

ARTH 480: Race and European Art

Dr. Letha Ch'ien

OLLI Spring 2022

"Race transforms the act of the perpetrator into a characteristic of the target. Race transforms one person's action into another person's being." - Barbara J. Fields

Course Description

This course recognizes traditional art history curricula grew out of nineteenth-century nationalist movements steeped in racial ideologies. Discussions of style and competing analytical categories dropped explicit discussion of race without abandoning racial ideological structures. We will consider the categories of 'race' and 'European art' together both historically in their periods of creation and subsequently in our own time by examining the art historical canon critically by analyzing artwork traditionally included and artwork traditionally excluded from the canon.

Like a survey course, this class proceeds roughly chronologically following the pattern of a traditional art history survey course. In addition to studying often neglected works of art and neglected aspects of them, we will foreground the ongoing effect of the inherited legacies of our art and history of art throughout.

January 24: Class 1 Racecraft and History: Art Historical Beginnings with Antiquity

Further reading: • Daniel Larkin, "How the Louvre Codified Essentialism in Art History," *Hyperallergic* March 15, 2021 <https://hyperallergic.com/621631/how-the-louvre-codified-essentialism-in-art-history/> • Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* (2012) • Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People* (2010) • Sarah E. Bond, "Why We Need to Start Seeing the Classical World in Color," *Hyperallergic* June 7, 2017 <https://hyperallergic.com/383776/why-we-need-to-start-seeing-the-classical-world-in-color/> • Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, (2006)

January 31: Class 2 Medieval Europe

Further reading: • Asa Simon Mittman, "Are the 'monstrous races' races?" *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies* (2015): 36-51. • The 'Geto at San Hieronimo', 1516. From a Venetian Senate decree 29 March 1516. • Kalmar, Ivan Davison, "Jesus Did Not Wear a Turban: Orientalism, the Jews, and Christian Art" in *Orientalism and the Jews*. Edited by Ivan Davison Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar. London: University Press of New England, 2005. 3-31.

February 7: Class 3 Early Modern Representations of Muslims & Turks; European Imaginations of the Americas

Further reading: • Amanda Wunder, "Western Travelers, Eastern Antiquities, and the Image of the Turk in Early Modern Europe" *Journal of Early Modern History* 7.1-2 (2003): 89-119 • Bronwen Wilson, "Reflecting on the Turk in late sixteenth-century Venetian portrait books," *Word & Image* 19.1-2, (2012): 38-58. • Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World*, Cambridge University Press, 2001. • Lia Markey, *Imagining the Americas in Medici Florence*, 2015.

February 14: Class 4 Early Modern Representations of Blackness

Further reading: • Paul Kaplan, “Black Turks: Venetian artists and perceptions of Ottoman ethnicity” in *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye, 1450-1750: Visual Imagery before Orientalism* edited by James G. Harper. Routledge: 41-66. • Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*, 1996. • Mark Rosen, “Pietro Tacca’s “Quattro Mori” and the Conditions of Slavery in Early Seicento Tuscany, *The Art Bulletin*, 97.1 (2015): 34-57.

February 28: Class 5 Asians to Orientalism / 19th c. Figurations of Blackness

Further reading: • Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, *Extremities: Painting Empire in Post-Revolutionary France*. London, Yale University Press, 2002. • Benjamin Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe’s Early Modern World* (2015) • Rahul Sapra, *The Limits of Orientalism: Seventeenth-Century Representations of India* (2011) • Ed. Michael North, *Artistic and Cultural Exchanges Between Europe and Asia, 1400-1900* (2010)

March 7: Class 6 Contemporary Responses

Further reading: • Caroline Ellen Liou “Looking at Kehinde Wiley and Thomas Gainsborough Side by Side” *Hyperallergic* October 11, 2021 <https://hyperallergic.com/682926/looking-at-kehinde-wiley-and-thomas-gainsborough-side-by-side/>

“But race is the child of racism, not the father.”

- Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*