

**Introduction to African Art**  
(ARH 2930)



Image: Tabita Rezaire, *Deep Down Tidal* (still), 2017.



Image: Church of Saint George, Lalibela, Ethiopia, 13<sup>th</sup> century.

**Mondays | Period 7: 1:55 PM - 2:45 PM**  
**Wednesdays | Period 6 and 7: 12:50 - 2:45 PM**

**Location:** FAC 0201 (class meets at the Harn Museum of Art on 9/25, 10/2, 10/16, 10/30, 11/6, 11/13)

**Credits:** 3

**Prerequisite:** None

**Additional Course Fees:** \$12.94

**Instructor:** Álvaro Luís Lima

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

**Office Hours:** Mondays | Period 10: 5:10 PM – 6:00 PM and by appointment

**Course Canvas Website:** <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/382489>

**Course Description:** This course introduces African art by highlighting its diversity and complexity. It examines historical and methodological questions to contextualize works of art from across the continent ranging from as early as Ancient Egypt, seen in the eyes of Cheikh Anta Diop, to the Afrofuturism of contemporary artists such as Tabita Rezaire. The course is organized in four parts to situate the broad scope of content. Part one questions what constitutes an African identity. Part two considers the location of Africa by looking at the way in which diasporic cultures, North Africa, and Europe, have been essential to the history of African art. Part three shows the role of African art traditions beyond the museum. The course concludes with part four, which looks at modern and contemporary liberation struggles and their aftermath. In addition to lectures, discussions, and weekly assigned readings, classes will include film screenings and visits to the Harn Museum of Art. Non-majors are welcome.

**Course Objectives:**

- Familiarity with basic methodological questions about researching African art through class readings, discussion, and writing assignments.
- Analyze curatorial choices in African art display through visits to the Harn and class discussions of other collections.
- Attribute major artistic traditions to geographical regions of Africa through quiz and class lectures.
- Expand skills to interpret African art objects from diverse cultural backgrounds and functions by class comparisons, visual analysis and readings.
- Develop oral presentation skills by making a presentation on an art object.
- Expand visual literacy by class activities and discussion centered on formal analysis.
- Polish skills in writing about art through short writing assignments.

**Required Readings:** Required readings will be posted on the Canvas e-Learning Course Website and 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.

**Optional Readings:** A selection of relevant books have been placed on course reserves at the Architecture & Fine Arts Library and can be consulted to complement required readings.

## **Requirements and Grading**

### **Assessments:**

- 10%: African map quiz (8/28)  
Students will have to fill in the name of all African nations on the map.
- 10%: Five-minutes presentation a work of art (scheduled throughout the semester)  
Students will present a work of art of their choice from a list given by the instructor.
- 10%: Attendance and participation in class  
In order to get an A grade for participation, students are not only expected to attend classes, but to actively engage in discussions.
- 20%: First short writing assignment (due 9/23)  
An essay question on a theme discussed in previous classes and readings will be sent by e-mail 10 days prior to the assignment's deadline.
- 20%: Second short writing assignment (due 10/30)  
An essay question on a theme discussed in previous classes and readings will be sent by e-mail 10 days prior to the assignment's deadline.
- 30%: In-class writing assignment (12/4)  
A list of essay questions will be distributed two weeks before. Three of such questions will be part of the in-class writing assignment.

**Submission of Assignments:** All written assignments should be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of the class in which they are due. Delays may incur in a grade penalty and electronic copies will not be accepted. Written assignments must be in Times New Roman 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. Any citations must be done in Chicago-style. Please number and staple pages. Further details on all assignments and exams will be provided during the semester.

### **Chicago Manual of Style Quick Guide for Citations:**

[https://www.chicomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](https://www.chicomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

### **Please note:**

- Completion of all assignments and exams is necessary to pass the course.
- Any grade of C- or below will not count toward major requirements.
- For more information on UF's grading policies and assigning grade points, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>% Equivalency</b>	<b>GPA Equivalency</b>
A	93 and above	4.00
A-	90 to 92	3.67
B+	87 to 89	3.33
B	83 to 86	3.00

B-	80 to 82	2.67
C+	77 to 79	2.33
C	73 to 76	2.00
C-	70 to 72	1.67
D+	67 to 69	1.33
D	63 to 66	1.00
D	60 to 62	0.67
E, I, NG, WF	59 and below	0.00

## **Course Instructions and Policies**

**Attendance:** Attendance to all classes is expected, including museum visits. Absences will affect the participation grade, unless the instructor is provided with appropriated documentation or doctor's note.

**No Electronic Devices:** The use of electronic devices, including computers, will not be allowed during class.

**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.

**Plagiarism and other malpractices:** UF's policies regarding academic honesty, the Honor Code, and student conduct related to the Honor Code will be strictly enforced. This means that cheating and plagiarism will be penalized, and a report will be filed with the Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution office. For more information on the Honor Code, see: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>. If you have any questions or concerns on this, please feel free to speak to me.

**For Students with Disabilities:** If you need course adaptation or accommodations because of a disability you should first register with the Disability Resource Center [(352) 392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)] by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that 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:** This course is committed to respecting difference, including of ability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, nationality, race, religion, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. As part of this effort, the intent is to present content that explores diverse points of view. As a class, we should strive to create an atmosphere in which students from all backgrounds and perspectives will be well-served by the course, and different backgrounds and perspectives will be used as a resource, strength, and benefit. It will be both my responsibility and yours to accomplish these goals. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

**Faculty Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

**Schedule:**

***Part I: African Who?***

**8/21: Introduction and Problems in Defining African Art**

**8/26: Problems in Defining African Art (continued)**

**8/28: Roots of African Cultures?**

- In-class African map quiz

**9/2: No class (Labor Day)**

**9/4: The Search for a Modern African Art**

**9/9: *Négritude***

**9/11: *Négritude* (continued)**

**9/16: Queer Africa**

**9/18: Afrikaners**

***Part II: Where is Africa?***

**9/23: Kongo**

- First short writing assignment due at the beginning of class.

**9/25: Power Objects**

- Class held at the Harn Museum of Art. Please meet at the front lobby on time.

**9/30: No class (Rosh Hashana. Make-up arrangements will be discussed in advance)**

**10/2: Primitivism**

- Class held at the Harn Museum of Art. Please meet at the front lobby on time.

**10/7: Kingdom of Benin and Yoruba**

**10/9: No class (Yom Kippur. Make-up arrangements will be discussed in advance)**

**10/14: Yoruba (Continued)**

**10/16: Mami Wata**

- Class held at the Harn Museum of Art. Please meet at the front lobby on time.

**10/21: North Africa**

**10/23: Contemporary African Diaspora**

***Part III: Art Beyond White Walls***

**10/28: Ethiopia**

**10/30: Adobe Architecture**

- Class held at the Harn Museum of Art. Please meet at the front lobby on time.
- Second short writing assignment due at the beginning of class.

**11/4: Luba**

**11/6: Baule**

- Class held at the Harn Museum of Art. Please meet at the front lobby on time.

**11/11: No class (Veterans Day)**

**11/13: Masquerade**

- Class held at the Harn Museum of Art. Please meet at the front lobby on time.

***Part IV: Resistance and Liberation***

**11/18: Photography from Mali**

**11/20: Socialisms**

**11/25: Resistance against Apartheid**

**11/27: No class (Thanksgiving Break)**

**12/2: Afrofuturism**

**12/4: Final Thoughts**

- In-class writing assignment

## Campus Resources

### **Health and Wellness:**

- U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact “U Matter, We Care” so that a team member can reach out to the student. Email: [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu). Phone: (352)392-1575. Website: <http://www.umatter.ufl.edu>.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: Address: 3190 Radio Road, Gainesville, FL 32611 Phone: (352)392-1575. Website: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>.
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), at the Student Health Care Center: Phone: (352)392-1161. Website: [http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/sexual\\_violence](http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/sexual_violence).

### **Academic:**

- The Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall and 339 Library West, offers help with brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers, as well as online tutoring. Phone: (352)846-1138. Website: <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>
- E-learning Technical Support: Email: [learningsupport@ufl.edu](mailto:learningsupport@ufl.edu). Phone: (352)392-4357 (select option 2). Website: <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.
- Library Support, for assistance in using the libraries and finding resources. Email: <http://answers.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Phone: (352)273-2805. Website: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>.
- Teaching Center, SW Broward Hall, for tutoring and strengthening study skills. Email: [teaching-center@ufl.edu](mailto:teaching-center@ufl.edu). Phone: (352)392-6420. Website: <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>.
- Harn Museum of Art, 3259 Hull Road, excellent collection on campus with more than 10,000 works of art; offers free student memberships that include admission to 75+ museums nationwide, invitations to museum events, and more. Email: [membership@ufl.edu](mailto:membership@ufl.edu). Phone: (352)392-9826. Website: <http://harn.ufl.edu/>