

ARH 6917: The Art and Architecture of Mexico City Through the Ages

Derek Burdette, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

University of Florida, Fall 2021 (3 credit hours)

Room: FAC 116a

Periods: M | Periods 5- 7 (11:45-am – 2:45 pm)

Final exam: No exam scheduled

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Course Description

This class surveys the art and architecture of Mexico City, which has been an important cultural center for more than seven centuries (ca. 1325- 2022). It follows the city from its foundation as the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan in 1325 to its rechristening as Mexico City, the capital of the Spanish viceroyalty of New Spain in 1521. It concludes with a look at the city's place in modern Mexico, as it evolved from a cradle of modernism to a booming locus of "global contemporary" art. Rather than a strict history of the city itself, the course uses the great metropolis as a platform for examining the relationship between art, politics and place. To do this, we will look at a variety of artforms, including (but not limited to) urban planning, architecture, muralism, and performance art. By weaving together pre-Columbian, colonial, modern, and contemporary Latin American art history, the course exposes students to a variety of art historical methods that should recall the lessons they have learned in other classes. Additionally, the course will support the students in their own individual exploration of a single artwork from the city's rich history, refining their research and writing skills.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Students should:

- perfect their abilities to read, write about, and discuss scholarly texts.
- refine their scholarly research and writing skills.
- master the ability to discuss works of art within the discipline of art history.
- produce a substantial research paper with all of the required elements (thesis and argument with review of literature, proper citations of relevant sources, figures with captions, and bibliography)

Graduate students are expected to produce work commensurate with their level of study

Required Reading: There are three required textbooks for the course:

Mary Coffey, *How a Revolutionary Art Became Official Culture* (Duke UP, 2012)

Barbara Mundy, *The Death of Tenochtitlan, The Birth of Mexico City* (University of Texas Press, 2015- paperback 2018)

William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style* (various editions)

We will use numerous book chapters and articles available on our Canvas page.

You will need to write on, make notes in and underlines these texts so that we can return to them in discussion. So, whether you print the readings or use your screens is up to you, but you will need to be able to bring them to class so please plan accordingly.

Grading:

30%	Attendance & Participation
10%	Discussion Leadership
15%	Weekly Discussion Questions
45%	Final Research Project

Attendance and Participation (30%): Attendance is extremely important in a seminar style class, as many of our learning outcomes can only be achieved by attending class and participating fully in discussion. As a result, attendance and participation will make up a large portion of your final grade for the class (30%). You will be allowed *one* unpenalized absence, which assumes that you will need a day because you are sick, etc. For each subsequent absence you will lose 2 points from the “Attendance and Participation” portion of your final grade. Also note that excessive absences may result in a failing grade.

With regards to participation, it is important that you come to class having read the material, and then *engage* in class discussion in a meaningful, collegial, and constructive way. Failure to come prepared will result in a loss of credit for that day’s attendance/participation grade. I realize that participating in class discussion will come easier for some than others; we all have to be aware that some students will need to step *up* and speak, and others must step *back* and make space for the opinions of others.

Discussion Leadership (10%): Once during the semester you will need to take charge of the discussion of a single article or reading. You will sign up for these discussion leadership roles at the start of the semester. This means that you should read the text carefully and (at the very least) establish a list of questions that you think will help steer discussion. You will likely share the task with one or more students. If you are sharing responsibilities to present with someone, you should reach out to them in advance to prepare together. Failure to do so will result in a lower grade. You will need to submit your discussion questions/ outline to an online assignment to receive full credit for the assignment.

Discussion Questions (15%): Prior to the start of class (precise due date/time will be in Canvas) you will need to write down a single idea that the reading(s) raised for you and that you think deserves our attention. You should be able to distil the idea to a brief sentence AND be able to cite a passage within the assigned text (using page #s) that can serve as a point of departure for our discussions. These ideas will serve as conversation starters for our discussion in class.

Research Paper Assignment (45%): This class will provide you an opportunity to put your research and composition skills into practice in lengthy research paper representative of the type of art historical scholarship we read in class. You will build the project up from the research paper is to select an issue of interest and explore it in much greater depth than is possible in class. This is a chance to put into practice the skills you have acquired throughout your classwork.

You will pick a time period and topic and then collect scholarly sources, read them, synthesize their arguments, examine the artworks/objects for yourself, and compose a thoughtful essay that makes an *argument* about the artworks or concepts that made up the focus of your examination. The process of writing the paper will be unlike that you have experienced in other classes. We will build the project up together over time and we will do so *as if* you were authoring an article for a particular journal in the field of Art History. This will be accomplished by breaking the process down into smaller goals, which collectively will be (graded) milestones that help you craft a well-developed and professional paper.

Important dates and graded assignments are as follows:

- Week 3: Research Topic Assignment Due (2%)
- Week 6: Journal Assignment Due (2%)
- Week 8: Research Question and Bibliography Due (3%)
- Week 11: In Class Presentation of Research (10%)
- Week 14: In Class Peer Review Assignment (3%)
- Week 16: Final Draft of Research Paper Due (25%)

*Note that graduate students will complete a much longer, more in-depth and more substantially researched paper than undergraduates. More details about the grad level paper will be forthcoming.

Grading Scale

Grades are tabulated on a 100-point scale and a letter grade is assigned as follows:

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87–89 B+	84–86 B	80–83 B-
77–79 C+	74–76 C	70–73 C-
67–69 D+	64–66 D	60–63 D-
59 and below	F	

If you have questions about how grade points are assigned by the University, go to:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Reminders and Requirements

UF Requirements and Policy: 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/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Statement Regarding the Honor Pledge: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel.

Accommodations: I, along with the rest of the University community, am working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation as soon as possible, and we can work to find a solution. Note that students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Diversity Statement: The intent is that we explore the content of this course in a way that is respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, ability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. The intent is also to present content that explores diverse points of view, which might be challenging. Maintaining a respectful environment will be our responsibility. The intent is that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

Changes to the Syllabus: While this document provides guidelines for the class, I do reserve the right to change the syllabus at any time during the semester if the need arises. Each class is different, and sometimes it takes some tweaking to get the right

readings, topics, and assignments. Being flexible with the syllabus allows us to get it right.

Notes on Technology and Communication

- **Communication and Respect:** We all must strive to be good communicators to make this class successful. This means listening respectfully to others in class (faculty and students) and engaging in respectful conversation. It also, perhaps just as importantly, means maintaining professional standards while communicating via email and outside of class. With that in mind, please use formal, respectful, and professional standards when corresponding via email. This means beginning emails with a formal greeting, employing proper grammar, and avoiding unprofessional colloquialisms.
- **Cell Phones:** Please refrain from texting during class. If it becomes a problem, I will simply ask you to put your phone away. If it happens repeatedly, I will ask you to leave class and mark you absent for the day.
- **Canvas:** Please make sure that you are familiar with our course site on Canvas so that you will have access to announcements, assignments and readings, and pptx presentations and study guides.
- **Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/> . Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/> . Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/> .

In Class Recordings: Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1: January 9- Introduction to the Class

- Overview of course
- Class discussion of Mexico City's history/ seminar outcomes

Week 2. January 16- No Class- UF Holiday

Week 3. January 23: Tenochtitlan

- **Research Topic Assignment Due**

Week 4. January 30: The *Templo Mayor* and Archeology

- Readings TBD

Week 5. February 6: Mary Coffey HESCAH/ Research: Journals and Publications

- Readings TBD
- Discussion with Mary Coffey TBD
- **ATTEND: HESCAH TALK:** At the Edge of Whiteness: Brown Feeling and the Public Life of Blackness in José Clemente Orozco's U.S.-based Prints
Thursday, February 9, 2023 at 5:30 pm during Museum Nights
Chandler Auditorium at the Harn Museum of Art

Week 6. February 13: The Colonial Period: A Transition to "Mexico City"

- Readings TBD
- **Journal Assignment Due**

Week 7. February 20: The Colonial Capital / Topic and Bibliography

- Readings TBD

Week 8. February 27: Mexican Muralism

- Readings TBD
- **Research Question and Bibliography Due**

Week 9. March 6: The Mexican National Project, Art, and Museums

- Readings TBD

Week 10. March 13- Spring Break- No Class

Week 11. March 20: Presentations of Individual Research Projects

- **In Class Presentations of Research**

Week 12. March 27: Modernist Architecture in Mexico City

- Readings TBD

Week 13. April 3: Mexico City and Global Contemporary Art

- Readings TBD

Week 14. April 10: Peer Reviews of Research Paper: In Class Activity

- We will engage in detailed and constructive peer-reviews of papers in class together. This will require you to bring:
 - 2 copies of your paper (text, bibliography, images)- printed out
 - Strunk and White's, *Elements of Style*
 - Highlighters and pens of at least two different colors
- **Completed peer review forms are due at the end of the class period (and make up part of your paper grade)**

Week 15. April 17: No Assigned Readings- Work on Research Paper

- This week you should be working diligently to complete your research project. You can schedule time with me to meet and discuss your project during class time if desired.

Week 16: April 24: No Assigned Readings

- **Final Papers Are Due**