

Topics in Native American Art History: Native California

ARHI 139 PZ

Pitzer College, Fall 2008

Mondays/Wednesdays 2:45 – 4:00 p.m.

Classroom: Fletcher 104

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Office Hours: Monday 1:00 – 2:30 p.m., Thursday 1:00 – 2:30 p.m., and by appointment

Course Description

Topics in Native American Art History is an upper division seminar, focused on critical readings and student research. Each semester, the seminar focuses on a particular topic in Native American art history. During fall 2008, our focus is on art (or more accurately, visual and material culture) of Native California. Before European contact and colonization, what is now the modern state of California was one of the most densely populated and diverse regions in the world. The cataclysm of the Spanish Mission system in the eighteenth century, and the incorporation of California into the United States of America in the nineteenth century destroyed or obscured much of the cultural heritage of precontact Native California, leading many contemporary Californians to believe that the Native peoples of the state vanished without a trace. The recent success of Native-owned casinos and resorts has increased the visibility of Native Californians as an economic and political force, but there is still a significant lacuna in the scholarly understanding of the visual and material culture of Native California. This course is designed to begin to remedy this regrettable situation. As such, our goals are twofold: In the first part of the course, we will work through a diverse range of material from precontact times to the present as “traditions in transformation.” Given our position as (mostly) non-Native scholars, we will focus on what art, visual, and material culture can teach us about the history of Native/non-Native interactions, with special attention to the problematics of engaging in scholarly work across cultures. Additionally, the material addressed in this class demands that we embrace an interdisciplinary methodology. We will make use of the tools of art history, archaeology, anthropology, history, literary criticism, and other disciplines.

The development of this class was supported by a Project Pericles Civic Engagement Course Development Award. Studying art to foster civic engagement may seem like a stretch. However, the study of Native American art, visual, and material culture engages issues of cultural diversity, the environment, education, ethics, justice, land rights, political representation, and sovereignty. Moreover, where possible, Native American art history works in consultation with local Native American artists and community representatives. Through the study of Native American art, visual, and material culture in historical and political context, we will aim to develop an appreciation for the history and continuing importance of indigenous issues and perspectives in the contemporary civic sphere. In this course, students will learn the value of collaborating with and incorporating Native voices into the study of Native American art and cultural history. Our goal is to grow as a community of scholars, and to become more informed and responsible community members as regards issues facing to Native American communities in California, and to develop a more educated and ethical public discourse on issues of the environment, education, land rights, and political representation, which affect Native American communities profoundly at the state and federal level. Does that sound like a heavy burden for art history? It should!

Additionally, some activities will take place in conjunction with ANTH 129, “Native California,” taught at Pomona College by Professor Jennifer Perry.

Course Organization

This seminar is organized around collaborative research and discussion. As such, a great deal depends upon your active participation. The job of all members of the class – students and instructor alike – is to create a community of learning, in which discussion and debate are characterized by curiosity, integrity, and above all, respect.

To provide some historical background, the first part of this class (roughly 12 weeks) is organized around four chronological units: (1) Precontact California – focusing on scholarly debates about the meaning and function of “Rock Art”; (2) Colonial California – focusing on the Native experience, architecture, and material culture of the Spanish, Mexican, and Russian missions and colonies from approximately; (3) The unit on California and U.S. Culture will focus on the experience of Native Californians in the aftermath of the Gold Rush and statehood, with particular focus on basketry and the development of a market for Native American arts and crafts; (4) Contemporary California will focus on Native artists in the last two decades, as well as new developments in museum-representation and Native cultural and political activism and ascendancy. In each of these units, I will provide some readings, which we will discuss in class. Most weeks, students will be expected to write a summary and generate points for discussion. Some weeks, students will be asked to locate additional bibliography and resources. Assignments for weekly papers will be given in class (see below).

During this first portion of the class, in consultation with the instructor, students will select topics for further research and develop bibliographies in relevant primary and secondary literature. A first draft of your paper is due the Monday before Thanksgiving. During the final two weeks of the course, students will make individual presentations to the class based on their in-progress research, and receive criticism and assistance from their peers. At the end of class each student will submit a final term paper. (See more information and due dates in the schedule below.)

Readings

Readings for the class will be placed on reserve in Denison Library at Scripps College, and on Sakai, the Claremont Colleges’ online courseware (log on at <http://sakai.claremont.edu>).

Additional valuable reference resources:

- R.F. Heizer and M.A. Whipple, eds., *The California Indians: A Source Book*. Second Edition. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1971.
- Robert F. Heizer, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 8, California*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1978.
- A.L. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*. Bulletin 78, Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1925. *Available via the Claremont Colleges Digital Library (CCDL): <http://ccdlib.libraries.claremont.edu/col/bba/>
- [American Indian Art Magazine](#), a magazine with short, scholarly articles and color illustrations. Honnold-Mudd Library has the entire run of this periodical, 1975-present.
- Honnold-Mudd Special Collections has numerous titles related to this course, which may be viewed by appointment. <http://libraries.claremont.edu/sc/>

Course Requirements

Participation: You are expected to attend every class, pay attention, and participate in discussion and the work of the class. Please note that a portion of your final grade is based on participation. As there are no tests, there is no substitute for attendance and participation.

Attendance: Your second unexcused absence will lower your final grade by one full grade (i.e., an "A" will become a "B", a "B" will become a "C", and so forth). Your third unexcused absence will lower your grade by two full letter grades (i.e., an "A" will become a "C"). You get the picture. Lateness will be counted as an absence. Absences will only be considered "excused" in the case of documented illnesses, family emergencies, or religious observances. I will require documentation: a note from your doctor, a copy of a traffic accident report, a fax from your bail bondsman, &c. Conflicts with your work schedule or other classes are not considered excused absences. I will not make any exceptions to this rule. Yes, I will take attendance. Plan accordingly.

Weekly papers and discussion: Most weeks, you will be asked to come to class with a brief paper. (There are a total of 9 weekly papers due: each 2 pages/600 words. Note days in schedule.) For some weeks, you will be asked to respond to assigned readings. Other weeks, you will be conducting research and reporting on your findings. Assignments for weekly papers will be given in class. Weekly papers MUST be completed before coming to class, as they will serve as the basis for class discussion.

Research project, presentation, and final paper: All students will write a 10-15 page paper that develops a topic from the class, and prepare and present a fifteen minute presentation on their final research paper during the final two class meetings. As the study of Native American art is interdisciplinary, possible research topics will draw from students' interest and expertise in art history, studio arts, anthropology, history, environmental studies, and other fields. Topics will be developed in consultation with the instructor. All students will need to submit a proposal in the form of a proposal, schedule an individual meeting with a librarian, develop an annotated bibliography, and write a first draft and final draft. You will receive a letter grade for each of these steps. More information and specific instructions will be given as the course progresses. Note due dates in the schedule.

Class trips and outside events: When possible, trips and events will be scheduled during our regular meeting time. We will be making one Saturday field trip. Outside events and trips comprise an important component of the seminar and the research process. Your attendance is required.

Format for written work: All written work must be typewritten or word-processed. Use a 10 or 12-point font and 1-inch margins. As college students, you are expected to understand the basics of academic writing, including appropriate style, source documentation, &c. Please make use of your college's writing center to help in the writing of papers. All written work must be turned in on the date due to receive full credit. I will not accept papers via email. Late papers or rewrites will only be accepted at my discretion.

Grades

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| Participation | 20% |
| Weekly reaction papers (total of 9) | 10% |
| Final paper proposal | 10% |
| Final paper annotated bibliography | 10% |
| Final presentation | 10% |
| Final paper first draft | 10% |
| Final paper final draft | 30% |

You must complete all assignments to pass this course. There will be no “incompletes” given in this class. There will be no opportunity for “extra credit.” I will use the following criteria when assigning grades:

- “A” is defined as work that is superior in every way, exceeding expectations for student performance. The work shows considerable investment of time and effort. The readings are referenced with well-chosen quotations, which have been cited with correct footnote, endnote, or parenthetical citations. Ideas are original and well argued, and there are no technical or grammatical problems.
- “B” is defined as work that is significantly above average, but not of the highest quality.
- “C” is defined as work that is average in effort and execution. This is not inferior work, but is not exemplary in any way; i.e., no special effort appears to have been made.
- “D” is defined as work that falls short of basic requirements in some way. There may be extensive factual errors or components of the assignment may be missing or inadequate.
- “F” is defined as work that clearly failed to engage the assignment, neglects major pieces of the assignment, or suffers from an excess of technical or grammatical problems.

Other policies

Disability/access: Your success in this class is important to me. If you have a disability (learning, physical, psychological or other) and require some accommodation or modification in procedures, class activity, instruction, requirements, &c. please contact me early in the semester so that I can refer you to Academic Support Services who will discuss and arrange for reasonable accommodations. The Pitzer College Academic Support Services office is in Scott Hall, room 134, (909) 607-3553.

Electronic devices: Electronic devices (including cassette tape recorders, cell phones, pagers, laptop, or palm computers) are prohibited in class as they may interfere with the airplane’s navigation systems.

Academic honesty: You are responsible and will be held accountable for the work you submit in this class. I will adhere to all College policies regarding academic dishonesty and misconduct in this course. Work that shows evidence of plagiarism or other violations will be failed and may at my discretion result in a failing grade for the class. In addition, all incidents of academic dishonesty must be reported to your Dean of Students. Please review the policies regarding academic dishonesty in your student handbook.

Schedule of class meetings and assigned readings

Assigned readings paper should be completed before coming to class on the day listed below. You need to have read the material thoroughly, have written your reaction paper, and be prepared to talk on these days. This schedule is subject to change or adjustment as necessary.

Course Introduction

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| W 9/3 | Introductions, discussion of syllabus, policies, logistics, &c. |
| M 9/8 | Discussion of Jules Prown, “Mind in Matter” and Ruth Phillips, “Art History and the Native Made Object.” <u>Paper due:</u> summarize these essays and suggest “talking points” for discussion. |
| W 9/10 | Overview of the art and visual culture of Native California. |

- M 9/15 Meeting with Meg Garrett, Library specialist for Anthropology. Meet in Keck 2 classroom, next to the elevator on the third floor of the Mudd side of Honnold-Mudd Library.
- W 9/17 Lecture on Native California creation stories and worldview by Tom Blackburn, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, Cal Poly Pomona. Location: Hahn 216, Pomona College.

I: Precontact California

- M 9/22 Discussion of Travis Hudson and Ernest Underhay, *Crystals in the Sky: An Intellectual Odyssey Involving Chumash Astronomy, Cosmology and Rock Art* (selections).
Paper due: summary/talking points.
- W 9/24 Rock Art and Astronomy, continued.
- M 9/29 Discussion of David Whitley, *The Art of the Shaman: Rock Art of California* (selections).
Paper due: summary/talking points.
- W 10/1 Rock Art and Shamanism, continued.

*Saturday, October 4: Trip to Big Morongo Nature Preserve, the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum in Palm Springs, and the Malki Museum. Meet at 8:00 a.m., Hahn Hall, Pomona College. Bring a lunch. Bus leaves promptly so don't be late. We will return to Claremont by 6:00 p.m.

- M 10/6 Paper due: The scholarly debate about California Rock Art (cite two additional sources)
Discussion of papers
- Also this week: Schedule an individual meeting with subject area specialist librarian
Anthropology: Meg Garrett (meg.garrett@libraries.claremont.edu)
Art: Alex Chappell (alexandra.chappell@libraries.claremont.edu)
- W 10/8 2nd lecture by Tom Blackburn, "The California Sketches of Henry B. Brown, 1851-1852."
Time and location TBA

II: Colonial California

- M 10/13 Discussion of Kent Lightfoot, *Indians, Missionaries and Merchants: The Legacy of Colonial Encounters on the California Frontiers* (selections)
Paper due: summary/talking points.
- W 10/15 Colonial Encounters, continued.
- M 10/20 *Fall Break, no class meeting
- W 10/22 Class trip to Mission San Gabriel, transportation details TBA
- M 10/27 Final paper proposal due: bring to class to discuss
- W 10/29 Lecture: "Chumash Basketry: Art in the Life of Native Californians" by Jan Timbrook, Curator of Ethnography at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Location: Hahn 216, Pomona College.

III: California and U.S. Culture

- M 11/3 Discussion of Marvin Cohodas, "Baskets and the Late Victorian Curio Trade," from *Basket Weavers for the California Curio Trade*
Paper due: summary/talking points.
- W 11/5 Annotated bibliography for final paper due (at least five sources):
Bring bibliography to class to discuss
- M 11/10 Discussion of Marvin Cohodas, "Frames for Reception," from *Basket Weavers for the California Curio Trade*
Paper due: summary/talking points.
- W 11/12 Read: Greg Saris, "A Culture Under Glass: The Pomo Basket."
Paper due: Frames for Reception (cite two additional sources)
Discussion of papers

IV: Contemporary California

- M 11/17 Discussion of *James Luna: Emendatio*
Paper due: summary/talking points.
- W 11/19 Read: The Dirt is Red Here: Art and Poetry from Native California,
Margaret Dubin, ed. (selections)
Native Contemporary Artists, continued.
- M 11/24 No class meetings this week. Individual meetings to discuss research (schedule TBA)
First draft of paper due – bring to meeting to discuss
- W 11/26 Thanksgiving Break
- M 12/1 Lecture by Maureen Salsitz, Ph.D. Candidate, Claremont Graduate University
- W 12/3 Student presentations
- M 12/8 Student presentations
- W 12/10 Final class meeting: wrap-up, course evaluations, misc. business

Final papers due by 5 p.m., Monday, December 15 under my door in Scott Hall 202