

Nineteenth-Century Art: Critical Global Histories

Jacob Henry Leveton



Richard Horwood, *Map of London*, 1791.



Otobong Nkanga, *Limits of Mapping*, 2010.

This course concerns the visual culture, art, architecture, and urbanism of the nineteenth century. Our emphasis will be on three cities: Paris, France; London, England; and Lagos, Nigeria. The central artistic practices studied in the course are those of Jacques-Louis David and Gustave Courbet in Paris; William Blake in London; and Olowe of Ise and William Cole in Lagos. Modes and tactics of aesthetic resistance to the reorganization of urban spaces along the axes of “Global North” cities London and Paris will serve as a principle focus, as well as engagement with Lagos as a “Global South” capital in West Africa. Core themes include the emergence of public art, art of the state, radical artistic production, and new image technologies. The course will also examine possibilities of turning the artistic modes and languages of a colonizer against the oppressor in an Anglophone West African context. A unique feature of the course will be precisely its global focus, which will allow students to challenge Eurocentric constructions of modernism in both current coursework and future engagement.

Course Requirements:

- Attend all lectures (a sign-in sheet will be circulated)
- Attend and participate in weekly discussion sections
- Complete all reading/viewing assignments
- Maintain Visual Analysis Journal
- Write 5 One-Page Short Essays
- Final Examination

Grading:

- 15% Lecture Attendance
- 15% Active Participation in Discussion
- 20% Critical Art Journal
- 20% Short Essays [Best 4 counted towards final grade]
- 20% Final Examination

Assignments explained:

1. Attendance and participation: the shared success of this course depends on all our engagement with materials as well as our physical and mental presence in the classroom. As a result, I require attendance *and* participation in both lecture and discussion sections. While the primary lectures will be led by myself, and the discussion sections will be led by your teaching assistant, you will be expected to offer comments and ask questions at both. Last, artists often desire that their work contribute to the pursuit of more equitable, committed, and deeper ways of being in the world. An aspect of participating in this course, in the spirit of art of the nineteenth century, includes that you take up one new way of bettering the collegiate and city environment. This can be formal, through some kind of volunteerism, or informal, e.g. my commitment as an ecological art historian to cleaning trash from the Lakeside Trail while jogging.

2. Visual Analysis Journal: Art frequently perplexes. Engaging it in a way that reveals insights about relations in the world demands that we develop an active and critical imagination. I have designed this sustained assignment to benefit you in these regards. Each week, you will annotate and explicate three artworks we will discuss in lecture and section. While explication is more frequently mobilized as an analytic tool in English courses than in Art History ones, we will deploy, develop, and refine it too for the pursuit of the interpretation of visual art. Either digitally, or by paper printout and with a pen, you will diagram the key components of select works and write a one-sentence summary of what you find the artwork to be about or express.

3. Short Essays: Because the objects of study in Art History are visual, and the way we study them is by writing, Art History courses offer extraordinary opportunities to expand your intellectual capacities and horizons by working both visually *and* verbally. In these essays, you will choose one artwork to which you've devoted additional time in the Critical Art Journal. In an essay that can be no longer than 1 page, develop a thesis about what the artwork expresses. Then, support your argument utilizing your visual analysis of the artwork with your annotations as the concrete evidence that supports your thesis. *The first essay, which I will consider "diagnostic," and utilize to identify areas for improvement over the course of the term, will be due at the conclusion of Week Two.* The remaining four can be submitted to your teaching assistant any week of the quarter. You may submit a maximum of two short essays in a single week.

4. Final Examination: The course will culminate in a final examination taking the form of an in-class essay, for which you may prepare a 1-page outline. The prompts will be arrived at collaboratively during the “Final Review” class meeting. Together, we will decide what constituted the primary driving questions that were most compelling that linked our study of the nineteenth century. You will have the opportunity to answer one.

Week 1: Introductions

Lecture: “Introduction: Social-Critical Art History, The Means of Art History, and How to Interpret an Artwork”

Readings:

- Stephen F. Eisenman, “Introduction: Critical Art and History” in *Nineteenth Century Art: A Critical History* (2011)
- John Berger, “Seeing comes before words” in *Ways of Seeing* (1972)
- Patricia Mainardi, “Building the Temple of Industry’ in *Art and Politics of the Second Empire*” (1987)

Lecture: “‘Reading’ Architecture and Urbanism”

- Eyal Weizman, “What is Forensic Architecture?” (2017)

****Download Course PowerPoint from Blackboard featuring all images to be discussed in lectures over the quarter.**

Week 2: Paris during the French Revolution

Lecture: “From the *Ancien Regime* to the Revolution Atelier”

Readings:

- Stephen F. Eisenman, “Patriotism and Virtue: David to the Young Ingres,” *Nineteenth-Century Art: A Critical History* (2011)
- Thomas Crow, selections from *Emulation: Making Artists for Revolutionary France* (1995)

Lecture: “Revolutionary Festivals in Paris”

Reading:

- Maria Ozouf, selections from *Festivals and the French Revolution* (1988)
- Rolf Reichardt and Hubertus Kohle, “Staging the Revolution” in *Visualizing the Revolution: Politics and Pictorial Arts in Late Eighteenth-Century France* (2008)

****Note: First Short Essay Due by E-Mail to Teaching Assistant, Friday, 5PM**

Week 3: Art in Napoleon France

Lecture: “French Artistic Production under an Authoritarian Regime”

Reading:

- Ingres, selections from *Art in Theory, 1648-1848*

Lecture: “Imperial Circulation, Art, & the Adornment of Parisian Urban Space”

Reading:

- Todd Porterfield, selection from *The Allure of Empire: Art in the Service of French Imperialism, 1798-1836* (1998)

Week 4: London during the Industrial Revolution

Lecture: “Blake’s ‘Dark Satanic Mills’ and Albion Mill”

Readings:

- Brian Lukacher, “Blake and his Contemporaries” in *Nineteenth Century Art: A Critical History* (2011)
- Saree Makdisi, selections from *William Blake and the Impossible History of the 1790s* (2003); *Reading William Blake* (2015)
- William Blake, “London”; “The Chimney Sweeper”; “The Voice of the Ancient Bard” in *Songs of Experience* (1794)
- Mary Robinson, “London’s Summer Morning” (1806)

Lecture: “Architecture on the Edge of Industrial Revolution”

- Selections from Edgar Jones, *Industrial Architecture in Britain, 1750-1939* (1985)

Week 5: London during the Napoleonic Wars

Lecture: “Architectures of the British War Industry”

Lecture: “Blake’s *Milton A Poem*: Anti-Classicism in an Anti-War Illuminated Book”

Reading:

- William Blake, *Milton: A Poem in 2 Books* (c. 1804-1811); visit <http://www.blakearchive.org/> and view images of the artwork

Week 6: Lagos and Urbanization in the Global South

Lecture: “The Complexities of Multiethnic Nigeria and the Challenge to Canonical Nineteenth-Century Histories”

Readings:

- Selections from Richard Borne, *Nigeria: A New History of a Turbulent Century* (2015)

Lecture: “Lagos: Contested Urbanization in West Africa”

Readings:

- Agboola Ashake Onikoyi, *The History of Lagos* (1975)
- Selections from Richard Borne, *Nigeria: A New History of a Turbulent Century* (2015)

Week 7: Resisting the Violences and Velocities of European Modernity

Lecture: “Art and Literature in 19th-Century Lagos: the Challenge to English Colonialism”

- Selections from the poetry of William Cole (1863)
- Kirstin Mann, “The Changing Meaning of Land in the Urban Economy and Culture” in *Slavery and the Birth of an African City, Lagos 1760-1900* (2007)

Lecture: “The Sculptural Works of Olowe of Ise”

Week 8: Paris in the Years of Haussmannization

Lecture: “The City and Security: Haussmannization”

Readings:

- David Van Zanten, “Paris Space: What Might have Constituted Haussmannization” (2010)

Lecture: “Gustave Courbet and the Radical Arts of Revolt”

Readings:

- Linda Nochlin, selections from *Courbet* (2006)
- T.J. Clark, selections from *Image of the People* and *Absolute Bourgeois* (1973)

**Please note: the second lecture will conclude 20mins early for students to complete a brief evaluation of the course trajectory to date and to allow for suggestions for what remains of the quarter.

Week 9: Modernity/Modernism in France

Lecture: "Paris and the Painting of Modern Life"

Readings:

- T.J. Clark, selections from *The Painting of Modern Life* (1999)

Lecture: "Impressionism's Critical Ecology on the Edge of the City"

Readings:

- Stephen F. Eisenman, ed., selections from *The Ecology of Impressionism* (2010)

Week 10: Final Review

No Lecture: Class time devoted to review for final examination and developing in-class essay questions.

Final Examination: [Location/Time]