

AH374 Australian Art and Architecture

Syllabus

Instructor Name: Peter Barnes

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Contact Hours: 40

Course Duration: 7 weeks in total

Course Credits: 4

Course Description

The course provides an introduction to the history of art and architectural practice in Australia.

Australia is home to the world's oldest continuing art tradition (indigenous Australian art) and one of the youngest national art traditions (encompassing Colonial art, modern art and contemporary art - the art of today).

This rich and diverse history is full of fascinating characters and hard won aesthetic achievements. The lecture series is structured to introduce a number of key artists and their work, to place them in a historical context and to consider a range of themes (landscape, urbanism, abstraction, realism, the noble savage, modernism, etc.) and issues (gender, power, freedom, identity, sexuality, autonomy, place etc.) prompted by the work. The history of art in Australia is influenced by international developments; the course will situate class content in an international setting.

Course Objectives

On completion of this course students will have experienced through field trips, research and readings, presentations and written papers the various movements (including Indigenous Art) of Australian Art and Architecture. Students will be conversant with the evolution of Australian traditions, particularly those which began with movements informed by international styles and philosophies. The concept of Australian Art and Architecture as an expression of Australian Identity will be a centrepiece to the course.

Question-driven Course Description

1. Was art practice in Australia during the colonial period overdetermined by its European context?
2. How were Australian artists able to establish unique modes of practice during the modern period?
3. What are the options for a unique contemporary Australian art in the period of global culture?

Hub Learning Outcomes

BU Hub Units: 2

1. Philosophical, Aesthetic, and Historical Interpretation

Aesthetic Exploration (AEX)

Aesthetic Outcome 1

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge and appreciation of notable works of art, including the cultural contexts in which those works were created, and be able to identify their ongoing significance and relevance. AH374 students have many opportunities to experience works of art in person during course field trips to major Australian galleries and museums. This provides the opportunity to develop primary research skills specific to the analysis of works of art.

Aesthetic Outcome 2

2. Students will demonstrate the reasoning skills and vocabulary necessary to interpret works of art. In AH374 each student assessment event meets these criteria and in-class work and collaborative exercises hone these skills and develop the critical vocabulary. We explore and utilize art and architectural terms and discuss the appropriate use for terms such as surface, texture, picture plane, abstraction, 'en plein air', arbitrary, motivated, aesthetic, sublime, everyday, autonomy, orientation, siting, environmental concerns and such. Interpretation is both descriptive and analytical. Class sessions will demonstrate the use of these analytical skills and of language and medium- specific terms in ways that students can employ in their own written work and their presentations

Aesthetic Outcome 3

3. Students will produce evaluative, analytical works that demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics – such as genres, modes, styles, and cultural history – of at least one artistic medium.^[1]To fulfill the requirements of the course students conduct a 'close reading' of a specific work of art using a range of formal approaches and technical terms specific to the medium (painting, photography, etching etc.) and genre (still-life, landscape, portrait). Students demonstrate mastery of a range of terms and concepts that provide the foundation for encounters with a wide range of aesthetic constructs.

2. Diversity, Civic Engagement, and Global Citizenship

Global Citizenship and Intercultural Literacy (GCI)

Global Outcome

At the completion of this course, a student will learn how dominant cultural concepts such as 'European vision' and the 'noble savage' impacted on aesthetic production and reception during the Australian colonial period and shaped relations between Indigenous and settler communities. AH 374 early classes guide the students to an understanding of the highly differentiated art cultures of the Indigenous peoples and the Europeans.

The early modern period in Australian coincides with the rise of a Nationalist discourse and we examine the role of artists in shaping the character of the nascent Australian culture. Students will witness the processes through which artists of the Heidelberg School (1888 to 1895) and the Symbolist movement (1895 – 1905) utilized developments in European art practice to produce novel solutions to local cultural developments. In particular, the prominent role of female artists in Australia is contrasted with the position of female artists in European and North American art cultures during this period.

As we move to the art of the postwar period, students examine the relationship between Australia and the US, in the context of historical and contemporary events. Students use their detailed understanding from these classes and field trips to interrogate their knowledge of their own culture and reflect on differences in national cultures and sensibilities. At the completion of this course, a student will have achieved a sense of orientation into the wider Australian art and architecture culture, and the social, economic and political context in which they are situated.

Program Learning Outcomes

The student will “demonstrate knowledge of Australian culture and society with respect to a combination of the following areas: Australian politics, industry, science and technology, economics, social policy, environmental policy, literature and the arts, film, marketing, advertising, and mass media” ^[L]_[SEP] This course meets the program outcomes by revealing Australian culture and society through the nation's art and architecture. Students learn about the history and identity of the country (both the ancient and the evolving modern) against the backdrop of place, in particular. Australia, as a nation island continent, which evolved differently in landscape, flora and fauna from elsewhere in the world. This is reflected in the art of the country in both its ancient and contemporary movements. Thus the learning objectives articulate with the sense of identity central to the outcomes of the course.

Instructional Format, Course Pedagogy, and Approach to Learning

The course combines in-class lectures employing a variety of media with group discussions and a number of field trips. The aim is to provide students with a general understanding of a series of major achievements in Australian art and its social and geographic context. Students should also gain the skills and confidence to observe, describe and discuss works of art.

Books and Other Course Materials

LIST OF RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Ian Burn, *Dialogue*, (Allen and Unwin, Sydney), 1991

Peter John Cantrill and Philip Thalys, *Public Sydney* (Historic Houses Trust of NSW, Sydney) 2013

Wally Caruana, *Aboriginal Art*, (Thames and Hudson, Melbourne), 1993

Betty Churcher, *The Art of War* (The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne), 2005

MCA Video Logic (Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney), 2008

Anna Clark, *Making Art History*, (Vintage, Melbourne), 2022

Paul McGillick, *Sydney Architecture*, (Pesaro Publishing, Sydney), 2005

Howard Morphy, *Aboriginal Art*, (London, Phaidon), 1998

Andrew Sayers, *New Worlds from Old: 19th Century Australian and American Landscapes*, (National Gallery of Australia, Canberra), 1998

Bernard Smith, Terry Smith and C. R. Heathcote, *Australian Painting: 1788-2000*, (Oxford University Press), Melbourne, 2000

Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, (Oxford University Press, 1969)

The Cambridge Companion to Australian Art, (Cambridge University Press, Melbourne), 2011

The 5th Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, (Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane) 2006

Institutions:

Visit Art Gallery of New South Wales and AGNSW Library.

Visit Museum of Contemporary Art.

Visit State Library of NSW (colonial art collection).

Visit MAAS/Powerhouse Museum (decorative art, fashion, design collection).

Visit Museum of Sydney (colonial art and first contact exhibitions).

Visit Sydney's vibrant contemporary art gallery scene.

Visit BUSC Library collection of art and architecture titles.

Internet:

See BUSC Library for access to significant electronic database collection.

Visit the specialist fine art library at the University of Sydney in person or online at

http://sydney.edu.au/arts/arts/power/research_library/index.shtml

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC): www.abc.net.au/iview

Special Broadcasting Service (SBS): www.sbs.com.au

The Conversation www.theconversation.edu.au

The City of Sydney has an excellent Library network (with branches near BU) and so students are encouraged the use that network.

The above list should be considered by no means exhaustive and merely represents a cross-section of available material. Students are encouraged to extend their research and reading range to meet the needs of their own topics of exploration.

Courseware

Readings and other materials will be posted on Blackboard at learn.bu.edu

Assignments and Grading

Presentation

Student will make a 10-minute presentation on the following topic. Each presentation will be followed by a short class discussion. Please email me a one-page *point-form* summary of your presentation by 5.00pm on the Day prior to your presentation.

Short Essay – 1000 words

The essay is due through the BUSC Library with the appropriate cover sheet. Word count may vary by 10%.

Major Essay – 2000 words

The essay is due through the BUSC Library with the appropriate cover sheet. Word count may vary by 10%.

Final Grades

Assessment Weighting and due date

Successfully completing the course involves the fulfillment of four tasks:

- i. Discussion Board Participation — 5%
- ii. Presentation, 15 minutes — 10%
- ii. Short papers, 1000 words — 20%
- iv. Longer Essay, 2000 words — 40%
- v. Exam (open notes) — 25%

Assessment Descriptions

Presentation

Student will make a 10-minute presentation on the following topic. Each presentation will be followed by a short class discussion. Please email me a one-page *point-form* summary of your presentation by 5.00pm on the Day prior to your presentation.

Topic

Each group member is to select and discuss a work of art viewed during our visit to the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Discuss the works attributes (scale, colour, shape, texture, focus, orientation, composition, framing, sound etc) and place it in its historical context. Identify a concept that could be used to speculate on the works possible meaning or significance.

Short Essay – 1000 words

Topic

Select an Australian artist from the list provide in class. Discuss the artists journey to becoming an artist, their early exposure to art (if any), their training and professional success. Give consideration to the critical reception of the work during the artist's lifetime and the status the work has today.

Major Essay – 2000 words

You must conduct research beyond the set course reading material, combining academic research with first hand observations of the works being discussed. Accurate referencing and a bibliography are compulsory. The paper must focus on the work of Australian artists.

Definitions

Colonial Art 1770 to 1880

Modern Art 1880 to 1980

Contemporary Art 1980 to today

Topics

- A. Compare an artwork by a female artist of the modern period with that of a contemporary female artist. Describe each work and reflect on the socio/cultural conditions in which the modern example was formed and analyse the forces and desires that give shape to the contemporary example you have selected.
- B. Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne exemplify radically different urban planning outcomes. Describe the major features of each city's urban context, the ideas that informed them and the issues that face them at the start of the 21st century.
- C. Select a photograph from the modern period and compare it with a photograph by a contemporary artist. Describe each work and reflect on the social/technological conditions in which the modern example was formed and analyse the forces and desires that give shape to the contemporary example you have selected. When selecting your works, ensure there is some form of shared theme, subject matter or stylistic concern.
- D. Is there such a thing as an Australian style of architecture (architecture, interior, landscape, fashion, object, design)? Describe this with reference to the work of a colonial or modern practitioner and compare this with the work of a contemporary practitioner working in the same field. (It is possible to discuss works not personally encountered, but you must first discuss your examples with the course coordinator)
- E. During the modern period, progressive Australian painters split into two groups, the Antipodeans (who championed a figurative approach to modernism) and the abstractionists (who argued that non-figurative art was the only true form of realism). Select a key work from each movement and discuss the arguments used to support it. What role did Sydney / Melbourne rivalry have in this positioning?
- F. Contrast the work of a contemporary urban aboriginal artist with the work of an aboriginal artist working in a rural community setting. Describe each work and reflect on the socio/cultural conditions in which the rural example was formed and analyse the forces and desires that give shape to the urban example you have selected.
- G. The eminent art historian Bernard Smith described the colonial generation of Australian artists' approach to their subject as overly influenced or filtered by their "European vision." What did Smith mean by this term? How does this situation compare to the Nationalist discourse surrounding the work of the Heidelberg painters. Discuss with reference to four works you have viewed at the AGNSW or the NGA.

Participation

The course aims to create an open dialogue on the themes and concerns of the unit. Art is a fascinating human pursuit that opens a world of possibilities. So don't be shy, ask questions, share your experience and perspective, we will all be the richer for it.

There are numerous field trips to this unit, which involve walking as a group. It is essential that you keep up with the group and your instructor. If you lag behind you may miss vital information relevant to the examination and this won't be repeated. It may also mean you have to find your own way back to the building as the group will not wait for late comers. This could mean you will be recorded as missing class and suffer grade penalties.

There is a course discussion board that all students are expected to participate in. This is also the primary forum for communication between lecture staff and students outside of the class situation. Please enjoy active participation by commenting and asking questions that extend the discussions and provide support for one another.

Resources:

Research Materials and Resources

- See the AH374 Blackboard page for a full list of recommended texts
- Visit BUSC Library collection of art and architecture titles
- See BUSC Library for access to significant electronic database collection.
Visit the specialist fine art library at the University of Sydney
http://sydney.edu.au/arts/arts/power/research_library/index.shtml
- Visit Art Gallery of New South Wales and AGNSW Library
- Visit Museum of Contemporary Art
- Visit State Library of NSW (colonial art collection)
- Visit MAAS/Powerhouse Museum (decorative art, fashion, design collection)
- Visit Museum of Sydney (colonial art and first contact exhibitions)
- Visit Sydney's vibrant contemporary art gallery scene

Community of Learning: Class and University Policies

Course Matters

Attendance at all classes is mandatory.

Any absence for medical reasons or other misadventure must be supported by a medical certificate or a letter offering a satisfactory explanation. Strict penalties apply, on a pro rata basis, for any unapproved absence. Missing one class without reason would attract as much as a 10% penalty.

Statement on Plagiarism

All students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be "... expulsion from the program or the University or such other

penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the Dean”.

Late Work

In general, there will be no extensions granted for any coursework. The exception is where there are clear and acceptable reasons for late submission. In this case a written statement outlining any serious illness or misadventure together with supporting documentation (e.g. medical certificates) must be provided or a strict penalty of 5% per day will apply.

Outline of Class Meetings: Date, Topic, Readings Due, Assignments Due

Time-table

Week 1: Monday 10.00AM - 2:00PM ; Thursday 6:30PM - 8:30PM

Week 2: Monday 10.00AM - 2:00PM ; Thursday 6:30PM - 8:30PM

Week 3: Monday 10:00AM - 2:00PM ; Thursday 6:30PM - 8:30PM

Week 4: Canberra Field Trip ; Thursday 6:30PM - 8:30PM

Week 5: Monday 10:00AM - 2:00PM ; Thursday 6:30PM - 8:30PM

Week 6: Monday – Field Trip ; Thursday 6:30PM - 8:30PM

Week 7: Monday 10:00AM - 2:00PM ; Thursday 6:30PM - 8:30PM

Course Outline

** Monday classes will include a gallery visit or a short break*

Week 1

Introduction to Course

Introduction to Topic

a. Artists – The Port Jackson Painter, Joseph Lycett, Tommy McCrae, John Glover, Augustus Earle, Sydney Parkinson, Conrad Martens

b. Readings – both readers are important short texts. It is compulsory to read them. They will be discussed in class and you will need to be prepared to contribute your thoughts and opinions.

i) Bernard Smith, 'Introduction' from *European Vision and the South Pacific 1768-1850: A Study in the History of Art and Ideas*, (Oxford University Press, Melbourne), 1960

ii) Jeanette Hoorn, 'Joseph Lycett: Exposing the Lie of Terra Nullius', *Art & Australia*, Vol.31, No. 1, 1993

23rd Biennale of Sydney – Introduction to contemporary art practice.

Colonial Art and Architecture

a. Artists - Joseph Lycett, John Glover, Augustus Earle, Sydney Parkinson, Conrad Martens, W.S. Blake, John Eyre, William Westall, George Stubbs.

b. Themes – vision and representation, science, idealism, realism, romanticism, imperialism, landscape, noble savage

c. Reading

i) Andrew Sayers, *The Shaping of Australian Landscape Painting*, in

New Worlds from Old: 19th Century Australian and American Landscapes, (National Gallery of Australia, Canberra), 1998

Assignments

- **Presentation –Options, Approaches, Expectations**
- **Short Essay – Topic – Expectations – Grading**
- **Major Essay – Topics – Expectations – Grading**

Week 2

Modernism

a. Artists - Sidney Nolan, Arthur Boyd, Margaret Preston, Clarice Cliff, Albert Tucker, William Dobell, Russell Drysdall, John Brack, Charles Blackman, Roy de Maistre, Thea Proctor, Grace Cossington-Smith, Ralph Balson, Grace Crowley

b. Themes – abstraction, modernity, realism, truth, humanism, romanticism, sexuality, spirituality, freedom, autonomy, commitment, feminism

c. Reading

i) Terry Smith, 'What was Australian Modernism?' in *Transformations in Australian Art: The Twentieth Century – Modernism and Aboriginality* (Craftsman House, Sydney), 2002

Discussion of first essay assignment.

Please bring your 1 page outline to class for your short essay. Must be in point-form with 10 points.

Week 3

Aboriginal Art

a. Artists – Unknown rock artists, Najombolmi (Barramundi Charlie), Djawida, Les Mirrikkuriya, Albert Namatjira, Clifford Possum, Tim Leura Tjapaltjarri, Rover Thomas, Robert Campbell junior, Michael Riley, Richard Bell, Danie Mellor, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Trevor "Turbo" Brown, Dorothy Napangardi, Tracey Moffat, Jonathan Jones

b. Themes – land, community, dispossession, power, dreamtime, landscape, spirituality, humor, sexuality, assimilation, land rights, art market

c. Reading i) Howard Morphy, 'Introduction', in *Aboriginal Art*, (London, Phaidon), 1998

Visit Art Gallery of NSW – Research your presentation topic

Heidelberg School and Early Modernism including

Descriptive Attributes, Context and Theoretical Concepts

a. Artists – Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton, Fredrick McCubbin, Charles Conder

b. Themes – nationalism – naturalism, realism, impressionism, influence, imperialism

c. Reading

i) Ian Burn, 'Beating Around the Bush: The landscapes of the Heidelberg School' in *Dialogue*, (Allen and Unwin, Sydney), 1991

War and Art

a. Artists – George Lambert, Sidney Nolan, George Gittoes, Wendy Sharpe, Ben

Quilty

b. Themes – objectivity, subjectivity, truth, globalism

c. Reading

I) Betty Churcher, 'The Birth of a Legend', *The Art of War* (The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne), 2005

Week 4

Canberra Field Trip:

- Bus departs BU Sydney Central at 7:30am. *
- Be on the bus no later than 7:15am.
- Bus returns to Sydney at 8:00pm.

**if you miss this field trip you will have to complete a 2000 word make up essay in addition to any other penalty outline below.*

Thursday

Student Presentations

Week 5

Australian Architecture

a. Architects – Francis Greenway, John Verge, Edmund Blacket, James Barnet, Glenn Murcutt, Harry Seidler, Robin Boyd, Peter Stutchbury, Ashton Raggatt Mcdougall,

b. Themes – identity, context, environment, landscape, place, shock, modernity, tradition, materiality, sustainability.

c. Reading – Paul McGillick, selection from *Sydney Architecture*, (Pesaro Publishing, Sydney), 2005

Visit MAAS – Collection of contemporary Australian fashion and design.

Photography and Video

a. Artists – Max Dupain, Harold Cazneaux, Olive Cotton, David Moore, Tracey Moffat, Michael Riley, Darren Sylvester, Anne Zahalka, Bill Henson, Carol Jerrems

b. Themes – Representation, documentary, subjectivity, objectivity, sexuality, otherness,

c. Reading i) Bernice Murphy, 'Australian Video Art since the 1980s', *Video Logic* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney), 2008

Final discussion of Major Essay topics

Please bring your 1 page outline to class for Major Essay. Must be in point with 10 points.

Week 6

Architecture Field Trip

View and discuss a selection of domestic and commercial buildings in central Sydney. Students will analyse formal, material and aesthetic developments across colonial, modern and contemporary period buildings and urban spaces.

Urbanism in Sydney / Canberra / Melbourne

a. Planners – Arthur Phillip, Lachlan Macquarie, John Bradfield, Walter Burley Griffin, James Hoddle, Craig Alchin,

b. Themes – the planned city, the grid, fine grain, topography, pragmatism.

c. Reading

i) Peter John Cantrill, 'Forming Sydney' in *Public Sydney* (Historic Houses Trust of NSW, Sydney) 2013

ii) Robert Freestone, 'The Americanization of Australian Planning', *Journal of Planning History*, August 2004 vol. 3 no. 3: pp. 187-214

iii) 'How Melbourne Found its Laneways: An interview with Craig Allchin' *Broadsheet*, 2014, accessed url 15 January 2015 <http://www.broadsheet.com.au/melbourne/art-and-design/article/melbourne-laneways-bars-cafes-restaurants-six-degrees#gallery-11>

iv) Craig Allchin, *Fine Grain Review – Recommendations For A Lively And Engaging City Centre*, (City of Sydney, Sydney) 2012

Week 7

Art Today

a. Artists – Brooke Andrew, Patricia Piccinini, Callum Morton, Dale Frank, Daniel Crooks, Shaun Gladwell, Hany Armanious, Jenny Watson, Fiona Hall, Adam Cullen, James Angus

b. Themes – globalism, regionalism, identity, transnationalism, post-medium, tradition, post-art, death

c. Reading

i) Anthony Gardner, 'Post-Provincial, Still Peripheral: Australian Art on the Global Stage 1980-2009' in *The Cambridge Companion to Australian Art*, (Cambridge University Press, Melbourne), 2011

Visit MCA – Solo Exhibitions and Permanent Collection of Contemporary Art

Australian Art and the Asia Pacific Region

a. Artists – Ai Weiwei, Michael Stevenson, Colin McCahon, Sangeeta Sandrasegar, Lindy Lee, Qin Ga, John Young, Guan Wei, Shigeyuki Kihara

b. Themes – regionalism, globalism, post-colonialism, activism, gender, sexuality, immigration, transnationalism

c. Reading

i) Ross Gibson, 'Aesthetic Politics', *The 5th Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*, (Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane) 2006.

ReCap of course material

Week 8

Examination

Field Trips

23rd Biennale of Sydney

View key exemplary works by a range of contemporary artists.

Art Gallery of NSW Collection

Students to conduct primary research at AGNSW on presentation subjects.

National Gallery of Australia - Canberra

View key works from the permanent collection of the NGA, including inaugural exhibition in the new NGA Contemporary that features a selection of significant works from the National Gallery of Australia's collection of 21st century Australian art.

National Portrait Gallery of Australia - Canberra

View works from the permanent collection.

Australian War Memorial - Canberra

View key works of Australian War Memorial collection and official war artist program.

MAAS - Sydney (Ultimo)

View collection of Australian fashion and design objects.

Architecture Field Trip - Sydney CBD

Visit and discuss a range of domestic and commercial buildings in central Sydney. Students will analyse formal, material and aesthetic developments across colonial, modern and contemporary period buildings and urban spaces.

Museum of Contemporary Art - Sydney CBD

View the exhibition Vivienne Binns in addition to the MCA permanent collection of Contemporary Art.