

Moravian College Syllabus

ART 222 African Art

Spring 2011 Monday and Wednesday 2:35-3:45 pm Hill 310

Professor Kearns

marthamkearns@gmail.com

Availability: Best time for a conference is immediately before or after class. If this is inconvenient, a meeting can be scheduled in advance in my office, Monday or Wednesday.

Course Goals

Students will gain an aesthetic and cultural understanding of the art of Africa, from prehistory to the present day. Sculpture is the primary medium studied in the course, but textiles, painting, artisan works and architecture are also included. Students will examine how religion and cultural influences affect the development of regional and national styles. The influence of the African diaspora on art in Europe, Latin America and the United States will also be considered. Students will acquire the critical vocabulary required to analyze and interpret African Art, and apply it in both discussion and writing.

(This course meets LinC M5/Cultural Values and Global Issues Requirement)

Required Text for purchase or loan

Africa: The Art of a Continent. Edited by Tom Phillips, NY: Prestel Publications, 2004.

Course Requirements

1. Students must attend all classes and bring the required text to each class.
2. Students must complete two analyses, a midterm, a final project, and a final exam.
3. Students must attend the African Art Museum Field Trip as assigned.
4. Students must complete peer group sessions as assigned.

ART 222 African Art
Spring 2011 Monday and Wednesday 2:35-3:45 pm Hill 310
Page 2

Evaluation

Grading: 35% of your grade is determined by written work; 35% by exams, 15% by Peer Seminars, 10% by the Final Project, and 5% by attendance.

Papers: there will be Aesthetic Analyses required on two different topics. Criteria for these will be given beforehand. **Aesthetic Analysis I** is 15%, and **Field Analysis II** is worth 20%.

Peer Seminar I, II and III: each is weighted 5%. **Peer Seminar I** is a group discussion. **Peer Seminar II** and **III** are short individual student power point presentations. Criteria for each will be given beforehand.

Exams: There will be a Midterm and a Final Exam, identifying, comparing, and analyzing images from the text. The **Midterm** counts as 15%, and the **Final Exam** 20%.

Final Project: A power point presentation will show the aesthetic, cultural and historical influences of each group's choice for **Greatest Works of African Art, 77,000 BC. to 2011 AD.** The **Final Project/Greatest Works of African Art** counts for 10%.

ART 222 African Art, Monday and Wednesday, 2:35-3:45 pm
Proposed Schedule of Meetings Spring 2011
Page 3

Week 1/ January 17 and 19

Introduction, African Aesthetics, *Weltanschauung*, Paleolithic to predynastic Egypt. Read **Africa: The Art of a Continent**, pp 8-37, 179-191, 103-105, 548-552.
Ancient Egypt and Nubia. Read **Africa: The Art of a Continent**, pp 41-115.

Week 2/ January 24 and 26

African Aesthetic and Cultural Influences in Minoan, Mycenaean, Etruscan Civilizations, Classic Nok to Meroe. Read **Africa: The Art of a Continent**, pp 48-9, 107-115, 194-5, 534-43, 553-8, 478, 484, 326, 526-531.
African Aesthetic and Cultural Influences in the Greco-Roman World, Read **Africa: The Art of a Continent**, p 543, 536-8, 553-8.
Peer Seminar I Black Athena (hand out) Due January 1/26

Week 3/ January 31 and February 2

Ancient West Africa, Coptic Christianity, Islam, 500 BC-1500 AD
Read **Africa: The Art of a Continent**, pp 178, 196, 230, 240, 326-412/179, 198-99, 327, 406, 468-70, 478-83, 488-95, 576-82, 538-43, 559-61, 586-91.
Greatest Works of African Art Meeting #1 2/2
Aesthetic Analysis I Due 1/31

Week 4/ February 7 and 9

South Africa, Igbo-Ukwu to Ife in West Africa, Ife Aesthetics
Read **Africa: The Art of a Continent**, p 178, 182-4, 194-6, 327-45, 383-95, 404-08.
Peer Seminar II: African Art *in situ* Due 2/7

Week 5/ February 14 and 16

Nigeria Sculptural Continuity, Ife to Benin
Read **Africa: The Art of A Continent**, pp 327, 412-431.
Greatest Works of African Art Group Meeting #2 2/16

Week 6/ February 21 and 23

Ancient Djenne-Juno, Ancient Mali, Dogon
Read **Africa: The Art of A Continent**, pp 479-95.

ART 222 African Art, Monday and Wednesday, 2:35-3:45 pm
Proposed Schedule of Meetings Spring 2011
Page 4

Week 7/ February 28 and March 2

Divination

Read **Africa: The Art of a Continent**, pp 231-9, 244-8,
268-9, 288-91, 427, 454, 456, 527.

Midterm March 2

Week 8/ March 7 and 9

Spring Break No Class

Week 9/ March 14 and 16

Benin, African Art to the 18th Century

Read **Africa: The Art of a Continent**, pp 337-345, 395-403.

Peer Seminar III: African American Art Due 3/16

Week 10/ March 21 and 23

African Art, European Colonialism in the 19th Century,

Diaspora of African Art to Europe

Read **Africa: The Art of a Continent**, pp 231-325, 440-6,
448, 452-5, 517, 132, 150, 162, 166, 174-5.

Greatest Works of African Art Group Meeting #3 3/26

Week 11/ March 28 and 30

West African Art to the 19th Century, African Art and Modern

European: Cubism/Expressionism

Read **Africa: The Art of A Continent**, pp 327, 412-431, 337-45,
395-403, 231-325.

Week 12/ April 4 and 6

Central African Art to the 19th Century, African Art and the

New York City's Harlem Renaissance

Read **Africa: The Art of a Continent**, pp 145-53, 170, 346, 348, 355,
358, 363, 366-7, 372, 382, 392, 440-3, 500-2, 513, 517, 522.

**Note: Required NYC museum field trip scheduled for
Friday, April 8**

Week 13/ April 11 and 13

Early 20th Century African Art, African Diaspora in the Americas

Read **Africa: The Art of a Continent**, pp 142-3, 146-7, 153,
158-9, 204-8, 256, 260, 276-8, 280, 300, 305, 312, 357-8, 421-6,
432, 436, 447-52, 456--7, 460-3.

Field Aesthetic Analysis II due 4/13

AR 222 African Art, Monday and Wednesday, 2:25-3:35 pm
Proposed Schedule of Meetings Spring 2011
Page 5

Week 14/ April 18 and 20

Contemporary African Art, 1980-2011
Read **Africa: The Art of A Continent**, pp 218-9, 372, 472,
465-6, 501, 520-2, 525, 544-6, 570-1, 573-5.
Greatest Works of African Art Presentations 4/20

Week 15/ April 25 and 27

Easter Monday No Class April 25
Greatest Works of African Art Presentations 4/27

Week 16/ May 6

Final Exam Friday May 6, 8:30 AM.

ART 222 Professor Kearns

African Aesthetic Elements of Sculpture

1. **Practical Function** is *how* and *where* the sculpture is used. The practical function includes but is not limited to sculpture to be worn, i.e., masks, or sculpture to fit into an altar or sacred setting, i.e., ancestor figures. If the work is in its original setting and still being used it is identified as *in situ*, in context.
2. **Spiritual or Cultural Function** is the religious and/or cultural use of the sculpture within and for the community as a whole. The work of sculpture *almost always* functions as an embodiment of the religious and cultural beliefs and rituals of the community. The **Spiritual Function** includes but is not limited to sculpture of humans or animals honored for the well-being or power they give to the community, i.e., Yoruba Ibedji twins.
Note: the element of function, both practical and spiritual, is **primary** for almost all traditional African sculpture, though there are exceptions.
3. **Media** is wood, clay, stone, or melded glass or metal alloys, i.e., faience, iron, which can be carved, modeled, or fired. Included in this element is the texture, which may be rough, smooth, lined, painted, embedded with gems, etc. Wooden African sculpture is almost always created out of a single trunk or limb.
4. **Shape** is created by the interplay of positive and negative space and is dictated by the three elements above. There are two basic categories of shape: **geometric** or **regular**, and **organic** or **biomorphic**. Note: the **element of line** may be implied or invisible here, that is, it emerges from the shape.
5. **Space** is internal and external. **Internal space** is both negative and positive. **External space** is the optimum viewing distance and possibly movement the work requires. For example, **a sculpture in the round** asks the viewer to walk around it. **Monumentality** may refer to a work small in size but demands the viewer step back.
6. **Mass** is the volume or weight of the work.
7. **Proportion** is derived from the work's practical and spiritual functions.
8. **Scale** is more than size. It is the work's relation to its setting. Categories are **human scale**, based on the size of a human being, **grand**, larger than a human, and **colossal**, the largest, in relation to mountains or the sky, i.e., The Sphinx.
9. **Composition** is the arrangement of the above elements. The basic designs are **symmetrical**, an equal balance divided by an axis or line, **asymmetrical**, an equilibrium of corresponding parts, or **radial symmetry**, equidistant parts emerging from a center point in a circle.
10. **Style** in African sculpture is abstract, rarely realistic, and based on the functions.
11. **Subject Matter** is important for its symbolism, i.e., what it represents in meaning
12. **Emotional Intensity** or **Passion** is the emotion, mood, or communication the viewer receives before the work. The feeling may be reverence, protection, wonder, etc.

13. Artistic Unity is the harmonizing of the above elements into a work of visual beauty.