, Patrick ed. *Readings in Latin American Modern Art*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004.

Lectures And Reading Assignments

Jan. 23 *Introduction*: review syllabus and course requirements

Discussion: What is Latin American art?

Jan. 25 *Lecture*: 19th Century Art in Latin America

Readings: Barnitz “Introduction and an overview of the Nineteenth Century” (1-12)

Jan. 30 *Lecture*: “Modernismo and the Break with Academic Art, 1890-1934”

Artists: Saturnino Herrán, Camilo Egas, José Sabogal

Readings: Barnitz chapter 1

Frank 3-4

Feb. 1 and 6 *Lecture*: “The Avant-Garde of the 1920s Cosmopolitan or National Identity?”

Artists: Brazil: Tarsila do Amaral, Emiliano di Cavalcanti, Anita Malfatti, Vicente do Rego Monteiro, Lasar Segall

Readings: Barnitz chapter 2 (skip 45-56)

Frank 24-27

“Klaxon: Monthly Review of Modern Art,” in Ades 1989, 309-310 (on blackboard)

Feb. 8 *Lecture*: “The Avant-Garde of the 1920s Cosmopolitan or National Identity?”

Artists: Argentina: Emilio Pettoruti, Xul Solar, Pablo Curatella Manes

Readings: Frank 19-23

Martin Fierro manifesto, in Ades 1989, 313-314 (on blackboard)

Feb. 13 *Lecture*: “The Avant-Garde of the 1920s Cosmopolitan or National Identity?”

Artists: Uruguay: Pedro Figari, Carlos Alberto Castellanos

Readings: Frank 14-18

Manley, Marianne. *Intimate Recollections of the Rio de la Plata: Paintings by Pedro Figari*, 1986, 9-23 (on blackboard)

Feb. 15 **No class (I’m at a conference)**

Feb. 20 *Lecture*: “The Avant-Garde of the 1920s Cosmopolitan or National Identity?”

Artists: Cuba: Eduardo Abela, Amelia Peláez, Carlos Enríquez, Victor Manuel, Marcelo Pogolotti

Readings: Frank 28-30

Enrique José Varona, “An Inquiry: What Should Latin American Art Be?”; Adolfo Zamora, “Eduardo Abela: Cuban Painter”; Martí Casanovas, “New Art,” and “A New Course: The ‘1927’ exhibition”; and Juan Marinello, “The Moment” and “The Negro Question,” in Ramírez and Olea 2004, 467-70 (on blackboard)

Feb. 22 **Quiz**

Video: Diego Rivera

Feb. 27, Mar. 1 and 6 *Lecture:* Mexican Muralism

Artists: Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco

Readings: Barnitz chapter 2 (45-56); chapter 3 (79-90)

Frank 33-50

José Clemente Orozco, “New World, New Races, and New Art” and

David Alfaro Siqueiros “Corrections about Visual Arts,” in Ramírez and Olea 2004, 471-72 (on blackboard)

***Museum paper 1 due on Mar. 6** (Specific assignment to be posted on blackboard)

Mar. 8 *Lecture:* “Social, Ideological, and Nativist Art: The 1930s, 1940s and After”

Artists: Brazil: Cândido Portinari; Ecuador: Eduardo Kingman, Oswaldo Guayasamín

Readings: Barnitz chapter 3 (90-111)

Frank 54-63

José Carlos Mariátegui, “Editorial: Amauta,” “Art, Revolution, and Decadence,” and “The Indian Question: A New Appraisal,” in Ades 1989, 316-18 and 327-28 (on blackboard)

Mar. 13, 15 no class, spring break

Mar. 20 **Mid-term exam**

Mar. 22 *Video:* Frida Kahlo

***Mar. 23 Visual Voices Lecture: Carmen Ramos, Curator of Latino/a Art, Smithsonian Museum of American Art**

“Rufino Tamayo: The New York Years”

7:30-9:00 Harris Theatre

Extra credit: write 1 page summary of Dr. Ramos’s talk

Mar. 27 *Lecture:* “The Mystique of Frida Kahlo”

Artists: Frida Kahlo

Readings: Lindauer, M. “Introduction: Rereading Frida Kahlo” and “Fetishizing Frida” in *Devouring Frida: The Art History and Popular Celebrity of Frida Kahlo* (on blackboard)

Frank 79-80

Mar. 29, Apr. 3 *Lecture:* “Surrealism, Wartime, and New World Imagery, 1928-1964”

Artists: María Izquierdo, Remedios Varo, Leonora Carrington

Readings: Barnitz chapter 4, 113-127

Frank 81-85

- Apr. 5, 10 *Lecture*: “Surrealism, Wartime, and New World Imagery, 1928-1964”cont.
Artists: Wifredo Lam, Roberto Matta, International Surrealist Exhibition
Reading: Barnitz chapter 4, 127-138
Frank 86-99
Katzew, Ilona “Proselytizing Surrealism: André Breton and Mexico” in *Review: Latin American Literature and Arts*, 51, Fall 1995, 21-33. (on blackboard).
- Apr. 12 *Lecture*: “Torres-García’s Constructive Universalism and the Abstract Legacy”
Artist: Joaquín Torres-García, Gyula Kosice
Readings: Barnitz chapters 5
Frank 135-147
Joaquín Torres-García, “The Southern School,” in Ades 320-22 (on blackboard)
- Apr. 17 *Lecture*: “New Museums, The São Paulo Biennial, and Abstract Art”
Artist: Alejandro Obregón, Rufino Tamayo, Vicente Rojo, Manabu Mabe, Fernando de Szyszlo
Readings: Barnitz chapters 6
Frank 148-157
- Apr. 19 *Lecture*: “Geometric, Optical, and Kinetic Art from the 1950s through the 1970s”
Artists: Edgar Negret, Eduardo Ramírez, Alejandro Otero, Jesús Rafael Soto, Carlos Cruz Diez
Readings: Barnitz chapter 8
Frank 161-171
- Apr. 24 **Museum paper 2 due** (specific assignment to be posted on blackboard)
Lecture: Brazilian Concrete and Neoconcrete Art and Their Offshoots
Artists: Lygia Clark, Helio Oiticica, Lygia Pape
Readings: Barnitz chapters 9
Frank: 172-181
- Apr. 26 *Lecture*: Neofiguration, Pop, and Environments: The 1960s and 1970s
Artists: Cuevas, Botero, Marisol, Amaral, Minujin
Readings: Barnitz chapters 10 and 11 (288-290)
Frank 187-211
- May 1 *Video*: Vik Muñoz *Waste land*
- May 3 **Review**
- May 10 **Final Exam 10:30-1:15**