

Postcolonialism and the Radical Imagination

(ARH 6597) African Art Seminar



Image: "Down with the mystification! Down with philistines!"

Marciano Galang, David Medalla, and Jun Lansang protesting at the opening of the Cultural Centre of the Philippines, 1969.



Image: Ramona Parra Brigade, Mural in Dante Building, Chile, 1979.

Tuesday | Period 8-10: 3 PM – 6 PM

Location: FAC 116A

Credits: 3

Prerequisite: art history graduate students or permission from instructor

Instructor: Álvaro Luís Lima

Contact: lima@ufl.edu or (352)294-0556 (e-mail preferred)

Office Hours: FAC 121 Thursday | Period 7: 1:55 PM – 2:45 PM and by appointment

Course Canvas Website: <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/553338>

Course Description: Has the dominant academic discourse turned its critique of empire into what Sa'ed Atshan describes as an “empire of critique”? Terms such as “postcolonial,” “decolonial,” “subaltern,” and “imperialist” are common usage in academic language, but they mobilize divergent, and often contentious views on the nature of exploitation in the Global South. This seminar will discuss a selection of texts giving shape to this discussion, paying special attention to their implications for contemporary cultural production, and intellectual work. Authors include Aijaz Ahmad, Samir Amin, Amílcar Cabral, Vivek Chibber, Vladimir Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Hồ Chí Minh, Vijay Prashad, Walter Rodney, and Olúfémí Táíwò. Through weekly discussion, the seminar will consider methods in art history from a global perspective.

Course Objectives:

- Build critical analysis of major debates on the history and theory of colonialism, imperialism, and national movements.
- Examine and assess primary and consider their significance for methodologies in art history and visual culture.
- Formulate oral and written analyses of historical and scholarly sources and works of art in their historical and cultural contexts.
- Develop oral argumentation through class discussion.
- Polish presentation skills through a symposium-style presentation.
- Nuance writing skills and research agenda by writing a final paper.

Required Readings: Required readings will be posted on the Canvas e-Learning Course Website and/or available at the library. Students may choose to purchase book-length readings for their convenience. Readings should be done in preparation for classes. Please, bring a hard copy of the reading to class to allow optimal participation. Input in class discussion of the readings will be an essential part of the participation grade.

Requirements and Grading

Assessments:

- 30%: Attendance and Participation in Class (throughout the semester)
To get an A grade for participation, students are not only expected to attend classes, but also to actively engage in discussions. In preparation for every meeting, students should have read all the required material, highlighting relevant portions and taking notes to be brought for discussion. Students will also be asked to mediate classes as an additional responsibility to ensure flow of discussion.
- 20%: Symposium Presentation (4/21)
Students will deliver a professional academic presentation of their individual research in a symposium format and entertain comments from the audience.

- 50%: Final Paper (4/30)
The paper should follow proper academic formatting, demonstrate substantial research, and express critical engagement with the topic of choice. When appropriate, the final paper should reflect material covered in class, and consideration for feedback received in conversation with the instructor and during symposium discussion.

Submission of Assignments: All assignments should be submitted/conducted through Canvas. Delays may incur in a grade penalty. Further details on all assignments and exams will be provided during the semester.

- Completion of all assignments and exams is necessary to pass the course.

Chicago Manual of Style Quick Guide for Citations:

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Policies and Academic Resources: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>

Attendance: Attendance to all classes is expected, including to special events such as guest lectures and masterclasses. Absences will affect the participation grade, unless the instructor is provided with appropriated documentation or doctor's note.

No Electronic Devices In Class: The use of electronic devices, including computers, will not be allowed during class, unless required by DRC. Assigned readings should be printed and brought to the class for consultation. Class notes should be taken by hand.

Electronic Communication: Announcements about the class may be sent by e-mail, so please check it regularly. All electronic communication should be made through your official UF account. I will answer your e-mails as quickly as I can, but please allow forty-eight hours for responses.

Schedule:

1/13 - Week 1: Introduction

1/21 - Week 2: Against Decolonization

1/27 - Week 3: Imperialism

2/3 - Week 4: The National Question

2/10 - Week 5: Postcolonial Modernism

- **February 12, 6pm, Attendance Required:** HESCAH Lecture by Professor Chika Okeke-Agulu at FAB: “Art, Nationalism and Power: Gazbia Sirry and Egyptian Modernists in Gamal Abdel Nasser's Revolutionary Egypt”
- **February 13, 9am, Attendance Required:** HESCAH Master Class by Professor Chika Okeke-Agulu at FAC.

2/17 - Week 6: The National Question in the Global South

2/24 - Week 7: Decolonial Marxism

3/3 - Week 8: Cultural Policy and Decolonization

3/10 - Week 9: Contemporary Imperialism

3/17 - No Class – Spring Break

3/24 - Week 10: Subaltern Studies

3/31 - Week 11: Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital

4/7 - Week 12: What is African Art?

- **April 9, 6pm, Attendance Required:** HESCAH Lecture by Professor Peter Probst at FAB: “Thrust Reversal: Artistic Intervention and Spiritual Repair in a Nigerian Energy Landscape
- **April 10, 9:30am (exact time in the morning to be confirmed), Attendance Required:** HESCAH Master Class by Professor Peter Probst at FAC

4/14 - Week 13: Debate on Postcolonial Theory

4/21 - Week 14: Presentations