

# Painting as Power: The Politics of Visual Culture in the Early Modern Spanish Empire

History 465      Spring 2010  
Mon & Wed 2-3:15      LA1 309

**Dr. Emily Berquist**

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Office Hours: Monday 4-5, Wednesday 9:30-10:30  
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“A picture is not thought out and settled beforehand. While it is being done it changes as one’s thoughts change. And when it is finished, it still goes on changing, according to the state of mind of whoever is looking at it. A picture lives a life like a living creature, undergoing the changes imposed on us by our life from day to day. This is natural enough, as the picture lives only through the man who is looking at it.”  
- Pablo Picasso, 1935



*The Innocent Eye Test.* Mark Tansey, 1981. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.

**Course Description:** While as students of the liberal arts we are accustomed to seeing paintings as compositions, metaphors, or expressions of feelings, we can also use them to ask about the politics behind the images, buildings, clothing, and maps that make up the visual culture of a certain time and place. In the early modern age, visual culture sources were the main transmitters of key information: clothes, for instance told about the wearers’ racial status, and maps represented not only the territory they showed but how their creators envisioned their own world post-contact. In an era with fewer material goods available for purchase and with a much smaller and slower flow of information about different parts of the world, visual culture was key to conveying political, social, and cultural data. Furthermore, visual documentation was believed to be more accurate and useful in the early modern world because it was thought to be more objective.

We will ask political, social, and cultural questions of these visual and material sources in order to learn about their importance in the early modern Hispanic world. This course guides students through learning how to read, interpret, and criticize the visual (paintings, architecture, clothing, illustrations) as historical documentation. In so doing, we will learn to think more critically about the visual lexicons of the past as well as those that surround us today. The course is designed as an upper-division course with lectures on Monday and discussion on Wednesday. As an upper division course, it has a larger reading requirement which students must be prepared to meet. Each week, a student or a group of students (depending on enrollment) will be responsible for leading class discussion. In addition, students are responsible for writing six short critical analysis papers on weeks of their choosing. The final assignment for this course is an inter-disciplinary assignment in which the student will assess a group of colonial Latin American and early modern Spanish paintings from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

## COURSE MATERIALS

**Books:** (available at campus store & library)

Linda Curcio Nagy, *The Great Festivals of Colonial Mexico City: Performing Power and Identity*

Carolyn Dean, *Inka Bodies and the Body of Christ: Corpus Christi in Colonial Cuzco, Peru*

Rose-Marie Hagen, *Francisco Goya: 1746-1828*

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (proper historical citation required in all work for this course, this is the best guide for you to use)

**Course packet:** available at Copy Co, 2155 North Bellflower, 961-1123

Note About Course Materials: The course packet for this class is unusually large and you must purchase it. I have tried my best to keep the costs down, but copyright permission is expensive. If the cost of materials for this class is an issue for you, I suggest you purchase *only* the course packet, and access the various books for the course on reserve or via LINK+ and ILL. You should also be advised that it is almost always less expensive to purchase used copies of the course books online. If you would like to do this, bigwords.com is a clearinghouse site that searches other available used booksellers in order to give you the best price.

**Suggested Books for Background Reading (optional):**

*The Art and Architecture of Viceregal Latin America*, by Kelly Donahue-Wallace

*The Arts in Spain*, John F. Moffitt

*The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk (a guide to help you improve your writing)

## GRADING RUBRIC

### **Attendance**

**possible negative points**

Attendance in class is mandatory. Absences are not excused unless they meet university regulations (see below.) Arrival in class more than 5 minutes after class begins counts as an absence, even if you remain in class for the entire session. Leaving early also counts as an unexcused absence.

*Each unexcused absence counts for one point off your total final grade in the course. This can have a seriously negative impact on your grade. If you are the type of person who misses classes or is late frequently, this is probably not the best class for you.*

### **Participation**

**10% final grade**

As this is a seminar course, your participation in every class meeting is essential and required. In addition to arriving in class each day and on time, your participation grade is also based on your contributions to class discussion. Each student must contribute to each discussion at least once. Do not worry that your ideas will be criticized or held against you; our classroom is a supportive environment where we welcome all ideas, including challenges to our pre-existing notions. Everyone will be called on at least once in each class meeting.

### **6 Weekly Response Papers**

**10% final grade each**

Throughout the semester, you are responsible for 6 response papers to the week's readings. These are 2 pages, double spaced, 12-point font. If your response papers go over two pages, I will not read the rest of the pages and whatever you write will not count towards your grade. Response papers are due at the beginning of each class meeting.

*Late response papers will lose one entire letter grade each day they are late.* This means that a paper that was due at the start of class at 12:30 on Monday but was turned in at 2 on Monday will lose one letter grade from what it would have earned originally. If turned in after 12:30 on Tuesday, it will lose two letter grades, so on and so forth. Remember it is always better to turn in a very late assignment and receive an "F" than it is to turn in nothing in at all and get zero points. *If you do not attend class the day an assignment is due, please email your work to me.*

Students may choose when during the semester to write their response papers. Please be aware that on the weeks you do not write a response paper, you still must do the reading. If I am feeling that students are not doing the reading, I will give weekly pop quizzes, and if this does not work, I will enact further punitive measures. Also know that if you like, you can write as many response papers as you want, and the highest six grades will count.

### **Leading Discussion**

**10% final grade**

Each week, a student or a group of students (depending on enrollment) will be responsible for leading seminar with an introductory 10-minute presentation. During this time, presenters will briefly summarize the authors' approach, argument, and evidence. They will also share their own questions about the work, so as to facilitate discussion.

## **Paper Proposal & Annotated Bibliography**

See directions in packet.

**5% final grade**

## **Final Paper**

**15% final grade**

More information on this will be given a few weeks after class begins. It will be due during the regularly scheduled final exam period for this course. *Note that you cannot pass this class without turning in the final paper.*

**Note on final grading:** Grading on beachboard is done on a 1000 point scale to make for easier calculations. That means if your final grade on beachboard says 878, you have an 87.8. On beachboard grades, anything at a .5 or above will be rounded up for final calculations; i.e. an 87.8 will become an 88, but an 87.4 will remain an 87. Then the total final grade for the course will be calculated by subtracting the negative points for absences.

## **READINGS & CLASS SCHEDULE**

### **Week One: Introduction**

Monday, Jan 25: Welcome & Introduction

Wednesday, Jan 27: Reading Visual Culture as Historical Documentation

Reading: Chapter One from John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, "Introduction," from Richard Leppert, *Art and the Committed Eye: The Cultural Functions of Imagery*, and "Art as a Cultural System," by Clifford Geertz (all in course packet)

Activity: Discussion

Critical Analysis Paper #1 Due.

### **Week Two: The Politics of Painting in the Spanish Royal Court**

Reading: Michel Foucault, "Las Meninas", from *The Order of Things*

Monday, Feb 1: Lecture on Spanish Golden Age Painting

Wednesday, Feb 3: Discussion with student leaders

Critical Analysis Paper #2 Due.

### **Week Three: Museum Visit**

Reading: Excerpts from Sylvan Barnett, *A Short Guide to Writing About Art* (course packet – this reading is not optional!)

**Students must visit LACMA and view the Colonial Latin American Art Collection  
sometime before the Wed, Feb 11 class meeting.**

Monday, Feb 8: **No Class – Furlough Day**

Wednesday, Feb 11: Discussion of Final Assignment – bring receipt from LACMA visit to class  
Special Session on How to Read Strategically

### **Week Four: The Visual Politics of Spanish Rule in Colonial America**

Reading: Linda Curcio Nagy, *The Great Festivals of Colonial Mexico City: Performing Power and Identity* (entire)

Monday, Feb 15: Lecture on public festivals

Wednesday, Feb 17: Discussion with student leaders

Critical Analysis Paper #3 due.

### **Week Five: Material Culture**

Reading: "Observations on the Origin, Development, and Manufacture of Latin American Furniture," Jorge P. Rivas

"Asia in the Arts of Colonial Latin America," by Gauvin Bailey

"Silver and Silverwork, Wealth and Art in Viceregal America," by Cristina Esteras Martín, all from *The Arts in Latin America*

"Still(ed) Life, Beauty, and Regimes of Power" from Richard Leppert, *Art and the Committed Eye*

(all in course packet)

Monday, Feb 22: Lecture on material culture in the early modern Spanish empire

Wednesday, Feb 24: Discussion with student leaders

Critical Analysis Paper #4 due.

**Week Six: Postmodernism and Art in Colonial Spanish America**

Reading: "Can the Subaltern Speak?", by Gayatri Spivak, from *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*

"Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America," by Carolyn Dean and Barbara Mundy, *Colonial Latin American Review* 12 (2003)

Monday, March 1: Lecture on postmodernism

Wednesday, March 3: Discussion with student leaders

Critical Analysis Paper #5 due.

**Week Seven: Indian Artistic Identity**

Reading: "Introduction: Art as a Tool of Christian Conversion," "Indians and Renaissance Art," and "Christian Murals by Indian Artisans," from Samuel Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion: Religious Architecture and Indian Artisans in Colonial Mexico*

Monday, Mar 8: Lecture on the Politics of Identity in Indigenous Art

Wednesday, Mar 10: Discussion with student leaders

Critical Analysis Paper #6 due.

**Week Eight: Controlling the Display of Power**

Reading: Carolyn Dean, *Inka Bodies and the Body of Christ: Corpus Christi in Colonial Cuzco, Peru* (entire)

Monday, March 15: Lecture on The Visual Politics of Inka Identity in Colonial Peru

Wednesday, March 17: Discussion with student leaders

Critical Analysis Paper #7 due.

**Week Nine: Return Visit to LACMA**

Due to furlough days, class will not meet on March 22 or March 24. You are to return to LACMA this week and finalize your selection of pieces for your final paper.

**Week Ten: Final Paper Proposal**

Due to Spring Break, (March 29-April 2), class does not meet this week. You are to work on your final paper proposal and annotated bibliography, which is due on Monday, April 5.

**Week Eleven: Representing Race, Representing Order**

Reading: "A Marvelous Variety of Colours," "The Rise of the Casta Painting," and "Changing Perspectives: Casta Paintings in the Era of Bourbon Reforms," from Ilona Katzew, *Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico*

Monday, April 5: Lecture on the Casta Painting Genre

Proposal and Annotated Bibliography due.

Wednesday, April 7: Discussion with student leaders

Critical Analysis Paper #8 due.

**PLEASE NOTE: EVERYONE MUST COMPLETE THIS WEEK'S CRITICAL ANALYSIS. PLAN ACCORDINGLY.**

**Week Twelve: Meetings on Final Papers**

This week students will have one-on-one meetings with Dr. Berquist to discuss their progress on their final papers.

Monday, April 12: meetings

Wednesday, April 14: meetings

**Week Thirteen: The Visual Politics of Cities**

Reading: "Piety and Polity," by Richard Kagan, in *Urban Images of the Hispanic World*

"The Upper Classes and their Upper Stories: Architecture and the Aftermath of the Lima Earthquake of 1748," by Charles Walker, *Hispanic American Historical Review* 1 (2003) (all in course packet)

Monday, April 19: Lecture on the Visual Politics of Cities.  
Critical Analysis Paper #9 due.

Wednesday, April 21 – **NO CLASS – UNIVERSITY FURLOUGH DAY**

**Week Fourteen: The Visual Politics of Clothing**

Reading: "Two Pairs of Pink Satin Shoes: Race, Clothing, and Identity in the Americas," by Rebecca Earle, *History Workshop Journal* 52 (Autumn 2001), pp. 175-195

"He outfitted his family in notable decency': Slavery, Honor, and Dress in Eighteenth-Century Lima, Peru," by Tamara Walker. *Slavery and Abolition: A Journal of Slave & Post-Slave Studies* 30, No. 3 (September 2009), pp. 383-402. (PDF will be posted on beachboard)

Monday, April 26: Lecture on the Politics of Dress in Colonial Spanish America  
Revised Paper Proposal Due.

Wednesday, April 29: Discussion with student leaders  
Critical Analysis Paper #10 due.

**Week Fifteen: Finalizing Papers**

This week students will work on their final papers.

Monday, May 3: **NO CLASS – FURLOUGH DAY**

**\*\*\* PLEASE NOTE: If you would like to turn in a draft of your final paper, today is the last day to do so.\*\*\***

Wednesday, May 5: Class does not meet. Work on final papers.

**Week Sixteen: Goya and the End of Enlightenment Art**

Reading: Rose-Marie Hagen, *Francisco Goya: 1746-1828* (entire)

Jutta Held, "Goya's Festivals, Old Women, Monsters, and Blind Men," *History Workshop* 1987 (course packet)

Monday, May 10: Lecture on Goya and the end of the Spanish empire

Wednesday, May 12: Discussion (no student leaders)  
Final Papers due in class.

**PLEASE NOTE: EVERYONE MUST COMPLETE THIS WEEK'S CRITICAL ANALYSIS. PLAN ACCORDINGLY.**

**ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENT TBA DURING REGULARLY SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM PERIOD**