ANTH-UA 9038.SY1 or SCA-UA 9836.SY1
Indigenous Australian Art: An Analytical and Cultural Study
Fall 2018

Instructor Information

- Petronella Vaarzon-Morel
- Consultation by appointment (Mon 9:00am – 12:00pm)
- pvm2@nyu.edu (Please allow at least 24 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails)

Course Information

- Pre-Requisite: None
- Mondays: 12:30 – 3:30pm

This course is a survey of the principal themes and issues in the development of Indigenous art in Australia. It focuses on some of the regional and historical variations of Aboriginal art in the context of the colonisation of Australia, while considering the issues of its circulation and evaluation within contemporary discourses of value. Topics include the cosmological dimensions of the art, its political implications, its relationship to cultural and national identity, and its aesthetic frameworks. There will be four required fieldtrips/excursions during which students will visit some of the major collections of Indigenous Australian art as well as exhibitions of contemporary works. The class will involve lectures, student presentations, discussion, and video material to accompany lectures. There will also be guest presentations from Indigenous artists and Indigenous curators of art.

Required field trip/excursions:

Week 1 (Monday 3 Sep): Museum of Contemporary Art, Exhibition: John Mawurndjul, I am the old and the new.

Week 2 (Monday 10 Sep): Guided tour of Aboriginal rock art sites at Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park

This field trip is in lieu of normal class time from 12:30m – 3:30pm.

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Week 11 (Monday 12 Nov): Student presentations on selected art work in Yiribana Gallery, Art Gallery of NSW Exhibition: Nongirma Marawili, from my heart and mind.

This field trip is in lieu of normal class time from 12:30m – 3:30pm.

Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials

Supplemental Textbooks & Materials
(Not required to purchase; available in NYU SYDNEY Library)
- See Appendix 1

Course Overview and Goals

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:
- Demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of Indigenous arts in Australia—ranging from acrylic paintings of the Western Desert to bark paintings of Arnhem Land to urban, politically motivated works in various media (including photography, sculpture, print-making, etc.) and reflect critically on the ways in which it is displayed.
- Think about these works both as objectifications of cultural expression (Aboriginal histories, religious beliefs, cultural/linguistic practices) and as political interventions.
- Appreciate the role of anthropology/art history in defining “Aboriginal art” as a genre of high art; think about “Aboriginal art” as itself an intercultural production, and be able to thoughtfully address our own participation in defining this category on various markets/multiple regimes of value.
- Relate case studies in Indigenous arts to broader themes, including the definition of race/Aboriginality in Australia; the recognition and representation of Indigenous Australians in various forms (the constitution, art museums, media); how value is understood/accrued on markets; destabilising dichotomies between remote/urban, art/craft, ethnography/art, prehistory/history; defining and problematising “authenticity,” and appropriation” and many more.

Course Requirements

Class Participation
Class participation includes two components:

1) Active engagement in discussions and respectful listening; collaborative group work as occasionally assigned; evidence of engagement with readings.

2) 15 minute presentation of course materials during the semester (to be decided via student sign-up on the first class). You will need to summarise authors’ arguments, present major themes, and raise questions for further discussion. Collaboration with another student may be necessary depending on numbers. Film/video/web clips and/or PowerPoint are welcome but not required.

Artwork Presentation
Visit the Art Gallery of New South Wales and select and research one work of art by an Indigenous artist that is on display and prepare a 12 minute, object-centered talk on this work. We will be presenting in front of the selected works in the Yiribana Gallery at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Week 11, 12 November. (12 minutes)

Exhibition Review
Your instructor will provide a listing with addresses. (4-5 pages)

Profile of an Art Producing Community
You will compose a profile of an Indigenous art producing community in Australia detailing its first experiments with making art for the public domain. Please specify the cultural, historic, stylistic negotiations that informed the community’s adaptive practices and include some information on one of its better-known members. (4-5 pages)

Final Research Paper
Write on a significant topic/issue in Aboriginal art using at least three of the class readings. Assessment criteria and a list of suggestions will be distributed in session 8; you may also choose your own topic/issue in consultation with the lecturer. Please schedule an in-person conversation; email is not sufficient. (2,500 words)

Written work must include appropriate and consistent citations and references (reference lists are not included in the required number of pages); please follow NYU’s Style Guide available on the NYU Classes site for our course (check under “Resources”).

Grading of Assignments
The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments/Activities</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
<th>Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition Review</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12:30pm, Fri 5 Oct (Wk 5) (MAKE-UP DAY, NO CLASS ON 1 OCT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments/Activities</td>
<td>% of Final Grade</td>
<td>Due</td>
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<td>-------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artwork Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Mon 12 Nov (Wk 11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Profile</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12:30pm, Mon 3 Dec (Wk 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>12:30pm, Mon 17 Dec</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this course, your total numerical score, calculated from the components listed above, is converted to a letter grade without rounding.

Extra credit: Site policy does not allow grading of work outside of the assignments included in the syllabus. The final grade will only be calculated from the assessment components listed here and no other work, whether additional or substituted, is permitted.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

**Letter Grades**

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Explanation of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent performance showing a thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics of the course; all work includes clear, logical explanations, insight, and original thought and reasoning. Creative work is of a highly sophisticated standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good performance with general knowledge and understanding of the topics; all work includes general analysis and coherent explanations showing some independent reasoning, reading and research. Creative work is of a superior standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory performance with some broad explanation and reasoning; the work will typically demonstrate an understanding of the course on a basic level. Creative work is of an acceptable standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Passable performance showing a general and superficial understanding of the course’s topics; work lacks satisfactory insight, analysis or reasoned explanations. Creative work is of a basic standard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance in all assessed criteria. Work is unfinished or unsubmitted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grade Conversions**

For this course your total numerical score, calculated from the components listed above, correspond to the following letter grades:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 to 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 to &lt; 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 to &lt; 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84 to &lt; 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 to &lt; 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 to &lt; 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74 to &lt; 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 to &lt; 74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 to &lt; 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>65 to &lt; 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 to &lt; 65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Schedule

Week 1: 3-Sep-18

Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Required field trip/excursion: Museum of Contemporary Art, Exhibition: John Mawurndjul, I am the old and the new. (2.10-3.20 pm). (We will meet at Science House in Room 302 first)

Homework Assignment: Research the Indigenous peoples from your hometown or city and write one or two paragraphs based on your findings. Please be prepared to present and discuss briefly on the bus (Wk 2).

Week 2: 10-Sep-18
The Memory of Place: Aboriginal rock engravings of Sydney and Murujuga

Guest Lecturer: Matt Poll

Required reading:

Recommended Reading:

Required field trip/excursion: Guided tour of Aboriginal rock art sites at Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park This excursion will be instead of the regularly scheduled class time at the Academic Centre. We will meet at the Academic Centre and a bus will take us to Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, which will take approximately 45 minutes. Depending on traffic, we may be a little late returning to Sydney. Please wear comfortable closed-toed shoes, as we will be walking on uneven, rocky and sometimes steep paths. A hat,
sunscreen, sunglasses and a bottle of water are recommended for the field trip. This trip will be in lieu of class from 12:30 – 3:30pm.

**Homework Assignment:** Visit the Art Gallery of New South Wales and select and begin research on one work of art by an Indigenous artist that is currently on display. Most of the Indigenous works are exhibited in the Yiribana Gallery which is on the lower ground floor of the Gallery. You will need to take the escalators down three levels to reach the Yiribana Gallery. This research will form the basis of a 12 minute talk that you will deliver in front of the selected work and in front of your class mates in **Week 11**. Please email me your selection by **6 October** to avoid duplication and to ensure that the work will still be on display for our presentations. Every day at 10.30 am, the Art Gallery of New South Wales offers free-guided tours of its Indigenous collection in the Yiribana Gallery, departing from the main Information Desk. Consider joining one of these or other free-guided tours. Please note that Indigenous art is hung throughout the Gallery and isn't just on the lower ground floor.

**Week 3: 17-Sep-18**

**First Citizen: Albert Namatjira and the Hermannsburg School**

**Required reading:**

- Brenda L Croft “Albert’s Gift,” in *Australian Aboriginal Art*, Issue 1, 2009, pp. 70–75.

**Selected reading for class presentation:**


**Recommended reading:**


**Media:**

- [The Namatjira Project](#)

**Week 4: 24-Sep-18**

**Papunya: Genesis and Genius**

**Required reading:**

- Howard Morphy, “Transformations: The Contemporary Art of Central Australia” in


Selected reading for class presentation:


Recommended Reading:


Media: Excerpts from Mr Patterns (2004), dir. Catriona McKenzie (55 mins)

Week 5: 5-Oct-18

MAKE-UP DAY FOR LABOUR DAY PUBLIC HOLIDAY (NO CLASS ON MON 1 OCT)

Marking country, social relations and self: artistic practices in Warlpiri and Anmatyer communities

Required reading:


Selected reading for class presentation:


Recommended reading


Week 6: 8-Oct-18

Northeast, Central, and Western Arnhem Land: Contact, Collections and Cultural Practices
**Guest Lecturer:** Matt Poll

**Required reading:**


**Required fieldtrip/excursion:** *Australian National Maritime Museum exhibitions:* 1) *Eora First People. Precious Works of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture.* 2) *Gapu-Monuk Saltwater: Journey to sea Country Yirrkala Bark Painting of Sea Country.*

We will be meet at the Maritime Museum, 2 Murray St, Darling Harbour, Sydney.

**Week 7: 15 – 19 Oct**

**SEMESTER BREAK – No Class**

**Week 8: 22-Oct-18**

**Eulogies in Ochre: Art from the East Kimberley and the Tiwi Islands**

**Guest Lecturer:** Matt Poll

**Required reading:**


**Selected reading for class presentation:**


**In Class Media:** Excerpts from *Art and Soul, dir.* Hetti Perkins; *Putuparri and the Rainmakers, dir.* Nicole Ma

**Week 9: 29-Oct-18**
Indigenous Art in south-east Australia: remembering William Barak, Tommy McRae and Mickey of Ulladulla.

**Guest Lecturer:** Matt Poll

**Required Reading:**


**Selected reading for class presentation:**


**Recommended reading**


**In Class Media:** clips from:

- [Culture Victoria Joy Murphy on her uncle](https://www.culture.vic.gov.au/joy-murphy), William Barak
- [Murruwaygu: following in the footsteps of our ancestors](https://www.culture.vic.gov.au/murruwaygu)

**Week 10: 5-Nov-18**

Daguerreotypes, Stereotypes, Prototypes: Reframing Indigenous Photography

**Required reading:**


**Selected reading for class presentation:**


**Recommended Reading:**

- Mick Dodson, “The End in the Beginning: Re(de)finding Aboriginality,” in
Week 11: 12-Nov-18
Class Presentations

We will be meeting at the Art Gallery of New South Wales for our presentations on an Indigenous work of art in the collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

We will also view the exhibitions: *Nonggirrga Marawili from my heart and mind*; and *Judy Watson*, paintings prints and drawings.

Week 12: 19-Nov-18
Alternative Models: Aboriginal Artists’ Cooperatives and the Indigenous Avant-Garde

**Guest Lecturer:** Matt Poll

**Required Reading:**


**Selected reading for class presentation:**


**In Class Media:** Excerpts from *Art and Soul*, *dir.* Hetti Perkins

Week 13: 26-Nov-18
Aboriginal Art on the Market: Circulation and Value in/through Auctions, Art Centres, Galleries, Museums

**Required reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


**Week 14: 3-Dec-18**

**Indigenising Museums: Repatriation, Activism and the Politics of Curation**

**Required reading:**


**Selected reading for class presentation:**


**Week 15: 10-Dec-18**

**Art: Culture, Visibility, and Survival**

**Required Reading:**


**Selected reading:**


**Recommended reading:**


**Homework Assignment.** Please bring a coloured print out, or alternatively, email me at least two days before class, one or two images of your favourite Indigenous works that you have encountered during the semester. This will fuel our final discussions in class and we will co-curate an exhibition in class and invite NYUS staff to attend.
Course Policies

Submission of Work
Assignments (excluding in-class presentations and exams) must be submitted electronically via NYU Classes. It is the student’s responsibility to confirm that the work has been successfully uploaded. In the unlikely event that a submission to Classes fails, students must immediately submit the work to the Academic Programs Coordinator via email before the original submission deadline accompanied by an explanation of the issue. All in-class presentations and exams must be completed during the scheduled class time. An assessment component is considered completed when the student has met all the terms for that assessment component as outlined by the instructor.

An assessment component completed after the deadline without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100-point scale (for the assignment) for each day the work is late. Work completed beyond five weekdays after the due date without an agreed extension receives a mark of zero, and the student is not entitled to feedback for that piece of work. Because failure to submit or fulfil any required assessment component will result in failure of the course, it is crucial for students to complete every assignment even when it will receive a mark of zero.

Plagiarism Policy
The academic standards of New York University apply to all coursework at NYU Sydney. NYU Sydney policies are in accordance with New York University’s plagiarism policy. The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

It is a serious academic offense to use the work of others (written, printed or in any other form) without acknowledgement. Cases of plagiarism are not dealt with by your instructor. They are referred to the Director, who will determine the appropriate penalty (up to and including failure in the course as a whole) taking into account the codes of conduct and academic standards for NYU’s various schools and colleges.

Attendance Policy
Study abroad at Global Academic Centres is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centres is mandatory, and unexcused absences will affect students' semester grades. The class roster will be marked at the beginning of class and anyone who arrives after this time will be considered absent. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.

For courses that meet once a week, one unexcused absence will be penalised by a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade. For courses that meet two or more times a week, the same penalty will apply to two unexcused absences. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.
Faculty cannot excuse an absence. Requests for absences to be excused must be directed to the Academic Programs Coordinator. Students must provide appropriate documentation for their absence. In the case of illness, students must contact the Academic Programs Coordinator on the day of absence. They must provide medical documentation to Academic Programs Coordinator within three days of the absence in order to be medically excused. The note must include a medical judgement indicating that the student was unfit to attend class/work on the specific day or dates of the absence. Faculty will be informed of excused absences by the Academic Programs staff.

**Religious Observance**

Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their professor and the Academic Programs Coordinator in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.

**Classroom Expectations**

This is a seminar subject and requires the active participation of all students. It also requires engaged discussion, including listening to and respecting other points of view. Your behaviour in class should respect your classmates’ desire to learn. It is important for you to focus your full attention on the class, for the entire class period.

- Arrive to class on time.
- Once you are in class, you are expected to stay until class ends. Leaving to make or take phone calls, to meet with classmates, or to go to an interview, is not acceptable behaviour.
- Phones, digital music players, and any other communications or sound devices are not to be used during class. That means no phone calls, no texting, no social media, no email, and no internet browsing at any time during class.
- Laptop computers and tablets are not to be used during class except in rare instances for specific class-related activity expressly approved by your instructor.
- The only material you should be reading in class is material assigned for that class. Reading anything else, such as newspapers or magazines, or doing work from another class, is not acceptable.
- Class may not be recorded in any fashion – audio, video, or otherwise – without permission in writing from the instructor.

**Diversity, Inclusion and Equity**

NYU is committed to building a culture that respects and embraces diversity, inclusion, and equity, believing that these values – in all their facets – are, as President Andrew Hamilton has said, “…not only important to cherish for their own sake, but because they are also vital for advancing knowledge, sparking innovation, and creating sustainable communities.” At NYU Sydney we are committed to creating a learning environment that:
• fosters intellectual inquiry, research, and artistic practices that respectfully and rigorously take account of a wide range of opinions, perspectives, and experiences; and

• promotes an inclusive community in which diversity is valued and every member feels they have a rightful place, is welcome and respected, and is supported in their endeavours.

Provisions to Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Centre for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Instructor Bio
Petronella Vaarzon-Morel (M.A., Indiana University) is a sociocultural anthropologist whose interests include Indigenous relations to the land, personhood, identity, visual culture and human-animal relations. Over many years she has conducted ethnographic research with Indigenous groups in central and northern Australia for Aboriginal land and Native Title claims, and for a range of other issues in such areas as environment management, the ‘stolen generation’ and history. In collaboration with Warlpiri she co-authored the book Warlpiri Women’s Voices.

Her academic publications include articles and chapters in peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes, and she has presented papers at national and international conferences. In 2012 she was the recipient of an Anthropology of Native Title Services (ANTS) Research Fellowship, at the University of Adelaide, and in 2013 a Research Writing Placement at the Centre for Native Title Anthropology, Australian National University. She is currently a Research Associate at the University of Sydney on the project ‘Re-integrating Central Australian community cultural collections’. Her pedagogic background includes a period teaching introductory anthropology at Indiana University, Bloomington.
Appendix 1

Supplemental Textbooks & Materials
(Not required to purchase; available in NYU SYDNEY Library)

- Margo Neale, *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture*
- Hetti Perkins, *Art and Soul*
- Hetti Perkins, *One Sun One Moon*
- Altman, Jon C & Perkins, Hetti 2004, *Crossing country the alchemy of western Arnhem Land art, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney*
- Shirley W. Wiencke, *When the Wattles Bloom Again: The Life and Times of William Barak, Last Chief of the Yarra Yarra Tribe*, 1984
- Hetti Perkins and Jonathan Jones *Half Light: Portraits from Black Australia*,
- Pamela McClusky and Wally Caruana, *Ancestral Modern: Australian Aboriginal Art*, Seattle Art Museum
- Catherine Summerhayes, *The Moving Images of Tracey Moffatt*
- Margo Neale (ed.) *Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye*
- Jane Lyndon (ed.) *Calling the Shots: Aboriginal Photographies*. Aboriginal Studies Press, 2014