

## **ARTH 699 Latin American Vanguardists**

Wednesday 4:30-7:10

Room 3113 S. Dillon Ripley Center, Smithsonian Institution

1100 Jefferson Drive SW, Washington, DC

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 2:00-3:00 at GMU, or by appointment (I'll be available before class on Wednesdays)

### **Course description:**

With a focus on six artistic centers (Mexico City, Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Lima, Quito, and Havana), this seminar examines avant-garde movements in Latin America during the 1920s and 1930s. The artists and writers who formed these groups shared aims with the European historical avant-gardes that inspired them. In their challenge to the status-quo, they also employed the similar strategies of manifesto writing, journal production, and the staging of public events of provocation. The Latin American vanguardias, however, accounted for specific social and political concerns, cultural infrastructures, and locations on the so-called periphery. We will undertake theoretical and historical readings (including primary texts) to explore the rhetorical strategies and visual culture of several vanguardias. The seminar will question the meanings and conditions of modernity in the region and investigate the issues, forms, and media that define Latin American modernisms.

**Course Format:** This class will consist of seminar-style discussions of assigned readings and critical assessment of the readings led by different students in the class. Written assignments will complement in class discussions.

### **Objectives:**

- To recognize and comprehend the diverse manifestations of Latin American vanguard movements
- To understand how historical and cultural contexts influence how art is understood and interpreted
- To perform specialized research using the ideas discussed in class and to convey the results your research as a class presentation and research paper

### **Course Requirements:**

- **Readings:** Complete all reading **before** the class. If a reading is listed under Jan. 14, for example, it should be completed **before** class on the 14<sup>th</sup>.
- **Attendance/Participation:** (10% of your grade) Since this class is designed as a seminar, class participation is essential. 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.” Each week you are required to read assigned material and come to class prepared to discuss ALL assigned readings. Your contributions to class discussions every week will determine your participation grade.

- **Lead discussion:** (15% of your grade) Each student will be required to lead a discussion of the assigned readings in one class. Leading discussion entails preparing a brief summary (1-2 pages) of one of the assigned texts on the day of your presentation (excluding manifestos and primary sources). Your summary should outline the main points raised in the reading and propose avenues for discussion. You must come to class with at least 3 prepared questions for the class. Please give me a copy of your summary and questions at the beginning of class. You should supplement your presentation with images.
- **Blog postings:** (20% of your grade) Specific instructions to be handed out in class. You must post a brief comment on the group of readings (no more than 250 words) on Blackboard **no later than 3pm** before each class. Your postings should highlight issues raised by the readings as a whole for that week and/or pose questions that you have about the readings. There are 9 weeks of readings to which you can respond in a blog entry. You should post at least 7 responses. If you do all or 8/9 of the response papers, I will drop your lowest grade (grades).
- **Paper topic proposal:** (10% of your grade) **One page abstract**, which summarizes the ideas to be discussed in your paper and **an annotated bibliography** of at least 15-20 sources.
- **Presentation:** (15% of your grade) 20-minute powerpoint presentation of your research topic to be followed by class discussion. In your presentation you should concisely describe the topic of your paper and outline your main argument. The issues raised in the discussion following your presentation should inform the final revisions to your research paper.
- **Final Research Paper:** (30% of your grade) 15-18 page research paper (with footnotes, bibliography and illustrations). Specific assignment to be handed out in class.

### **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
A	93-97
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82

C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	59 and lower

**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 one grade per class 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 presentations 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://www2.gmu.edu/resources/facstaff/findex.html>) **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.
- All work must be submitted in hard copy. E-mailed assignments will not be accepted.
- 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.
- 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 703-993-2474 and produce 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 final papers must be in good standard English.**

**Important dates:**

Jan. 31	Last day to add classes
Feb. 25	Last day to drop classes
Mar. 14	No class (Spring break)
Mar. 21	<b>Paper topic proposals due</b>
Apr. 11	Visit to "Suprasensorial" at the Hirshhorn
Apr. 18	Presentations
Apr. 25	Presentations
May 2	Presentations/ <b>Final papers due</b> (except those students who present today)
May 9	Final papers due for those who presented on May 2

**Required texts:**

Bürger, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Trans. Michael Shaw. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Unruh, Vicky, *Latin American Vanguards: The Art of Contentious Encounters (Latin American Literature and Culture)*. University of California Press, 1994

Suggested text for background information: Jacqueline Barnitz, *Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001.

\*All other readings will be posted on blackboard unless otherwise indicated

**Schedule of weekly topics and required reading assignments:**

Jan. 25: **Introduction**

Feb. 1: **Theoretical Foundations: The Avant-Garde**

Feb. 8: **Theoretical Foundations: The Vanguard on the Periphery**

Feb. 15: **Theoretical Foundations: Modernism/Modernity on the Periphery**

Feb.22: **European Vanguards: Cubism, Futurism, Dada, and Surrealism**

Feb. 29: **Mexico: Avant-Garde and State**

Mar. 7: **Buenos Aires: The Paradoxes of Cosmopolitanism**

Mar. 14: No class spring break

Mar. 21 **Paper topic proposals due**  
**Brazil: From Futurism to Cannibalism**

Mar. 28 **Lima and Quito: The Avant-garde and the Left**

Apr. 4: **Cuba: Anti-Traditionalism and the National Body**

Apr. 11: Visit to “Suprasensorial: Experiments in Light, Color and Space” at the Hirshhorn

**Apr. 18: Student Presentations**

**Apr. 25 Student Presentations**

**May 2 Students Presentations**

**May 9 Final Paper due**