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
OFFICE HOURS: Before or after class or by appointment

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:

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 20th 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
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

Week of October 11
Required Reading: Berlo and Phillips, Chapter 4
Mon. Oct. 12: no class

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