



**AHCS-121-Q Birth of the Modern Syllabus
Liberal Arts & Sciences**

Spring 2021

Instructor: Dr. Amanda Cachia, Ph.D.

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Class Hours: every Monday from 4-5pm on Zoom

<https://otis.zoom.us/j/96010591725>

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3-4pm by appointment on Zoom

Course Overview:

This course investigates the mechanisms of taste, value, and exclusion that have dictated art and design in the West from roughly 1850 to the present. Students will explore the ways colonialism, capitalism, structural racism, sexism, the construction of genius and celebrity, and technological acceleration have shaped the world in which we live -- and how art and design have been imbricated in these practices. In an effort to disrupt privileged chronologies and canonical stylistic approaches, Birth of the Modern is structured around case studies, supporting lectures, discussions and assigned reading outlined in the Weekly Schedule section of this Syllabus. These are designed to elicit critical investigation of an object, a set of objects, or a practice, as these illuminate past and present conditions of power and privilege.

Course Learning Objectives

- Contextualize and explain how shifting dynamics of power shaped and contributed to art and design in the West from roughly 1850 to 1960.
- Through reading responses, experiential learning, and a signature learning assignment, analyze the limitations and challenges these dynamics of power presented in their day, and continue to pose to art and design.
- Locate and articulate how artistic legacies from the onset of modernity manifest in many art and design worlds today.
- Develop cultural awareness in a global context.
- Develop confidence in critical thinking skills through research, writing, and in-class participation.
- Understand and evidence how the ideas, materials, and ways of making from the modern era can be used in creative practices today.

Program Learning Objectives

- Communicate ideas in a coherent, logical, and compelling way for different purposes and audiences.
- Identify issues clearly, synthesize and contextualize relevant sources, and make connections across experiences and disciplinary perspectives to create well-reasoned and imaginative approaches to issues, problems, and challenges.
- Develop skills to locate, evaluate, and use information resources from both traditional and emerging technologies appropriately effectively and ethically.
- Develop collaborative skills to construct knowledge, negotiate effective outcomes, and generate new insights.

- Forge interdisciplinary connections among the liberal arts and sciences, studio, and community.
- Develop cultural awareness in a global context.

Required Texts and Materials:

All required readings, videos and other materials will be provided as PDFs, linked and available for downloading in Weekly Assignments.

Coursework Details:

The grade for this course will be calculated as followed

Project	Percentage of Final Grade	Details
Critical Responses	40%	6 critical responses responding to each of the 6 themes: colonialism, capitalism, structural racism, sexism, the construction of genius and celebrity, and technological acceleration. Each paper is 2-3 pages long.
Draft Paper	10%	This is a draft of the Signature Assignment Final Essay with annotations. Students will get detailed feedback as they work towards their final submission.
Signature Assignment Final Essay & Presentation	30%	Every signature assignment will include the following components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparing and contrast course material relating to at least two of the course topics. • Connect course case studies with art that has been produced in their lifetimes. • Articulation of a conception of modernity outside the Western canon. • Information literacy: 2 annotations and 4 citations. • Students need to write at least 1500-1800 words, distributed at the instructor’s discretion. (6 pages double-spaced).
Critical Reflection	10%	Determined by instructor, according to Course Learning Objectives.
Participation	10%	Points can be earned each week in two ways. 1) Engaged participation in Zoom class discussions; 2) Participation in the online discussion boards, with a minimum of 2 responses to other posts.

Assignment Criteria

All project grades are based on Class Project Rubric

The major assignments for this course are:

- 6 Critical Responses – 40%
- A Draft – 10%
- Signature assignment: Final Project – 30%
- Critical Reflection – 10%
- Participation at the instructor's discretion – 10%
- Total Points: 100%

Grade Scale

Grade	Percentage
A	95 - 100%
A-	90 - 94%
B+	86 - 89%
B	82 - 85%
B-	78 - 81%
C+	74 - 77%
C	70 - 73%
C-	67 - 69%
D	60 - 66%
F	0 - 59%

All work will be graded on line within 7-10 days of submission -- that time frame allows for tech glitches that always happen even in a perfect world.

Due Dates

All work is due by the beginning of the specified class meeting; hard deadlines are clearly specified in the Week by Week schedule found in this syllabus.

Late Work

Because we are in an unprecedented COVID situation that has made life very stressful for teachers and students alike, I will accept late work for one week after the due date with no penalty.

Art History Tutoring

Art History tutoring will help students with:

- Reading Comprehension
- Explanation of art terms and concepts
- Writing (including reading responses and essays)
- Exam prep

The following Art History faculty will be available via Zoom sessions to assist you with our class.

For Hours Contact

[Schedule an SLC tutor Appointment.](#)

The TLC or jmvenurini@otis.edu will instruct you on scheduling digital tutoring during our COVID closed campus requirements.

Otis College Policies

Interim Course Attendance Spring 2021

Attendance is critical to learning and academic success. Consistent attendance by all students benefits everyone and allows class communities to learn in an efficient and productive manner without disruption. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that there are times when a student must miss a class meeting. At Otis College of Art and Design, students will take responsibility for their absences and for meeting assignment requirements and deadlines. Student responsibility and proactivity are valued at Otis College of Art and Design.

Students are not expected or required to disclose reasons for their absences.

Each instructor will indicate the accepted timeframe for submitting coursework missed due to an absence on the course syllabus. **However, some class meetings or experiences cannot be made up (“excused”), therefore an absence on those dates is automatically recorded as “unexcused.”** The instructor determines which and how many class meetings or experiences cannot be made up (“excused”) and indicates them on the course schedule.

All Foundation Level courses are considered required.

There are no "excused" absences.

Consequences of “Unexcused” Absences:

During the fall and spring semesters, students must not incur more than:

- 3 “unexcused” absences in a course that meets once per week

After a student reaches the maximum number of “unexcused” absences, as quantified above, the student will receive a **failing grade** for the course.

Academic Alerts:

After 1 “unexcused” absences, an academic alert will be submitted by the course instructor.

After 2 "unexcused" absences, an academic alert will be submitted by the course instructor.

Arriving Late or Leaving Early:

A “tardy” is arriving late for class or leaving class early.

- **Any student arriving over 10 minutes late to Zoom class or leaving class early is considered tardy.**
- **4 tardies will equal 1 "unexcused" absence.**
- **Entering class 40 minutes late or leaving 40 minutes early will be counted as an "unexcused" absence.**

Persistent tardies (more than 4) are disruptive to the class and drastically compromise your success in the course.

Behavioral Expectations

All Otis students are expected to assist in maintaining an environment that supports effective teaching and learning, and a culture of civility and respect for others. Therefore, any behavior that disrupts or interferes with the functioning of a classroom, studio, or college-sponsored off-campus venue may result in students being asked to leave the class, and where warranted, being referred for possible discipline according to the Otis Code of Conduct (as outlined in the current Student Handbook). The consequences of disruptive behavior may also affect a student’s grade.

Hours for Course Completion

One unit generates three hours of coursework:

3 unit course = 3 hour class, 6 hours of homework each week

Disability Accommodations

If you are a student with documented disability services (physical, learning, or psychological) requiring reasonable academic accommodations, you must contact Dr. Carol Branch at (310) 826-2554 before you need any accommodations. Retroactive accommodations are not provided, so please be sure to make your request early in the semester. All discussions will remain confidential.

For more information, please visit the [Disability Services website](#)

Student Health and Wellness Center

The [Student Health and Wellness Center](#) (SHWC) is available for all currently enrolled students if any medical or counseling need should arise. Medical services include acute, chronic and preventive care which includes sick visits, physical exams, lab work, and immunizations.

Therapeutic counseling services are offered Free and Confidential to all enrolled students. Common topics include generalized anxiety, depression, social anxiety, adjustment, and relationship concerns. When a student is in significant emotional distress or experiencing a crisis, we also have same-day appointments available.

The SHWC is located on the first floor of Ahmanson, room 107; hours of operation are 9am-5pm, Monday through Friday. Appointments can be made in person or by calling (310) 846-5738. In a life-threatening emergency, students should call 9-1-1 and Campus Safety and Security: (310) 665-6965.

*As a reminder, the Student Health and Wellness Center does not provide excuse notes for missing class.

SLC Tutoring for Contemporary Art Survey

The [Student Learning Center](#) (SLC) seeks to provide Otis' diverse student population with the support tools they need in order to grow as individuals, scholars, and artists. Support is offered by peer writing consultants and tutors to assist students in improving their academic performance.

- [Schedule a tutor](#)
- Location: Library, room 100 E
- SLC Coordinator: Ryan Khoo (rkhoo@otis.edu)

Preferred Name/Pronoun Policy

Preferred Name Policy

Otis College of Art and Design is committed to fostering an inclusive campus that values self-expression and respect for the variety of communities it serves. The College recognizes that many students, faculty and staff choose to use a preferred first name rather than a legal name whenever a legal name is not absolutely necessary, limited by technology, or required by law. At Otis College, students may request a preferred first name by submitting a [Preferred First Name Request Form](#); faculty and staff may request use of a preferred first name by contacting Human Resources.

Otis College reserves the right to remove or deny the preferred first name if used inappropriately. This includes, but is not limited to, names using foul or inappropriate language, names submitted to avoid a legal obligation, and names used to create misrepresentation. Each individual may request one preferred first name change during each twelve month period.

Read the [full policy](#).

Plagiarism

If you have to ask: "should I acknowledge where this information came from?" . . . then you probably should!

Plagiarism Statement:

Plagiarism occurs when a person deliberately uses another person's concepts, language, images, music, or other original (not common knowledge) material without acknowledging the source and/or making substantial modifications. While referencing or appropriating may be part of a studio or Liberal Arts and Sciences assignment, it is the student's ethical responsibility to acknowledge and/or modify the original material.

Specific examples of plagiarism include:

- Submitting someone else's work in whole or part (including copying directly from a source without documentation and/or alteration, or turning in studio work that is not your own).
- Having someone else produce, revise, or substantially alter all or part of a written paper or studio assignment.
- Cutting and pasting any textual or image-based work from the internet without proper documentation or clarification of sources.
- Failure to cite sources. Proper citations in MLA style and a Works Cited page must accompany all papers. You can find citation information through the [Library website](#).
- Using the writing, editing, or creative services of another person who quantitatively and/or qualitatively revises the paper and/or studio work significantly. An editor often fixes the paper without the writer learning how to do it him/herself. Sometimes the editor changes so much of the paper that it is no longer the student writer's work and thus plagiarized. A trained tutor helps the writer to learn how to revise the papers and eventually not need the tutor's assistance.

Instances of alleged plagiarism are reported to the **Academic Integrity Committee** for review. For a complete description of the Academic Integrity Committee process, please refer to the [Academic Misconduct Complaint Form](#)

Schedule of Classes, Readings & Assignment Deadlines:

Week 1: Monday January 18 – Martin Luther King Holiday – no class

Week 2: Monday January 25

Introductions and overview of class syllabus.

Colonialism: Case Study #1 – The Benin Bronzes

Readings:

1. *The British Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution*, Dan Hicks, Pluto Press. 2020
2. “This Art was Looted 123 Years Ago. Will It Ever Be Returned?” *The New York Times*, January 23, 2020
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/arts/design/benin-bronzes.html>

****Introductions/bios due Sunday January 31 at 11:59pm**

Week 3: Monday February 1

Colonialism: Case Study #2 – Kent Monkman Indigenous Queer Reversal of Colonial Gaze

Readings:

1. “ ‘Genius’ or ‘Amoral’? Artist’s Latest Angers Indigenous Canadians,” *The New York Times*, May 28, 2020,
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/28/world/canada/painting-canada-monkman-trudeau-indigenous.html>
2. Kent Monkman Commission at the Met
<https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2019/great-hall-commission-kent-monkman>
3. “Kent Monkman Reverses Art History’s Colonial Gaze”
<https://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/now-at-the-met/2019/kent-monkman-mistikosiwak-wooden-boat-people-colonial-gaze>
4. www.kentmonkman.com

****Critical Response #1 due Sunday February 7 at 11:59pm**

Week 4: Monday February 8

Capitalism: Case Study #1 – The Construction of the Fashion System

& Case Study #2 – The cotton gin and the mechanical loom

Readings:

1. “Charles Frederick Worth and the Origins of the Fashion Show”
<http://www.beautifully-invisible.com/2012/11/charles-frederick-worth-the-origin-of-the-fashion-show.html>
2. Selections from *Fashion Theory: A Reader*. Edited by Malcolm Barnard, Routledge, 2007.
3. *The New York Times Podcast*: “The Economy That Slavery Built”
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/30/podcasts/1619-slavery-cotton-capitalism.html>

****Critical Response #2 due Sunday February 14 at 11:59pm**

Week 5: Monday February 15 – President’s Day Holiday – no class

Week 6: Monday February 22

Structural Racism: Case Study #1: Artifact(s): W. E. B. DuBois’s Data Portraits, 1900

Reading:

1. Weber, Jasmine. “How W.E.B. Du Bois Meticulously Visualized 20th-Century Black America.” *Hyperallergic*, 5 Feb. 2019, <https://hyperallergic.com/476334/how-w-e-b-du-bois-meticulously-visualized-20th-century-black-america/>
2. Mansky, Jackie. “W.E.B. Du Bois' Visionary Infographics Come Together for the First Time in Full Color.” Smithsonian.com, Smithsonian Institution, 15 Nov. 2018, www.smithsonianmag.com/history/first-time-together-and-color-book-displays-web-du-bois-visionary-infographics-180970826/.
3. Jacob Lawrence, *The Migration Series*.

Week 7: Monday March 1

Structural Racism: Case Study #2: Confederate Monuments

Reading:

1. Matthew Desmond, “In order to understand the brutality of American capitalism, you have to start on the plantation,” *New York Times*, 14 August 2019.
2. German Lopez, “The battle over Confederate statues, explained,” *Vox*, 23 August 2017.
3. Ryan Best, “Confederate statues were never really about preserving history,” *FiveThirtyEight*, 8 July 2020.
4. [John Oliver’s takedown of confederate monuments](#) (2017)
5. <https://monumentsmustfall.wordpress.com/>

****Critical Response #3 due Sunday March 7 at 11:59pm**

Week 8: Monday March 8

Disciplined Bodies: Case Study #1 – Manet’s Olympia

Reading:

1. Meilan Solly, “Musée d’Orsay Renames Manet’s ‘Olympia’ and Other Works in Honor of Their Little-Known Black Models” *Smithsonian Magazine*, March 27 2019.
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/musee-dorsay-renames-manets-olympia-honor-its-little-known-black-model-180971812/>
2. Griselda Pollock, “Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity” (1988)
3. Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, “Still Thinking About Olympia’s Maid,” *The Art Bulletin* 97:4 (2015): 43-451.
4. “Olympia’s Maid: Reclaiming Black Female Subjectivity,” Lorraine D’Grady in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, Amelia Jones, Ed.
5. *Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth Century Art, Medicine and Literature*, Sander L Gilman.

Week 9: Monday March 15

Disciplined Bodies: Case Study #2 – Self-Portraits by Women Surrealists

Reading:

1. Hayden Herrera, “Frida Kahlo: The Palette, the Pain, and the Painter,” *Artforum*, 21, March, 1983, 60-67.
2. Thompson, Z. B., “Still Devouring Frida Kahlo: Psychobiography versus Postcolonial and Disability Readings,” in *Narratives of Different in Globalized Cultures*, 57-80
3. Josten, Jennifer. 2006. “Reconsidering Self-Portraits By Women Surrealists: A Case Study of Claude Cahun and Frida Kahlo.” *Atlantis* 30 (2): 22–35.

****Critical Response #4 due Sunday March 21 at 11:59pm**

Week 10: Monday March 22 NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Week 11: Monday March 29

Constructions of Genius and Celebrity: Case Study #1 – LIFE Magazine Profile of Pollock

Reading:

1. “The Case for Jackson Pollock,” PBS Digital Studios.
2. Evelyn Toynton, “The Discovery of an American Icon: Extract from ‘Jackson Pollock’ by Evelyn Toynton,” YaleBooks Blog, 20 January 2012.
3. Erin Thomas, “artist,” The Chicago School of Media Theory.
4. Jackson Pollock timeline -- including the fact that his brother Charles went to Otis (!)
5. Linda Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?,” (1971) - excerpted version, 229-233.
6. Tara Isabella Burton, “The dark history behind letting male “geniuses” get away with bad behavior,” Vox, 26 October 2017.
7. Tiernan Morgan and Lauren Purje, “An Illustrated Guide to Linda Nochlin’s ‘Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?’,” *Hyperallergic*, 23 May 2017.
8. Bradford R. Collins, “Life Magazine and the Abstract Expressionists, 1948-51: A Historiographic Study of a Late Bohemian Enterprise,” *The Art Bulletin* 73:2 (1991): 283-308

****Critical Response #5 due Sunday April 4 at 11:59pm**

Week 12: Monday April 5

Constructions of Genius and Celebrity: Case Study #2 – Jeff Koons Masterclass

Reading:

1. Andrew Russeth, “Can Jeff Koons Teach Me to Paint”? *The New York Times*, December 2020
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/27/arts/design/can-jeff-koons-teach-me-to-paint.html>
2. Blake Gopnik, “Jeff Koons: A Genius from Day One,” *ArtNet*, August 18, 2014, <https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/jeff-koons-a-genius-from-day-one-79880>
3. Caroline Goldstein, “Watch Scarlett Johansson Explain Why Jeff Koons Is An Artistic Genius (Really),” *ArtNet*, June 15, 2017, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/scarlett-johanssen-narrates-jeff-koons-994904>

****Draft of Final Signature Assignment + Annotations due Sunday April 11 at 11:59pm**

Week 13: Monday April 12

Technological Acceleration/Technological Determinism: Case Study #1 – The Camera

Reading:

1. Sarah Lewis, “The Racial Bias Built into Photography,” *The New York Times*, April 25, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/25/lens/sarah-lewis-racial-bias-photography.html>
2. “Evolving Images: Race and Popular Darwinism in Nineteenth Century Photography,” Cambridge lecture by Professor Elizabeth Edwards.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_vFD-yoR2c
3. “The Daguerreotype: Photographic Processes Series Chapter 2 of 12,” George Eastman Museum, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d932Q6jYRg8&feature=emb_logo
4. Kaja Silverman, “Introduction,” and “The Second Coming,” from *The Miracle of Analogy or The History of Photography, Part 1*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015.

****Critical Response #6 due Sunday April 18 at 11:59pm**

Week 14: Monday April 19

Final Project Class Presentations.

Week 15: Monday April 26 - FINAL CLASS TODAY.

Final Project Class Presentations.

Please submit Final Signature Assignment & Presentations by **Sunday May 2, 11:59pm.**

Please also submit Critical Reflection Papers by **Sunday May 2, 11:59pm.**

Week 16: Monday May 3

FINALS WEEK: THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM FOR THIS CLASS.

