

ANTH 305

ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE ARTS

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Andrea Walsh

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course provides a critical examination of the anthropological study of art beginning with significant work in the field from the early twentieth century through its intersection with recent visual cultural theory and contemporary artistic practice. Reading undertaken in this course will examine a broad range of topics that span foundational essays on art and society to the exploration of the relationship between contemporary art and current issues for anthropology and anthropological theories of culture. Lecture and reading topics may include: the use and critique of the category “primitive art”; discussions of aesthetics through an analysis of form, style and meaning of art from around the world throughout the 20th century to the present; Indigenous Arts and global cultural tourism; and the art and practice of individual contemporary artists whose interests intersect with those of contemporary anthropologists interested in colonial/postcolonial identities and politics, appropriation of intellectual and cultural property and heritage as well as interdisciplinary collaboration.

ANTH 305 hosts the Salish Visiting Artist Program in which a contemporary Salish artist leads a 4-5 weeks long unit with students to create a hands-on art project.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- understand anthropological approaches to the relationship between art and culture
- understand the how anthropological theories of culture have influenced the ways art has been viewed as cultural production
- situate contemporary art practice into an anthropological context
- develop skills to critically analyze how art is produced, circulated and consumed as a cultural product in different economic and geographical contexts
- carry out an anthropological analysis of some aspect of contemporary art production