

Department: ARTH

Course No: 141

Credits: 3

Title: Introduction to Latin American Art

Contact: Robin Greeley

Content Area: CA1-Arts and Humanities

Diversity: CA4 Non-International

Catalog Copy: ARTH 141. Introduction to Latin American Art. Either semester. Three credits. A thematic survey of Latin American art from 200 B.C. to the present.

Course Information: Description: This course considers the trajectory of Latin American art from pre-Columbian times, through the Colonial and Independence periods, into the 21st century. It addresses the relationship of native cultures to the Conquest, the relationship of Colonial art to both indigenous arts and European traditions, the struggle to define a nationalist tradition in the 19th century, and the 20-21 centuries' incorporation/shifting of European avant-garde visual languages, and the uses of indigenous/popular arts in defining cultural identities.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: This course aims not merely to introduce students to a variety of Latin American societies and cultures, but also to give them insight into the historical framework within which such diversity developed. It aims to give students the opportunity to actively learn and discuss these ideas, so that they can become more intellectually sophisticated and articulate, and thus more capable of making informed critical judgments about the world around them. The course aims to teach students in a manner that will help them become better, more knowledgeable and socially-conscious people well-prepared for the challenges of their role as world citizens.

CA1 Criteria: Through lectures, discussion sections and short written assignments, students will engage critically with the various practices and processes of visual representation as they have intersected with diverse historical, social and political conditions in Latin America from 200 a.d. to the present. Key to its approach is to engage students exploring visual images not merely as a means of 'illustrating' history, but as a crucial mode through which the major social transformations could/can be imagined, assessed and critiqued.

CA4 Criteria: This course examines a wide variety of human experiences, modes of thought and creativity across time and space. The course often compares European, African, and U.S. cultures to those of Latin America, beginning by addressing the momentous clash of world views that was the European Conquest of the Americas – the repercussions of which are still active today. Via the window of visual culture, it examines the enormous diversity of cultural and artistic responses to that event and to subsequent histories of the Western hemisphere, as such

diversity facilitates, impedes, or mediates human communication, understanding and community. This course teaches students to see how such apparently “logical” or “natural” issues as ‘progress’ ‘modernization’ ‘freedom’ and ‘history’ are, in fact, conditioned by social experience and context. The course further teaches students to analyze visual imagery and mechanisms that are often taken to be ideology-free --such as photographs, scientific drawings, even aspects of cognitive perception such as perspectival vision -- as socially conditioned. The course encourages students to think about similarities between groups, as well as difference. The issue of defining a “Latin American” identity is present throughout the course, whether it be the lack thereof in pre-Conquest times, the contentious relationship of the American colonies to their European colonizers, the urgent definitions of Latin-Americanness during the 19c Independence period, or the necessity during the 20c nationalist period of defining Latin Americanness in the face of growing U.S. power. The course looks at the issue of human rights from the Conquest to the present in relation to cultural production. It is particularly concerned with indigenous rights in the face of the long history of their marginalization in the Americas . It also treats the issue of human rights in relation to the slave trade in the Americas . The course examines how culture can be an effective mode of response to human rights abuse situations, as well as how hegemonic culture can, conversely, be used as a tool for human abuse. The course also focuses on migration issues as they affect cultural production, eg. African diasporic migration due to the slave trade; European migration, esp. during the Colonial period and in early 20c South America; and 20c migration from Latin America to the United States as it affects both U.S. Latino cultures and the cultures of the Americas. The course examines the social, political & economic dynamics of power – as expressed through culture and history – of empire formations (pre-European and European); colonizer/colonized formations (16-18c and beyond); of nation-state formation (19c & 20c Americas). Through the window of visual culture, the course also examine the dynamics of race, gender and class formations as they shift & intertwine according to historical circumstances. The course treats a range of cultures, communities and nation-states throughout the Americas, focusing most particularly on those that were formerly colonies of Spain, France, and Portugal.

Role of Grad Students: Graduate student assistants, drawn from the MA program in Art History, will be responsible for leading discussion sections and teaching students how to use new web-based digital imaging services (ArtStor, etc.) to provide a much enhanced pedagogical environment . GA preparation for teaching is an inherent aspect of the MA in Art History, and involves close supervision from the Art History professor in charge of the designated course. Preparation thus includes a strong previous knowledge of the history, theory and methodologies used in the course itself, as well as a strong previous preparation in language and writing skills. Supervision includes weekly meetings between professor and GAs, as well as classroom visits and evaluation sheets.