

## Art and Culture

ANTH 3508  
Spring 2013

Dr. Susan Johnston  
Various venues...

- Textbooks: Morphy, Howard and Morgan Perkins (eds.). 2006. The Anthropology of Art. Blackwell: London. ISBN 978-1405105620
- Lewis-Williams, David. 2002. The Mind in the Cave. Thames & Hudson: New York. ISBN 978-0500284650
- Feld, Steven. 1990. Sound and Sentiment. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia. ISBN 978-0812212990
- Campbell, Shirley F. 2002. The Art of Kula. Berg: New York. ISBN 978-1859735183

### Reading:

- |          |    |  |
|----------|----|--|
| January  | 16 | Introduction   |
|          | 18 | What is art?<br>Morphy and Perkins, Introduction   |
|          | 23 | The history of art in anthropology I<br>Morphy and Perkins: Boas, Levi-Strauss   |
|          | 25 | The history of art in anthropology II<br>Morphy and Perkins: Fagg, Forge   |
|          | 30 | Primitivism?<br>Morphy and Perkins: Danto, Clifford  |
| February | 1  | Is it art?<br>Morphy and Perkins: Gell, Firth  |
|          | 6  | Non-human animal art?<br>Lecture on non-human animal art:<br><br><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJ0y8NuJhkM&amp;playnext=1&amp;list=PL046BE9DF21689F0F&amp;feature=results_video">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJ0y8NuJhkM&amp;playnext=1&amp;list=PL046BE9DF21689F0F&amp;feature=results_video</a><br><br>Look through pix at these sites and read comments:<br><a href="http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4712948">http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4712948</a><br><a href="http://www.monpa.com/wcp/">http://www.monpa.com/wcp/</a> (this one might be a joke...)<br><a href="http://www.cnn.com/video/?hpt=hp_t3#/video/us/2012/10/30/dnt-in-painting-horse-draws-crowd.wdrb">http://www.cnn.com/video/?hpt=hp_t3#/video/us/2012/10/30/dnt-in-painting-horse-draws-crowd.wdrb</a><br><a href="http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/hoax/weblog/comments/3836/">http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/hoax/weblog/comments/3836/</a> |

[http://www.metacafe.com/watch/979280/elephant\\_artists/](http://www.metacafe.com/watch/979280/elephant_artists/)  
<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/article817761.ece>  
<http://paintingpig.com/>  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ve16qLg75B4>  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1492463/Art-world-goes-wild-for-chimpanzees-paintings-as-Warhol-work-flops.html>  
<http://www.artistsezine.com/WhyChimp.htm>

- 8 The Mind in the Cave  
Ch. 1, 2
- 13 The Mind in the Cave  
Ch. 3, 4
- 15 The Mind in the Cave  
Ch. 5, 6
- 20 The Mind in the Cave  
Ch. 7, 8
- 22 The Mind in the Cave  
Ch. 9, 10  
Critique, Paul Bahn (Blackboard)

27 **EXAM**

March

- 1 Aesthetics  
Morphy and Perkins: Coote, Morphy
- 6 Sound and Sentiment  
Introduction
- 8 Sound and Sentiment  
Ch. 1,2 (you should read Ch. 2 but don't worry about the detail, just get a general sense of how the Kaluli perceive birds and their sounds)

13, 15 **SPRING BREAK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

- 20 Sound and Sentiment  
Ch.3
- 22 Sound and Sentiment  
Ch.5 (skim Ch. 4)

- 27     Sound and Sentiment  
Ch. 6 (you can mostly skip pp. 225-30, though skim them), Postscript (1989), Introduction to Third Edition (pp. xiii-xxiii)
- 29     Formal analysis  
Morphy and Perkins: Rosman & Rubel, Jonaitis, O’Hanlon
- April     3     The Art of Kula  
Introduction, Ch. 1
- 5     The Art of Kula  
Ch. 2, 3
- 10     The Art of Kula  
Ch. 4, 5
- 12     The Art of Kula  
Ch. 6, 7
- PAPER DUE**
- 17     The Art of Kula  
Ch. 8, 9
- 19     DVD: In and Out of Africa
- 24     Marketing culture  
Morphy and Perkins: Graburn, Steiner, Price
- 26     Final thoughts

**Learning Objectives**

- \* to think about what art is from a cross-cultural perspective;
- \* to challenge assumptions about the cultural context of art and artists;
- \* to learn something about the art of other cultures

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**Course Requirements:**

This syllabus represents the basic framework of this class. However, **I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CHANGE IT IF IT BECOMES NECESSARY**. This would only happen if we get behind, or want to pursue a topic for more time than I have allowed for that topic. You will get plenty of warning if I do have to change the syllabus.

All of the reading listed in this syllabus is required. You are also responsible for anything which happens in class. It will make this class both more interesting and more useful for you if you will **PLEASE DO THE READING**. That will make it easier for you to enter discussions, which will be numerous in this class.

**You must do the paper and take both exams in order to pass the course.** There are two exams, one during the semester and the other during the final exam period. Each will cover the section of the course that precedes it. This includes the second exam that, although held during the final exam period, is not cumulative. Each exam is worth 30% of your grade.

**FAILURE TO APPEAR AT AN EXAM WITHOUT LETTING ME KNOW IN ADVANCE, WILL GET YOU AN F ON THAT EXAM.** If you must miss an exam, you will have until I hand back the graded exams to make it up. This is usually about a week. If this becomes necessary, please see me as soon as possible to arrange a time.

There is also a paper for this course. The paper topic is on the following page; it asks you to analyze a piece of art from an anthropological perspective. **THE PAPER IS DUE APRIL 12 IN CLASS.** The paper is worth 30% of your grade. **YOU MAY ONLY SUBMIT PAPERS BY E-MAIL IF YOU HAVE MADE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS WITH ME TO DO SO.** I am not a printing service. Last minute submissions by e-mail without such arrangements will not be accepted.

You will have noticed that there is an additional 10% unaccounted for. I am reserving this for class participation. This class will be much more interesting if you participate in discussions, and the 10% is designed to provide some motivation to do so. It will not be difficult to earn your 10%-- just say something moderately relevant 4-5 times during the semester, and that will be sufficient.

My office has not yet been established, but I will let you know when I find out. You can always reach me at 4-6075, which is the anthropology department, and they will also know where I am on any given day. You can also reach me by e-mail at [sjohnsto@gwu.edu](mailto:sjohnsto@gwu.edu). I will be available in my office (wherever it may be!) on Wednesday 1-3 and Friday 11-12:30, if you need to see me. I am only on campus those two days, but I check my email frequently.

## **Paper Assignment**

Since this course is about the anthropological analysis of art, the paper asks you to do one. Select any object and analyze it from an anthropological perspective. The object can be from anywhere—a museum, an outdoor public space, your living room—or any time (though you might find it trickier to do this for archaeological objects). I am, for the purpose of this paper, requiring you to analyze an **OBJECT**—I know, art isn't limited to objects, but it's more straightforward in terms of analysis and paper writing. You should provide a description of the object (photos and/or drawings are welcome, but are neither necessary nor a substitution for verbal description) and then consider it in its cultural context. Some of the questions you might consider:

-- Is it art in the conventional sense, and if it isn't, why is it appropriate for this paper?

- Who made it and why?
- What does it “mean”, to you, to others, to experts, to the public in general? Does it have multiple meanings for different people?
- Where does the meaning lie—in its form, in its style, in its location, in its history, in all of these?
- How does its cultural context affect its meaning?
- What affect does its setting have on its interpretation? Would it “mean” the same thing if it was located elsewhere?
- What does it tell us about the culture and people who made it?

This is an anthropology class, so this should be an anthropological analysis. If you are unsure of what that is, please come and see me.

You will have to do some research for this paper, in order to situate the object in its cultural context. The amount of research will depend on the object and the availability of information. Some portion of this paper will be your own views, but you should back these up in some way with additional sources. Internet sources are acceptable as long as they are legitimate websites. If you are uncertain about what constitutes “legitimate” in the cyber world, send me the URL and I’ll let you know.

The paper should be 7-10 pages long, so that should give you some idea about how much research will be needed. Please remember—I have been using computers for longer than most of you have been alive. I know all about large type faces and large margins. Do give me some credit for intelligence.

You should clear your topic with me sometime before you present it. I want to be sure that you will be able to find out enough information to do the paper, and I can also point you towards useful sources if needed.

If you want to discuss any details about this paper with me, please come to my office hours or email me. Also, I would be happy to read a draft version of your paper, and make comments on it before you turn the final version in. Draft papers may be emailed to me. **If you want me to read a draft, please give it to me no later than ten days before the paper is due.**

**THE PAPER IS DUE APRIL 12, IN CLASS!!!!**