

**SCHOOL OF FINE ART AND MUSIC**  
**Fall Semester 2015**  
**ARTH\*2060-01**  
**ABORIGINAL ARTS OF THE AMERICAS**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Judith Nasby, Curator Emerita, Art Gallery of Guelph  
**TIME:** Monday, Wednesday, 2:30- 3:50 pm  
**LOCATION:** Room 114 MacKinnon Building  
**OFFICE:** MacKinnon Building Room # 211  
**PHONE:** Ext. 56453  
**EMAIL:** [jnasby@uoguelph.ca](mailto:jnasby@uoguelph.ca)  
**OFFICE HOURS:** Before or after class or by appointment

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**CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:**

An introduction to the aboriginal cultures of North, South, and Central America with special emphasis on the pre-contact period. The interdisciplinary approach will take into account recent debates about methodology, ethnocentricity, and aboriginal viewpoints.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course introduces students to the arts of the aboriginal North and Central America, focusing on traditional art forms. The course emphasizes the examination and curatorial discussion of art works in the Art gallery of Guelph collection and from private collections. By examining the arts of the East, the Northwest Coast and the Arctic, we will investigate how such arts are understood in the communities in which they are made. Additionally, we will look at how aboriginal works came under the purview of a Western art historical discourse, and some implications of conflicting notions of aesthetic value. Historical factors affecting aboriginal art production, such as the banning of the potlatch in Canada, will be investigated. We will examine the arts of the Southwest and the development of a tourist market for aboriginal arts and contemporary art. The course will include films and guest lecturers.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Berlo, Janet C. and Ruth B. Phillips, *Native North American Art* (Oxford, 1998)  
Nasby, Judith, *Irene Avaalaaqiaq: Myth and Reality*, (MQUP, 2002. Reprinted 2009)

**METHOD OF EVALUATION**

*Midterm Exam Essay – due Wednesday October 14* ..... 40%  
*Final Exam – Thursday December 17, 19:00 to 21:00* ..... 60%

**MIDTERM ESSAY (DUE ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14):**

You will write an essay that analyzes two art works, selected from aboriginal cultures that constitute the Southwest (Chapter 2), the East (Chapter 3), or the West (Chapter 4) as defined in the Berlo/Phillips books. The intention of the essay is to introduce you to the principles of art historical research and curatorial writing. Your paper should be a minimum of 2000 words (typed and **double spaced**). You should select works from either the Art Centre exhibitions or from your own research, through books, exhibition catalogues, and the Internet. You should not select works from the Berlo and Phillips text. Following is a suggested guideline for organizing your essay:

**a)** You should first provide good quality, large size colour images of the two works (one per page) with a catalogue description of each (artist, band name, title, date, size (if known) and medium), and identify the source of the image: public collection, book reference or internet reference.

**b)** Discuss the cultural context of each artwork separately.

a) Spirituality of the cultural group (also known as worldview)

b) Pre and post contact history

c) Characteristics of the cultural group's art work (media, design, colour)

- How is their spirituality revealed in their art?

- What changes occurred in the art pre and post contact?

- How did 20<sup>th</sup> century tourism affect the art?

**c)** Finish your paper by writing a comparison of the two art works emphasizing the similarities and differences you think are significant. The information and general concepts you have learned from the Berlo and Phillips book and from the lectures will help you to develop your ideas and discussion of the art works.

**d)** For citing sources use MLA style including any references you use from the course text. See MLA style guide on ARTH #2060 CourseLink.

**e)** Provide a bibliography.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Understand how changes in Aboriginal worldviews from the pre-contact period to the post-contact period affected the development of Aboriginal art.
2. Learn to examine original artworks from a curatorial standpoint
3. Write curatorial analyses of artworks and critical comparisons between different works
4. Write critically about artworks in their cultural context using knowledge gained from visual analysis, as well as facts about artist, style, content, and major historical events
5. Learn how understanding spirituality is central to gaining an understanding of the history of Aboriginal arts in the Americas
6. Explain how cross-cultural interactions, spirituality, tourism, and questions about authenticity affected the history of aboriginal arts in the Americas in the pre-contact and post-contact periods

Note: Texts are available on reserve at the Library Reserve Desk and lecture images are on CourseLink.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE:**

**Week of September 6**

1. **Thurs.** Sept. 10 at 2:30 pm: Introduction to the course, tour of the sculpture park

**Week of September 13**

Required Reading: Berlo and Phillips, Chapter 1

2. **Mon.** Sept. 14: Chapter 1
3. **Wed.** Sept. 16: Chapter 1 continued, Examination of artworks

**Week of September 20**

Required Reading: Berlo and Phillips, Chapter 2

4. **Mon.** Sept. 21: The Southwest
5. **Wed.** Sept. 23: The Southwest

**Week of September 27**

Required Reading: Berlo and Phillips, Chapter 2&3

6. **Mon.** Sept. 28: Videos on the Hopi Nation and the Navajo Nation, The East
7. **Wed** Sept 30: The East

**Week of October 4**

Required Reading: Berlo and Phillips, Chapter 3

8. **Mon.** Oct.5: Guest Lecturer: Ken Maracle (Cayuga, Six Nations on the Grand) discusses Haudensaunee (Iroquois) art and spirituality
9. **Wed.** Oct. 7: Guest lecturer: Naomi Smith (Neyaashiinigmiing, Ontario) on beadwork

**Week of October 11**

Required Reading: Berlo and Phillips, Chapter 4

- Mon. Oct. 12: no class
10. **Wed.** Oct. 14: The West (mid-term essay due)

**Week of October 18**

Required Reading: Berlo and Phillips, Chapter 5

11. **Mon.** Oct. 19: Kainai Nation, Crazy Horse (DVD), Yuxweluptun (DVD)
12. **Wed.** Oct. 21 The Arctic

**Week of October 25**

13. **Mon.** 26 Guest Lecturer: Don Russell (Metis: French/Mi'kmaq)

14. **Wed.** Oct. 28 Norval Morriseau (Ojibwa) film and discussion of his work

**Week of November 1**

Required Reading: Berlo and Phillips, Chapter 5 & Irene Avaalaaqiaq: Myth and Reality

15. **Mon.** Nov. 2: Baker Lake, Nunavut
16. **Wed.** Nov. 4: Irene Avaalaaqiaq and Annie Pootoogook

**Week of November 8**

Required Reading: Berlo and Phillips, Chapter 6

17. **Mon.** Nov. 9: The Northwest
18. **Wed.** Nov 11: The Northwest, Argillite and Kingcome Inlet

**Week of November 15**

Required Reading: Berlo and Phillips, Chapter 7

19. **Mon** Nov. 16: Twentieth Century Art
20. **Wed.** Nov. 18: Contemporary Art

**Week of November 22**

21. Mon Nov. 23: *Shooting Indians; A Journey with Jeffrey Thomas* (film)

22. Wed. Nov. 25: Kuna Art from Panama.

**Week of November 29**

23. Mon. Nov. 30: Embera Art from Panama

24. Wed. Dec. 2: Exhibitions and collection tours

25. **Friday Dec. 4, 2:30 pm** Course review and repeat of film: *Shooting Indians: A Journey with Jeffrey Thomas*