

Aboriginal Sacred Art & Music
HARRA 1050 FALL 2019

Prof. J. Hilary Martin, O.P.

Tues. 12:40 - 3:30 pm

DSPT Room 18

Office Hours (by appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The Aboriginal People of Australia possess the oldest continuous culture on earth, more than 40,000 years old. Their art has been, and *is*, expressed in Rock and Bark painting and on ones body. This course will teach about the Dreaming and Land, and will celebrate the contemporary art of local aboriginal communities. Aboriginal art forms are intimately connected with stories arising from the *Dreaming*, so aboriginal art cannot be well understood without understanding sacred land and its Dreaming ancestors. While some representations occur all across the Continent, "Dreamings." are local and exercise their influence in local areas and over particular peoples. This course will treat all aboriginal art, but will focus on the Kimberley and the Northern Territory.

METHOD

The seminar method will be employed. The course will begin with lectures on key concepts of the Dreaming and of aboriginal claims of the land. This will lead to examination of ancient and contemporary Aboriginal art and music. Students will be given opportunities to examine and particular works of art and music. Students will learn about religious and secular meaning of land to understand the struggle by Aboriginal and other indigenous peoples for native land title .

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Attendance at class lecture and participation in discussion is expected.. Since aboriginal culture is not well known in this country, and is often misunderstood, students will be expected to pay particular attention to building up a bibliography of books, articles and recorded performances that reflects Australian aboriginal and indigenous culture. Students will be on the watch for possible connections with the art of other indigenous peoples, particularly those of North America.

Bibliography

Australian Aboriginal Studies, Canberra: Journal of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, [AIATSIS]

Brennan, Frank, S.J., *Land Rights the Religious Factor*, (Charles Strong Memorial Lecture, 1992), Flinders University, S.A.: Flinders Press, 1993.

Caruana, Wally, *Aboriginal Art* (3rd edn.) London New York: Thames and Hudson, World of Art, 2012

Edwards, R., *The Art of the Alligator Rivers Region, Northern Territory*, Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1974. 1979

Ellis, Catherine, *Aboriginal Music Making: a Study of Central Australian Music*, Adelaide: Libraries Board of South Australia, 1964

Isaacs, Jennifer, *Arts of the Dreaming, Australia's Aboriginal Heritage*, Willoughby NSW: Weldon Publishing, 1990. (N.B., There are other publishers of this work)

Isaacs, J, *Australian Dreaming, 40,000 Years of Aboriginal History*, Sydney: Landsdown, Press, 1980

Yothu Yindi "Tribal Voice"
16 tracks done in 1992, distributed by MGM

Eliade, Mircea, *The Sacred and the Profane*, New York: Harper and Row, 1957.

Stanner, W.E.H., *On Aboriginal Religion*, With introductions by Francesca Merlan and L.R. Haitt, Sydney: Sydney University press, 2114.
(first published 1959)

_____, "The Dreaming," *White Man Got No Dreaming*, Canberra: Australian National Univ. Press,

_____, "Religion, Totemism and Symbolism," *Religion in Aboriginal Australia*, ed. Charlesworth et al, San Lucia: Univ. of Queensland Press, 1984.

Jung, C.J., Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, *The Collected Works IX.1* Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968, 3-53.

Martin, John Hilary, *The Reality of Myth*, Antioch, Ca.: Solas Press, 2001

_____, "Bringing the Power of the Past into the Present
Religious and Social Ritual: Interdisciplinary Explorations, ed. M. Aune, N.Y.: SUNY, 1996).

_____, "Aboriginal Dreaming as a Text," *Festschrift for Campion Murray*, Adelaide: CTF Press, 2004.

_____, "Aboriginal Communities and Globalisation" in *Religion and Global Society*, Oxford: Oxford Uni. Press, 2005.

_____, "Intervention in Aboriginal Life", *New Blackfriars*, Oxford: 2011. vol 93.

My Country of the Pelican Dreaming. The life of an Australian Aboriginal of the Gadjerong, Grant Ngabidi (1904-1977) as told to Bruce Shaw, Canberra, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1981.

Moyle, Alice, *Aboriginal Sound Instruments*, Canberra: Aboriginal Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1978.

Turner, Victor, *The Ritual Process*, Ithica, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1969.

Requirements

Reading

1. Article on aboriginal religion will be assigned and/or slides of aboriginal art or a gallery catalogue.
2. Two short papers evaluating art or musical materials that have been assigned in terms of aboriginal cultural values.

Written Work and Assessment

1. Two short reflection papers (4-5 pgs) on the meaning of assigned readings or a written analysis of an art work presented in class. (15%)
2. A review of a book (or a notable article) on the Indigenous religion or attendance and review of a performance of aboriginal music or dance. (15%)
3. An essay on the notion of the *Dreaming* in connection with art or performance; or an essay on contemporary application or relevance of this ancient art in a modern society that is no longer hunter-gathering. (70%)

Purpose and Outcomes

Course goals

1. Students will learn about *the public and the secret* in aboriginal life and art; about boundaries, prohibitions and freedoms in aboriginal art.
2. Students will learn about the *Dreaming*, as a basic religious concept and its connection with land and with the claims of land (both legal and religious)
3. The importance of possessing title to cultural sites and the struggle of aboriginal people for gaining title and ownership to their lands.
4. Students will become aware of bibliographical materials in local libraries and websites that are concerned with indigenous peoples and their culture.

Course Outcomes

1. To acquire a **critical understanding** of another culture, ancient and quite different from our own.
2. To **communicate** their visual and oral experiences of this course to academic and non academic audiences in giving talks and serious and semi-serious writings.
3. To be aware and to understand the **contemporary problem** aboriginal and other indigenous communities have in their struggles to acquire legal title to traditional lands.
4. To see the **prophetic value** of aboriginal warnings, "to take care of the land, so that the land can continue to take care of you."

Grading Rubrics

"A" The ability to interpret aboriginal visual and oral art materials in a culturally sensitive manner. Examination of both ancient and more contemporary aboriginal art. Is aware of the anthropological literature (both the good and the bad) about aboriginal culture and has developed his/her bibliography. Is aware of the reasons for the aboriginal struggle for title to land.

Faithfulness to class discussion and to required papers. The ability to write a clear and concise final paper on the topic chosen using appropriate examples and bibliography.

"A-" The ability for interpret aboriginal visual and oral material in a culturally sensitive manner. Is aware of a difference between ancient and contemporary aboriginal art. Is aware of the struggle for land title among indigenous peoples. Weak on building a bibliography.

Faithfulness to class discussion and required papers. The final paper on the topic chosen imprecise in places and with lack of examples and a thin bibliography.

"B+" Some missteps in interpreting aboriginal visual and oral material. Not much awareness of differences in aboriginal styles. Unaware of legal struggle for acquiring title to land. Neglect in building a bibliography.

Lack of faithfulness to class discussions or to papers. The final paper lacking a clear statement of the problem chosen, nor very clear conclusions, serious lack of examples, and paper not on the topic previously agreed upon.

"B" Lacking of understanding the aboriginal art or culture we have been discussing. Lack of clarity and/or mistakes about contemporary art and/or music. Uninformed discussion of contemporary viewpoints with no awareness of aboriginal ideals. Innocent of aboriginal discussion of land

Lack of faithfulness to class discussion and missing papers. The final paper not on the topic we had agreed on. The paper largely journalistic, or simply an exchange of opinions without an awareness of the issues involved. Gaining a "B" in the first semester indicates the student shows promise, but needs to see the advisor for basic instructions about what is expected.

"C" You will get three credits for this course on your transcript, but the work is below graduate level.

Plagiarism

This is taking credit for the work of another without giving credit to your source. Sometimes this is *unintentional*, but you will have to prove that, you will be assumed to be guilty if you use someone else's material without attribution. Plagiarism includes, paraphrasing texts, lifting ideas from another without citing your source. The academic penalties for plagiarism are severe. Zero or an F for a grade is common.

Remember if you quote the full name of the author and the title of the work or slide you are **not committing** plagiarism. Your paper may be a long string of quotes and little more, but all you can be accused of is not being very original.