

ARTH 376: Twentieth-Century Latin American Art

Class time: Monday and Wednesday 1:30-2:45

Location: Art & Design Building L008

Professor: Michele Greet

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Phone: (703) 993-1250 (general office number)

Office: Horizon Hall 3141

Office Hours: Wednesday 11:00-12:00 or by appointment

Course Description: Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, Wifredo Lam...Why are these groundbreaking artists often omitted from modern art classes? This course will examine the works of these and other leading Latin American artists to establish a more inclusive understanding of modernism. Twentieth-century Latin American artists had a complex relationship with the European avant-garde. Some artists appropriated European trends such as cubism or surrealism and transformed them into uniquely Latin American styles, whereas other artists reacted against international modernist tendencies, focusing instead on portraying their national identity. This course will address issues such as the relationship between social realism and politics, the expression of national identities versus the adoption of so-called “universal” trends, the creation of an avant-garde in post-colonial societies, and the perception of the “fantastic” in Latin American art.

***This course fulfills the Mason Core Arts requirement**

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.

Mason Core Arts Objectives:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic process, and a work's underlying concept, and the contexts associated with the work.
- Identify and analyze the formal elements of modern art in Latin America using appropriate vocabulary.
- Analyze cultural production using standards appropriate to the visual arts, as well as the works cultural significance and context.
- Analyze and interpret the content of a work of art through its social, historical, and personal contexts.

General 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 1, for example, it should be completed **before** class on the 1st.
- **Participation:** (5% 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.
- **In class writing:** (10% of your grade) Throughout the semester there will be at least 10 opportunities for in class formal analysis. These assignments are not graded, but you must complete at least 8 of these for full credit (8=A, 6=B, 4=C, 2=D)
- **Paper:** (25% of your grade) 5-7 pages, a focused analysis of works of art in a DC museum. **Museum visit required.** Specific assignment to be handed out in class.
- **Quiz:** (10% of your grade)
- **Mid-term:** (25% of your grade)
- **Final:** (25% 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 (<https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/full-honor-code-document/>) **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. 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:

<https://historyarthistory.gmu.edu/undergraduate/resources-and-support-services>

Important dates:

Jan. 23	Last day to add classes
Jan. 30	Last day to drop classes (with full refund)
Feb. 14	Quiz
Mar. 4, 6	Spring break, no class
Mar. 13	Mid-term exam
Apr. 15	Museum paper due
Apr. 29	Last day of class
May 1	Final Exam: 1:30-4:15

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. 17 *Introduction*: review syllabus and course requirements

Discussion: What is Latin American art?

Jan. 22 *Lecture*: 19th Century Art in Latin America

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

Jan. 24 *Lecture*: "Modernismo and the Break with Academic Art, 1890-1934"

Artists: Saturnino Herrán, Camilo Egas, José Sabogal

Readings: Barnitz chapter 1
Frank 3-4

Jan. 29, 31 *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. 5 *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. 7 *Lecture*: "The Avant-Garde of the 1920s Cosmopolitan or National Identity?"

Artists: Uruguay: Pedro Figari, Carlos Alberto Castellanos

Readings: Frank 14-18

Feb. 12 *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. 14 Quiz

Video: Diego Rivera

Feb. 19, 21, 26, 28 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)

Mar. 4, 6 No class, spring break

Mar. 11 Review

Mar. 13 Mid-term exam

Mar. 18 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. 20 Lecture: "The Mystique of Frida Kahlo"

Artists: Frida Kahlo

Readings: <https://smarthistory.org/frida-kahlo-introduction/>

Sheena McKenzie, "Queen of the Selfie: The enduring allure of Frida Kahlo," CNN, July 28, 2015:

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/07/28/world/americas/queen-of-the-selfie-the-enduring-allure/>

García Cheran, Joanna, "An Indigenous Perspective on Frida Kahlo" Hyperallergia, July 4, 2021.

https://hyperallergic.com/660471/indigenous-perspective-frida-kahlo/?utm_campaign=daily&utm_content=20210705&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&fbclid=IwAR2NEHxGsEyM_e0buTDtocRQNNaYyINfk4TuPteI5lvznjIPi6lINimmfuM

Frank 79-80

Film: *Frida Kahlo: Portrait of an Artist* (<https://library.gmu.edu/> click on "databases," click on "F" scroll down to "Films on Demand" search film title 28:09 minutes)

Mar. 25 and 27 *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. 1 and 3 *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. 8 *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. 10 *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. 15 **Museum paper due** (specific assignment to be posted on blackboard)

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. 17 *Lecture: Brazilian Concrete and Neoconcrete Art and Their Offshoots*

Artists: Lygia Clark, Helio Oiticica, Lygia Pape

Readings: Barnitz chapters 9

Frank: 172-181

Apr. 22 *Lecture: Neofiguration, Pop, and Environments: The 1960s and 1970s*

Artists: José Luis Cuevas, Fernando Botero, Marisol, Antônio Henrique Amaral, Marta Minujin

Readings: Barnitz chapters 10 and 11 (288-290)

Frank 187-211

Apr. 24 Film (in class): Vik Muñoz *Waste land* (99 min.)

Apr. 29 **Review**

May 1 **Final Exam 10:30-1:15**