

Arts 2L / INTL 24 History of Art Visual Arts of Africa

De Anza College

Fall Quarter, 2011

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or by appointment

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De Anza College library: <http://www.deanza.fhda.edu/depts/library/index>



Course Description: A general introduction to the visual arts of Africa. This course covers diverse art forms, including architecture, ceramics, textiles, weaving, performance, painting and sculpture from antiquity to the present. Emphasis will be placed upon the religious, cultural, social, economic and political contexts of the art, including topics addressing gender issues and contemporary social/political awareness. We will work collaboratively, becoming actively involved in the learning experience. We will apply an interdisciplinary approach to art history including methods of analysis from intercultural studies, anthropology, history and cultural studies. Students will also learn basic skills in stylistic analysis and how to describe a work of art.

Required Texts (available at the Bookstore and ON RESERVE in the Library):

Blier, Suzanne Preston, *The Royal Arts of Africa: The Majesty of Form*. N.Y.: Harry N. Abrams, 1998.

*** **Additional readings:** I will be posting online (see faculty website above) and handing out additional readings in class. Please make sure you access readings via the internet and pick up handouts in class as you will be responsible for them.

In this class, I will expect students to:

1. Contribute to a positive, collaborative learning environment by being open and receptive to the ideas and opinions of others. It is ok to disagree with a concept, but please be respectful of the ideas of others.
2. Attend class regularly. More than three, unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your grade one full step (A to a B, B to a C, etc.) or being dropped from the class. **If you become ill, contact the instructor and we can discuss possible solutions for days missed.**
3. Be on time and practice polite classroom etiquette. If you are late, I may count you absent, especially if you disturb the class. Don't hold separate conversations during lecture time or class discussions. Others may want to hear what is going on in class. Come prepared to class and participate. ****TURN CELL PHONES OFF during class time.
4. Don't cheat. Anyone found cheating on an exam or plagiarizing (copying material without reference or credit) will be given an "F" on that exam or assignment and may fail the course. Each student **MUST** write his/her own paper. If two students hand in the same paper, each will receive half the points earned (equivalent to an "F").
5. Finish paper and reading assignments on time. Readings complement the material we cover in class. Completing the reading assignments will help your ability to participate in class discussions.
6. Visit the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Center for the Visual Arts, Stanford University, following the class assignment, outside of class meeting times.
7. **NO E-MAIL SUBMISSIONS OF COURSE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Assignments: Two exams and one quiz are required. They will be composed of short slide identifications, multiple choice and reading questions. Exam format, typical questions and study tips will be discussed thoroughly in class. **The midterm will be Monday, October 24th. The final exam will involve class time on Monday, December 12th, and during the scheduled final exam time (9:15-11:15 AM, Thursday, December 15th).** Attendance on **BOTH** days is required.

ABSOLUTELY NO EARLY EXAMS OR MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN. If you miss an exam due to a health or family emergency, please discuss the situation with me.

*****A number of short in-class writings, activities and assignments done in small groups will be required throughout the quarter.**

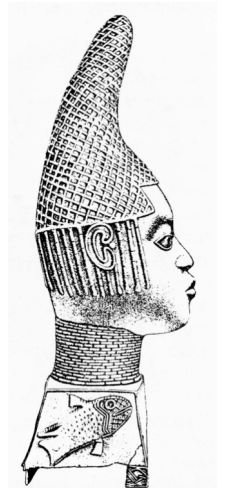
One paper (4-6 pages) and a group presentation will be required. The paper is **DUE November 14th**. Dates of group presentations will be discussed and assigned in class.

The paper is based upon your visit to Stanford University. It involves looking at and describing works of art as well as research. *** See class handout for full instructions regarding the paper assignment and presentation.

Grading Policy: Grades are determined using a scale of 100 points as follows:

Over 100	A+
100-93	A
89-87	B+
79-77	C+
69-60	D
below 60	F

Two Exams: Midterm, Final = 25 points each	50 total
Museum Visit Paper =	20 points
In-class written exercises, class participation	
Other short assignments =	20 points
Class group presentation =	5 points
Quiz	5 points
	<hr/> 100 points



*****Extra Credit: An opportunity to receive up to 8 points in extra credit will be discussed in class. NO EXTRA CREDIT WILL BE GIVEN IF YOU FAIL THE FINAL EXAM**

Class Schedule and Assignments:

Week One: Introduction

Reading Assignment: Class reading 1 posted online via faculty website (listed above) and Blier, Suzanne Preston, *The Royal Arts of Africa*, pp. 11-16.

Week Two: West Africa

Reading Assignment: Blier, Suzanne Preston, *The Royal Arts of Africa*, pp. 43-71.

Week Three: West Africa QUIZ: Wednesday, October 12th.

Reading Assignment: Blier, Suzanne Preston, *The Royal Arts of Africa*, pp. 79-96.
Class reading 2 posted online via faculty website.

Week Four: West Africa

Reading Assignment: Class reading 3 posted online via faculty website. Dogon.

Week Five: MIDTERM EXAM: Monday, October 24th

Week Six: West and Central Africa

Reading Assignment: Blier, Suzanne Preston, *The Royal Arts of Africa*, pp. 125-163.

Week Seven: Central Africa

Reading Assignment: Blier, Suzanne Preston, *The Royal Arts of Africa*, 165-199.

Week Eight: Central Africa

Reading Assignment: Blier, Suzanne Preston, *The Royal Arts of Africa*, pp. 201-248.

Week Nine: East Africa

Reading Assignment: Class reading 4 posted online via faculty website. Maasai.

Museum / Research paper DUE: Monday, November 14th.

*****NO late papers accepted without prior approval of the instructor**

Week Ten: East / South Africa

Reading Assignment: Class reading 4.

Week Eleven: South Africa / Class Group Presentations

FINAL EXAM: Part I multiple choice, Monday, Dec. 12th. Part II written exam 9:15-11:15 AM, Thursday, Dec. 15th. ALL students are required to take the final exam at that time only!

History of Art

Outline for Describing a Work of Art

When studying or writing about art, make note of the following:

- WHO? For whom was the object made? Specific artist known?
Patron known? (Who commissioned or paid for an artwork?)
- WHAT? What is it? What is its title or subject?
- WHERE? Where was it made? What site and is this an important factor?
- WHY? Why was this object made? For what purpose? What does it tell us about the culture who made and used it?
- HOW? How was it made? What are the materials and techniques used?

Does the artwork reveal anything about the following contexts?

- Historical
- Cultural
- Social
- Political
- Religious or ceremonial
- Economic

What is the subject matter? What motifs or symbols are used and what is their significance? Art historians call this *iconography*.

When describing the style of an artwork (stylistic analysis), consider the following:

- Scale: What is the size and why is this important?
- Composition: What is the overall arrangement of the elements of the piece?
Is the design balanced or symmetrical? Asymmetrical?
Do the motifs fill the entire design surface? How is space used?
What are the relationships of the designs to one another?
- Overall approach: Is it naturalistic? Based on natural forms, but stylized?
Geometric? Abstract (not naturalistic)?
- Shape: What is the basic shape or contour of the piece?
What shapes does the artist use? Square, circle, triangle?
- Line: What is the character of the painted, sculpted, beaded, embroidered, woven line? Are forms strongly outlined? Is the line curvilinear?
Straight-edged? Dynamic, meandering, fluid? Do forms suggest movement?
- Color: What are the colors used? How do they affect the work? Are they bright?
Subtle in effect? How is black and white used? Are shadows obvious?
- Texture: Is texture indicated? How does this affect the work?

How have all the elements above contributed to the way the piece looks?

What is the emotional impact on you, the viewer?

Do these aspects of style suggest anything about the contexts given above?

About the artist and his or her culture?