

## TWENTIETH-CENTURY LATIN AMERICAN ART SYLLABUS AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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Class time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00-4:15

Location: Robinson Hall B218

Professor: Michele Greet

Email: mgreet@gmu.edu

Phone: (703) 993-1250 (This is a general office number where you may leave a message. The best way to reach me is via email)

Office: Robinson Hall B 371A

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:00-4:00 and Thursdays 1:45-2:45 or by appointment

**Course Description:** Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, Wifredo Lam—the names are familiar, yet why are these influential artists frequently omitted from twentieth-century art curricula? This course will provide an in-depth discussion of these and other pivotal Latin American artists, in order to establish an alternative vision of modernism. Twentieth-century Latin American art evolved through a complex relationship with the European avant-garde. Some artists re-appropriated European trends and transformed them into a uniquely Latin American idiom, whereas other artists reacted against international modernist tendencies and developed unique expressions of national identity. This course will address issues such as the relationship between social realism and politics, the expression of specific national identities versus the adoption of universal trends, the creation of an avant-garde in post-colonial societies, and the perception of the “fantastic” in Latin American art. Key figures in Latin American modernism from the Mexican muralists to the artists of the Taller Torres-García will be discussed, as well as the numerous women artists (Frida Kahlo, Maria Izquierdo, Remedios Varo, Amelia Pelaez, and Tarsila do Amaral) who made a unique contribution to Latin American art.

**Course Format:** The classroom experience is the core of the course. Class sessions comprise lecture/discussions on selected aspects of material introduced in that day’s reading assignment. Tests and quizzes derive from both what we cover in class and the readings, thus **careful note taking** is essential to your success in the course.

### Objectives:

- To become familiar with the major movements in twentieth-century Latin American art
- To learn about these movements in their historical context and to recognize their formal/stylistic traits
- To develop analytical and interpretive skills and use them to discuss and write about works of art

### Course Requirements:

- **Readings:** complete all reading **before** the class. If a reading is listed under February 13, for example, it should be completed **before** class on the 13<sup>th</sup>.
- **Participation:** (5% of your grade) Participation refers to both the content of your verbal contributions as well as your attention and response to others’ comments. The GMU catalogue reads: “Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for

which they register...instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as *de facto* evidence of non-participation.” Everyone starts with a B as a participation grade. You will maintain that grade by simply coming to class (missing no more than 3 classes over the semester). To get an A for participation you need to actually contribute to class discussions. Your participation grade will be reduced according to attendance after 3 absences. You will not pass the class if you miss more than 50% of the class sessions no matter how well you do on other assignments.

- **Paper:** (20% of your grade) 5-6 pages. Specific assignment to be handed out in class.
- **Quiz:** (15% of your grade)
- **Mid-term:** (30% of your grade)
- **Final:** (30% of your grade)

### **Grading Standards:**

C is the average expected performance of a college Student. To receive a C you must complete all readings and assignments on time, demonstrate a basic knowledge of the material, and write competently (all assignments must be well organized and have correct spelling and grammar). To receive a B your work must be substantially better than average and to receive an A truly exceptional. A work is meticulously researched, well written, and imaginative and goes above and beyond the assignment.

A+	98-100	C+	77-79
A	93-97	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D	60-69
B	83-86	F	59 and lower
B-	80-82		

### **Technology Requirements:**

- GMU requires you to activate your GMU e-mail account to receive official campus communications. If you prefer to use another address, you must activate the e-mail forwarder. I will use GMU addresses exclusively.
- Web access and searching ability
- All written work must be word-processed, spell-checked, and printed on a quality printer

### **Policies:**

- Students are responsible for all material covered in class (announcements, lectures, discussions) whether you are present or not.
- Late assignments are not acceptable. Any work turned in late without a valid written excuse (i.e. doctor's note) will be graded down one grade per class late. If an assignment is not turned in by the last day of class you will be given a 0 for that assignment. If you are having difficulty completing an assignment please see me well before the assignment is due. If I am aware of your circumstances I am more than willing to work with you.

- Make-up exams or extensions will be granted only in the case of documented emergencies.
- GMU operates with an **Honor Code**. It is clearly defined in the catalogue (<http://www.gmu.edu/mlfacstaff/findex.html>) **Plagiarism** (presenting someone else's ideas or words as your own without proper acknowledgement) violates the Honor Code. I will notify the Honor Committee concerning possible infractions.
- All work must be submitted in hard copy. E-mailed assignments will not be accepted.
- Cell phones, pagers, etc. must be **turned off** during class.
- Accommodations will be made for students with documented disabilities, in accordance with law and university policies. Students requiring accommodations must register with the University's Disability Resource Center and produce documentation. Please do this well **before** the first test or presentation in case alternate arrangements need to be made.
- If English is your second language, I encourage you to turn in a rough draft of your paper at least one week before it is due. If needed I will recommend that you work with the Writing Center. **All papers must be in good standard English.**

**Important dates:**

Feb. 2	Last day to add classes
Feb. 9	Quiz
Feb. 19	Last day to drop classes
Mar. 4	Mid-term exam
Mar. 9, 11	Class does not meet (Spring Break)
Apr. 6	Paper due
Apr. 29	Last day of class
May 11	Final Exam: <b>1:30am-4:15pm</b>

**REQUIRED TEXT BOOKS:**

Barnitz, J. Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001.

Frank, P. ed. Readings in Latin American Modern Art. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004.

**LECTURES AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

Jan. 19 *Introduction*: review syllabus and course requirements

*Discussion*: What is Latin American art?

Jan. 21 *Lecture*: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Art in Latin America

*Readings*: Barnitz "Introduction and an overview of the Nineteenth Century" (1-10)

Jan. 26, 28 *Lecture*: "Modernismo and the Break with Academic Art, 1890-1934"

*Artists*: Saturnino Herrán, Camilo Egas, Pedro Figari

*Readings*: Barnitz chapter 1

Frank 3-4, 14-18

Feb. 2, 4 *Lecture*: “The Avant-Garde of the 1920s Cosmopolitan or National Identity?”  
*Artists*: Brazil: Tarsilo do Amaral, Emiliano di Cavalcanti, Lasar Segall; Argentina: Emilio Pettoruti, Xul Solar  
*Readings*: Barnitz chapter 2 (skip 44-55)  
Frank 19-27  
“Klaxon: Monthly Review of Modern Art,” in Ades 1989, 309-310 (electronic reserve)  
“Martin Fierro manifesto, in Ades 1989, 313-314 (electronic reserve)

Feb. 9 **Quiz**

Feb. 11 *Video*: Diego Rivera

Feb. 16, 18 *Lecture*: Mexican Muralism  
*Artists*: Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco  
*Readings*: Barnitz chapter 2 (44-56); chapter 3 (76-83)  
Frank 33-50  
José Clemente Orozco, “New World, New Races, and New Art” and David Alfaro Siqueiros “Corrections about Visual Arts,” in Ramírez and Olea 2004, 471-72 (electronic reserve)

Feb. 23, 25 *Lecture*: “Social, Ideological, and Nativist Art: The 1930s, 1940s and After”  
*Artists*: Brazil: Cândido Portinari; Andean countries: Eduardo Kingman, Oswaldo Guayasamín, José Sabogal, Julia Codesido, Mario Urteaga  
*Readings*: Barnitz chapter 3  
Frank 54-63  
José Carlos Mariátegui, “Editorial: Amauta,” “Art, Revolution, and Decadence,” and “The Indian Question: A New Appraisal,” in Ades 1989, 316-18 and 327-28 (electronic reserve)

Mar. 2 *Lecture*: “The Mystique of Frida Kahlo”  
*Artists*: Frida Kahlo  
*Readings*: Lindauer, M. “Introduction: Rereading Frida Kahlo” and “Fetishizing Frida” in Devouring Frida: The Art History and Popular Celebrity of Frida Kahlo (electronic reserve)  
Frank 79-80

Mar. 4 **Mid-term exam**

Mar. 16 *Video*: Frida Kahlo

Mar. 18 *Discussion*: “Introduction” in Indianapolis Museum of Art, Art of the Fantastic: Latin America, 1920-1987, 1987. (38-40) (electronic reserve)  
Ramírez, Mari Carmen “Beyond ‘the Fantastic’: Framing Identity in US Exhibitions of Latin American Art” in Mosquera, G., ed. Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America, 1996. (229-246) (electronic reserve)

Mar. 23, 25 *Lecture*: “Surrealism, Wartime, and New World Imagery, 1928-1964”

*Artists:* María Izquierdo, Remedios Varo, Leonora Carrington  
*Readings:* Barnitz chapter 4, 103-117  
Frank 81-85

Mar. 30, Apr. 1 *Lecture:* “Surrealism, Wartime, and New World Imagery, 1928-1964” cont.  
*Artists:* Rufino Tamayo, Wifredo Lam, Roberto Matta  
*Reading:* Barnitz chapter 4, 117-126  
Frank 86-99

**Apr. 6 Paper Assignment Due**

*Lecture:* “Torres-García’s Constructive Universalism and the Abstract Legacy”  
*Artist:* Joaquín Torres-García, Gyula Kosice  
*Readings:* Barnitz chapters 5  
Frank 135-147  
Joaquín Torres-García, “The Southern School,” in Ades 320-22 (electronic reserve)

Apr. 8 *Lecture:* “New Museums, The São Paulo Biennial, and Abstract Art”  
*Artist:* Vicente Rojo, Manabu Mabe, Fernando de Szyszlo, Alejandro Obregón  
*Readings:* Barnitz chapters 6  
Frank 148-157

Apr. 13 *Lecture:* “The Post-War Period: Internationalism and Abstraction”  
*Artists:* Edgar Negret, Eduardo Ramírez, Alejandro Otero, Jesús Rafael Soto, Carlos Cruz Diez  
*Readings:* Barnitz chapter 8  
Frank 161-171

Apr. 15, 20 *Lecture:* Concrete/Neo Concrete Art in Brazil;  
*Artists:* Lygia Clark, Helio Oiticica, Lygia Pape,  
*Readings:* Barnitz chapters 9  
Frank: 172-181

Apr. 22 *Lecture:* Neo-Figuration, Expressionism, and Pop  
*Artists:* Fernando Botero, Marisol, Amaral, Minujin, González  
*Readings:* Barnitz chapters 10  
Frank 187-211

Apr. 27 *Video:* Fernando Botero

Apr. 29 **Review**

**May 11 Final Exam 1:30-4:15**