**Description:** This course explores contemporary African artistic production and its reception in international markets. Readings on early African studio artists during the colonial and independence eras will set the stage for contemporary works. We will focus on several artists, artistic media, and art movements as case studies. We will also address the collection and display of contemporary African art, focusing on several important collections and exhibitions.

**Goals:** A primary goal of this class is to provide you with insights into the contributions of studio artists from Africa. The study of contemporary African art as a category within the larger field of contemporary art raises a number of important issues, including the role of identity politics in simply creating this category. By exploring the debates surrounding authenticity, artists’ identities, and the politics of museum display, this course provides a framework for understanding African artists’ active participation in contemporary art markets. The issues we will address in this class will help you to think about cultural expressions beyond Africa and beyond the art world.

**Course Policies:**

**Attendance**
Students are expected to attend all classes and to complete the reading and assignments for each class meeting. Only two absences will be permitted; any absence beyond that will adversely affect your grade. You are responsible for all of the material covered in lectures. While attendance is important, participation is crucial. We will all enjoy the class more, and learn more effectively, if everyone participates. Class participation will also improve your grade. Please note: Occasionally, I will recommend events (such as lectures) outside of class time. I understand that some of you may have conflicts, but do try to attend.

**Requirements and Grades**

**Readings:** You are expected to do the assigned readings for each class meeting. Our class discussions will center on these readings, all of which are available through the e-reserves system OR hard copies are on reserve in the Art Library. *This course has a heavy reading requirement—be prepared to devote significant time to class preparation.*

**Attendance and Participation:** Attendance and participation (see above) will affect your final grade—if you are on the border between grades, attendance and participation will move your final grade higher or lower. For example, a final average of 89 with excellent attendance and participation will result in an A- rather than a B+.

**Papers and Report:** Course assignments include two papers. Together, the papers constitute 50% of your grade. A separate bibliography and research narrative are required as part of paper #2.

**Exams:** Two exams, each consisting of slide identification, term identification, short answers, and an essay question, will together constitute 50% of your grade.

**Late Papers/Make-Up Exams:** You have all of the deadlines and exam dates now, so plan accordingly. Only in extraordinary circumstances will extensions/make-up exams be given.

**Grades:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C-</th>
<th>D+</th>
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<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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</tbody>
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*A grade of C- or below will not count toward major requirements.*
**Academic Honesty**
The University of Florida’s honor code requires all students to be honest in their academic work. University policies on cheating, plagiarism, and related issues are available at: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcode.php  
*Any paper that is plagiarized—partially or entirely—will receive an automatic E and will be reported to the Dean of Students Office.*

**Accommodations**
Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to me when requesting accommodation.

**Also note:**

→ Please do not be late for class!  
→ Do not engage in any distracting activities during class.

**Course texts:** You may purchase, or use copy on reserve in Architecture/Fine Arts Library.  

**August 22**  
**Introduction**

**August 27**  
**Themes and Issues: Overview**  
Kasfir  *Contemporary African Art*, introduction  

**August 29**  
**Artist in Focus: El Anatsui**  
El Anatsui “Sankofa: Go Back An’ Pick”  *Third Text* 23 (summer 1993)  

**September 3**—Labor Day, no class

**September 5**  
**Defining Art and Culture**  
Cotter “In Mali, Art as Real as Life Itself”  *New York Times*, 4/16/12  
Kasfir  *Contemporary African Art*, chapter 5

**September 10**  
**Authenticity and the Art Market**  
Kasfir  *Contemporary African Art*, chapter 4  

**September 12**  
**Authenticity and Identity Politics**  
Consentino “Hip-Hop Assemblage”  *African Arts* 33 #1 (Spring 2000)
September 17 The Politics of Primitivism

September 19 Reshaping Traditions: Oshogbo
Glassie “Obituary: Twins Seven Seven” African Arts 45 #1 (2012)
Probst “Chapter 2: Heritage as Novelty” in Osogbo and the Art of Heritage (Indiana University Press, 2011)

September 24 Early Developments: Workshops and Patrons
Paper #1 due
Kasfir Contemporary African Art, chapters 2 & 3

September 26 Early Moderns and Exam 1 Review
Oguibe “Footprints of a Mountaineer” in The Culture Game (U Minn Press, 2004)
Kasfir Contemporary African Art, chapter 6

October 1 Exam #1

October 3 Reshaping Traditions: Adinkra and Kente
Anyidoho “Ghanaian Kente: Cloth and Song” in The Poetics of Cloth (Grey Art Gallery NYU, 2008)

October 8 Reshaping Traditions: Nsibidi and Uli **Class meets at Harn Museum**
Kreamer and Purpura “Songs of Ancient Moons: Victor Ekpuk on his Art” Inscribing Meaning (Museum for African Art, 2007)

October 10 “Popular” Arts as Contemporary Art 1
Kasfir Contemporary African Art, chapter 1

October 15 “Popular” Arts as Contemporary Art 2

October 17 Photography: Documenting Identities
Diawara “Talk of the Town” Art Forum 36 #6 (1998)
Rips “Who Owns Seydou Keita?” New York Times 1/22/06

October 22 Artist in Focus: Ibrahim El Salahi
October 24  South Africa: Histories and Identities

October 29  Art and Identity: Race and Sexuality
   Schmahmann “Censorship, Censoriousness, and a Colourful Commotion: The Useful Objects Controversy” in Grey Areas: Representation, Identity and Politics in Contemporary South Africa (Chalkham Hill, 1999)

October 31  Art and Identity: Race and Gender

November 5  Artists in Focus: Ghada Amer, Julie Mehretu
   Research Narrative due

November 7  Artist in Focus: Yinka Shonibare

November 12  Veterans Day—no class

November 14  Art and Identity: Africa in the Diaspora
   Kasfir Contemporary African Art, chapter 7
   Cassell “Convergence: Images and Dialogue; Conversations with Alexander ‘Skunder’ Boghossian” in Third Text 23 (Summer 1993)

November 19  Harney In Senghor’s Shadow  pages 1-48

November 21  Harney In Senghor’s Shadow  pages 49-148

November 26  Harney In Senghor’s Shadow  pages 149-241
   Bibliography due

**Monday Nov 26  *Elizabeth Harney Lecture*  Harn Museum, 6:00 pm

November 28  Jean Pigozzi: One Collector’s Impact on Contemporary African Art
   Picton “In Vogue, or the Flavor of the Month: The New Way to Wear Black” Third Text 7 #23 (1993)
   “Two Conversations” (Jean Pigozzi, André Magnin) African Art Now (Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 2005)
December 3  Fashion Design as Contemporary Artistic Expression
Gondola “La Sape Exposed! High Fashion Among Lower-class Congolese Youth” in
Contemporary African Fashion (Indiana University Press, 2010).
Rovine “Working the Edge: XULY.Bët’s Recycled Clothing” in Old Clothes, New

December 5  Last day of class

December 12 (Wed) 3:00-5:00  FINAL EXAM

December 14 (Fri) 3:00  Paper #2 due (bring hard copy to office—FAC 119B)

__________________________________________________________________

Citing sources for your paper assignments

For your bibliographies, please use Chicago Style format, as illustrated here:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Use the Author-Date system, not the Notes and Bibliography system (click on the Author-Date tab). You will use short parenthetical citations in the text, which refer to items in your bibliography. *Be sure to look this over before you begin writing your papers--this will save you time.