

## **IDS 2935**

### **Representing Others, Representing Ourselves: Politics and Identity in Contemporary Art**

#### **Quest 1// Identities**

## I. General Information

### **Class Meetings // Hybrid**

- **Online Lectures: Tuesday & Thursday**
  - Period 3 // 9:35am–10:25am // Location: online
  - Zoom link for lectures:  
<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/96155438152?pwd=auCed0s8Sphi9XCG3ZN00T5XoYc5vt.1>
  - Passcode: 228218
- **In person meetings with TA: Friday**
  - Period 4 // 10:40am–11:30am // Location: CSE E222
  - Period 5 // 1:45am–12:35pm // Location: WEIM 1070
  - Period 6 // 12:50pm–1:40pm // Location: WEIM 1094

### **Main Instructor**

- Anthea Behm
- Email: [antheabehm@ufl.edu](mailto:antheabehm@ufl.edu)
- Office location // zoom: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/6154087682>
- Office hours: Thursdays 10:40am–11:30am & by appointment

### **Teaching Assistant**

- Maria Kuran, Art History PhD student
- Email: [mariakuran@ufl.edu](mailto:mariakuran@ufl.edu)
- Office location: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/3421349861>
- Office hours: Mondays 12:35pm–1:25pm & by appointment

### **Course Description**

Discusses how artists represent identities through their work and the different social, political, and philosophical contexts in which those identities develop. Rather than a narrow understanding of “identity politics” with identities being reducible to politics, it explores how artists use different representational practices to complicate and transform our understanding of identity. Students will be invited to reflect on their own identities and ideas throughout the course, as they engage with the works and their fellow students. Key questions will include: how do multiple overlapping ideas of one’s identity function to create the ways in which we see the world through creating and interpreting art? What ways of looking at work will inform a more complete picture of the person, the art, the audience, and the world?

The lectures will be held online on Tuesday and Thursday. They will consist of reading discussions,

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looking and discussing the work of contemporary and modern artists, and live studio visits with artists in their studios, giving students a unique opportunity to engage live with artists at work in their studios around the country and the world. Additionally, there will be time for questions and smaller group discussions. The TA will hold in person sessions on Fridays for the third contact hour. In these sections, students can discuss the readings and artworks in a small seminar format.

In this course, you will be asked to engage in conversation about challenging topics related to art, identity, politics, and ideology. I want you all to keep in mind that a primary objective of this course is to hone skills in critical thinking. This does not mean you ascribe to the beliefs presented by the artists and artworks, but rather that you can identify and engage with the critical structures inherent in what is presented. Given the potentially sensitive subject matter, students will be introduced in week 1 to a variety of tools for respectfully and meaningfully engaging with each other, which they will be expected to utilize throughout the semester.

I know that some of the discussions outlined above can be fraught, and I want to ask that we collectively make this a space in which everyone feels comfortable to express themselves, while remaining mindful of the impacts that your expressions may have on others. If at any point in this course an issue occurs, around these or other concerns, please do not hesitate to speak with me or contact another campus resource, such as your undergraduate advisor. My door is always open. And if there is anything you would like me, or the rest of the class to know about you, please do not hesitate to let me know.

**Quest 1 Credit**

[Quest 1 Objectives](#) will be fulfilled through the following:

- Identify, describe, and explain the concept of identity and the different modes of representation used by artists, with a particular focus on how the politics of identity and the possibilities for representation interact.
- Consider the relationship between theoretical reflection in philosophy, politics, and aesthetics and its relation to the forms of artmaking practiced by contemporary artists.
- Have students engage with issues of identity and representation in contemporary art outside the classroom.
- Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions about identity and representation in oral and written forms appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines incorporated into the course.
- Analyze, evaluate, and critically reflect on connections between these questions of identity and your intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.

**Required & Recommended Course Materials**

All the readings, videos, and audio recordings are available as PDFs on canvas or freely available

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online. See the course schedule for specific titles and authors.

**Recommended Writing Manual**

The Chicago manual of style, 16th edition, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010

**Materials and Supplies Fees:** N/A

**II. Graded Work**

**1. Attendance // 10 % of final grade**

**Due: ongoing**

During the Tuesday and Thursday lectures, students will be required to sign in to a google doc which will be posted in the zoom chat during each class. During the Friday sections, attendance will be taken by the TA.

**1. Participation // 20 % of final grade**

**Due: ongoing**

Consistent, informed, thoughtful, and considerate class participation is expected and will be evaluated using the rubric (see next page). Please note, if you have personal issues that prohibit you from joining freely in class discussion, see the instructor as soon as possible to discuss alternative modes of participation.

• **During lectures participation will be graded by successful completion of** (25 points):

- i. Having your camera on (whenever possible) and engaging with the class discussion through questions/responses, the chat box, and breakout rooms is important for participation
  - o Several random times throughout the semester, we will record who has their camera on, it should be on a significant portion of the time
  - o Having your camera on and engaging while the visiting artist is presenting and during the QA for the visiting artist is extra important as they are our guest.
- ii. Engaging with questions via chat, polls, or speaking on camera.
- iii. Engaging with your peers in the breakout rooms.

• **Discussion board responses // Due: Sundays at 11.59pm** (50 points)

- i. Beginning week 2, a question about the lecture will be posted after each class, and students are expected to respond in 2-3 sentences.
- ii. When we have visiting artists, you must submit a question or two for the artist by this due date.

(These cannot be submitted late and will lower your grade by 20% for not submitting on time).

- **In Friday sections, participation will be graded by successful completion of** (25 points):

- i. Input and engagement during the discussion, sharing, and research

The instructor will inform you of your participation grade to date around mid-term and you should schedule a meeting with the TA or the instructor if you are earning below 60% of the possible points.

**2. Journaling // 25% of final grade**

**Due: from Week 2–Week 14, each Thursday by 11.59pm**

- Each week, beginning week 2 through to week 15, write a short journal entry reflecting on how the themes of the class help you understand something that happens in your life—such as a personal matter, a news story, a TV show you watch, or anything else.
- You may also use this entry to reflect on the limits of the reading or discussion; that is, how what we discussed misses something important that you experience.
- You will also take and embed one photo each week that relates to the themes, the readings, or the slide lectures in some way.
  - i. These can be taken with a cell phone.
  - ii. Aim for quality, but the idea is the important part.
  - iii. Write one sentence about how it is related.

**3. Semiotic Method of Reading an Artwork // 10% of final grade**

**Due: Week 6, Thursday 02/19 by 11.59pm**

- Visit the Harn Museum and find a work that relates to the questions of identity and representation.
- Based on our in-class discussion of how to use semiotics to analyze a work of art, use this method to discuss the formal elements that contribute to the artist's representation of identity in 450–500 words.

**4. Artistic Assignment 1: Collage // 10% of final grade**

**Due: Week 7, Thursday 02/26 by 11.59pm**

- Make a collage that represents yourself and your various identities.
- In a brief statement of 100 words, explain the ideas and motivation behind your work.
- The collage will likely take the form of something familiar such as a magazine spread, an album cover, a family crest.
- There is a proposal and a draft due in Week 5 which will make up part of your grade for the assignment.

**5. Artistic Assignment 2 // 10% of final grade****Due: Week 11, Thursday 03/26 by 11.59pm**

- Make a photo series of 5 to 7 photos, or short video up to 3 minutes, that explores an aspect of your identity that you did not think about very much prior to this class.
- In a brief statement of 100 words, explain the ideas and motivation behind your work.
- There is a proposal and a draft due in Week 8 which will make up part of your grade for the assignment.

**6. Final Reflective Essay // 15% of final grade****Due: Week 14, Thursday 04/16 by 11.59pm**

- Look back through your journal entries, artist projects, participant responses, and lecture/discussion notes. Write an essay that reflects on what you have learned about identity, politics, and/or representation this semester in 500–700 words.
- There is an outline due in Week 12, and a Workshop in Week 13 that will facilitate this assignment and make up part of your grade.

**Grading**

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Late submissions will be penalized at 10% per class period late unless arranged in advance (1 week late = 30%, etc).

**Grading Rubrics + Criteria**

<b>Participation Grading Rubric</b>	High Quality	Average	Needs Improvement
Informed: Shows evidence of having done the assigned work.	Responses show depth of knowledge and engagement with both texts and images	Responses show basic understanding and engage with just a part of work	Responses show issues in understanding and do not engage with assigned works
Thoughtful: Shows evidence of having understood and considered issues raised.	Assignments demonstrate the ability to analyze key elements of debates and add original perspectives	Assignments demonstrate a basic understanding of debates.	Assignments suggest some confusion over key issues.

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Considerate: Takes the perspective others into account.	Assignments successfully incorporate counterarguments and develop complex perspectives on issues with no obvious answer	Assignments sufficiently summarize various competing points of view.	Assignments present only one view with no consideration of how it is situated.
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<b>Writing Assessment Rubric</b>	Satisfactory (Y)	Unsatisfactory (N)
Content	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off-topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
Organization + Coherence	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
Argument + Support	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
Style	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.

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Mechanics	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive, so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.
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**Artistic Assignments Grading Criteria**

A: This grade is awarded for exceptional work that demonstrates critical thinking, a full realization of the ideas put forth in assignment, and outstanding engagement of both form and content; excellent amount of effort given to the assignment.

B: This grade will be awarded for very good work that demonstrates a sound and competent realization of the ideas put forth in each assignment; excels in many areas but lacks one or more of the outstanding characteristics listed above.

C: This grade will be awarded for well-presented, average work that demonstrates a fairly good attempt at grasping the expectations of given assignment. This work lacks a competent, comprehensive understanding mentioned in 'B' above.

D: This grade is awarded for inadequate work-- extremely poor and/or half-finished work with no care or attention to the assignment.

III. Annotated Weekly Outline**Week 1: Overview + Intro to diversity**

+ Summary: An introduction to the course and overview of practices to respectfully and meaningfully engaging with the course material and each other.

Tuesday 01/13	Course Overview
Thursday 01/15	Identity Wheels
Friday 01/16	Bring in a show-and-tell object for an icebreaker activity
	Journal Overview
	Course overview + questions

**Week 2: Intro to Identity + Politics**

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+ Summary: With guest writer Dr Avram Alpert, this week we explore the concept of identity through Appiah, especially how it shifts over time and geographical space. Following this, through Wolin and Crick, we will explore the nature and development of political philosophy and its relationship to broader philosophical traditions.

+ Read: Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity*. New York: Liveright, 2019, pp. 3-32

+ Crick, Bernard. excerpt from *In Defense of Politics*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993, 15-19.

+ Wolin, Sheldon S. excerpts from *Politics and Vision*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016, pp. 3-12.

T 01/20	Reading lecture + discussion // Appiah
TR 01/22	Reading lecture + discussion // Wolin + Crick
F 01/23	Discuss identity wheel
	Overview: Artistic Assignment 1

**Week 3: Intro to Representation in Art**

+ Summary: We will explore how meaning is constructed through language and how it can be applied to all types of visual representation.

+ Read: Hall, Stuart. "The Work of Representation" in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Eds. Stuart Hall, Sean Nixon, and Jessica Evans. London: Sage, 1997, 1-14 + 16-26

T 01/27	Hall // Reading lecture + discussion // p. 1-14
TR 01/29	Hall // Reading lecture + discussion // p. 16-26
F 01/30	Discuss key ideas, share journal, research visiting artist

**Week 4: Semiotic Method of Reading an Artwork**

+ Summary: We continue to explore how meaning as it is constructed through language can be applied to all types of visual representation, including putting this method into practice, first through a class lecture, then individually and in person at the Harn Museum.

T 02/03	No class-independent work day
TR 02/05	Lecture on Semiotic Method of reading an Artwork
F 02/06	Harn Visit: Semiotic Method of Reading an Artwork

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+ Summary: This week we explore how strategies used in 1950s Hollywood Cinema constructed audiences' viewpoint, and how artists have responded to this; including a zoom studio visit with a contemporary artist.

+ Read: Mulvey, Laura. Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. *Screen*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1975, pp. 6-18.

T 02/10	reading discussion + looking at artwork
TR 02/12	Visiting artist: <a href="#">Hannah Spector</a>
F 02/13	Due: Artistic Assignment 1 Proposal (share + discuss)

**Week 6: Ai**

+ Summary: This week we explore Ai, especially in relation to contemporary art and artists working with Ai; including a zoom studio visit with a contemporary artist and writer.

+ Read: Chiang, Ted. "ChatGPT Is a Blurry JPEG of the Web." *The New Yorker*, 2023.

+ Kent, Charlotte. "How Will AI Transform Photography?" *Aperture*, no. 250, Spring 2023.

+ Tuggar, Fatimah. "Light Cream Pods: Artistic Meaning Making." *Delos*, vol. 39, no. 2, 2025, pp. 349-403.

T 02/17	Reading lecture + discussion
TR 02/19	Visiting artist: Fatimah Tuggar
F 02/20	Due: Semiotic Method of Reading an Artwork (share + discuss)
	Discuss key ideas, share journal, research visiting artist

**Week 7: Exile**

+ Summary: This week we explore how artists are working with the topic of exile and narrating exile in visual language; including a zoom studio visit with a contemporary artist.

+ Watch: Runo Lagomarsino: *Narrating Exile In a Visual Language*, Louisiana channel, 2024

T 02/24	reading discussion + looking at artwork
TR 02/26	Visiting artist: Shadi Harouni
F 02/27	Due: Artistic Assignment 1 (share + discuss)
	Discuss key ideas, share journal, research visiting artist

**Week 8: Power + Appropriation**

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+ Summary: This week we explore different types of cultural appropriation using examples of artworks from the 1980s through to current day; including a zoom studio visit with a contemporary artist.

+ Read: Bhabha, Homi K., et. al. "Cultural Appropriation: A Roundtable." Accessed April 25, 2020.

T 03/03	reading discussion + looking at artwork
TR 03/05	Visiting artist: David Dixon
F 03/06	Due: Proposals for Artistic Assignment 2 (share + discuss)
	Discuss key ideas, share journal, research visiting artist

**Week 9: LGBTQ+**

+ Summary: This week we explore categories and debates associated with gender, giving a general overview to key terms and histories, and how artists have responded to this in their work.

+ Read: Stryker, Susan. *Transgender History*. Berkeley: Seal Press, 2009, pp 1-31.

T 03/10	reading discussion + looking at artwork
TR 03/12	No class—Independent work day
F 03/13	Discuss key ideas, share journal, research visiting artist

**Week 10: Spring Break**

T 03/17	No class
TR 03/19	No class
F 03/20	No class

**Week 11: Post-truth**

+ Summary: This week we explore post-truth and conspiracy, especially in relation to post-modernism, while looking at artists that have explored this theme; including a zoom studio visit with a contemporary artist.

+ Read: Lee McIntyre, "Did Post-Modernism Lead to Post-Truth?," *Post-Truth*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2018, pp. 123-150.

T 03/24	reading discussion + looking at artwork
TR 03/26	Visiting artist: <a href="#">E.E. Ikeler</a>
F 03/27	Due: Artistic Assignment 2 (share + discuss)

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	Discuss key ideas, share journal, research visiting artist
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**Week 12: Disability + Access**

+ Summary: This week we look at how ideas about disability + access are informing art production and art writing/ criticism; including a zoom studio visit with an arts critic/writer.

+ Read: Emily Watlington, "[Nothing About Us Without Us: Disability Arts Now](#)," *Art in America*, 2022

T 03/31	reading discussion + looking at artwork
TR 04/02	Visiting curator: <a href="#">Emily Watlington</a> , Senior Editor <i>Art in America</i>
F 04/03	Due: Outline for Reflective Essay (share + discuss)
	Discuss key ideas, share journal, research visiting artist

**Week 13: Care**

+ Summary: This week we explore the need for a broader understanding of political engagement that acknowledges everyday struggles of differently abled individuals, alongside artists that forefront care and access in their work; including a zoom studio visit with a contemporary artist.

+ Read: Tang, Jeannine. "On What Sculpture Depends: Carolyn Lazard, Park McArthur, and Constantina Zavitsanos" in *Who Cares: Inquiries into Contemporary Sculpture*, New York: Sculpture Center, 2019.

M 04/07	reading discussion + looking at artwork
W 04/09	Visiting artist: <a href="#">Kaela Mei-Chee Chambers</a>
F 04/10	Workshop: on outline/draft for Reflective Essay (share + discuss)
	Discuss key ideas, share journal, research visiting artist

**Week 14: Healing**

+ Summary: This week we think about art practice as a form of healing; including a zoom sound bath session with a contemporary artist.

+ Watch: [Grace Ndiritu: Healing the Museum, Louisiana Channel, 2023](#)

T 04/14	reading discussion + looking at artwork
TR 04/16	Visiting artist: Sound bath with <a href="#">Camilla Padgett-Coles // Ivy Meadows</a>
F 04/17	Due: Reflective Essay (share + discuss)

**Week 15: Wrap Up**

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T 04/21	Wrap up discussion Course Evaluations
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## IV. Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, the students will be expected to have achieved the [Quest Student Learning Outcomes](#) as follows:

**Content //** Course SLO: Identity, describe, and explain the theoretical, methodologies that explore the relationship, between art and politics + identify, describe, and explain the concept of identity and the different modes of representation used by artists, with a particular focus on how the politics of identity and the possibilities for representation interact. This will be assessed through class participation, writing assignments, and midterm exam.

**Critical Thinking //** Course SLO: Analyze and evaluate artistic representations with a particular focus on how the identity of the artists impacts the subject matter, and what the political ramifications of the artistic choices are. This will be assessed through class participation, writing assignment 1 & 2, mid-term exam, artistic collage project, the Harn Museum response and the final essay.

**Communication //** Course SLO: Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions about identity and representation in oral and written forms appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines incorporated into the course. This will be assessed through in-class discussion, breakout discussions, written assignments, mid-term exam.

**Connection //** Course SLO: Connect course content with artist assignment on own identity and visit to the Harn Museum. This will be assessed through the Collage assignment and written response to work viewed in person at the Harn Museum.

## V. Quest Learning Experiences

**Details of Experiential Learning Component // Semiotic Reading of an Artwork in a museum**

Students will visit the Harn Museum or the University Galleries and find a work that relates to the questions of identity and representation. Based on our in-class discussion of how to use semiotics to analyze a work of art, use this method to discuss the formal elements that contribute to the artist's representation of identity in 450–500 words.

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**Details of Self-Reflection Component // Artistic Assignments**

Early in the semester, students will make their own collage that represents their identity. Later on, students will also make a photo series of up to 7 photos, or short video up to 3 minutes, that explores an aspect of their identity that they did not think about very much prior to this class. Both these artistic assignments will be accompanied by a brief statement of 100 words that explains the ideas and motivation behind the work.

**VI. Required Policies**

Academic policies and resources: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>