

FALL 2020

Instructor: Susana Galan

01:988:258 S90

GENDER, RACE AND CONTEMPORARY ART

Course Description:

This course will survey some of the ways visual representation serves to reflect and critique the construction of racial and gender identity in society. Our study will focus on how such identity groupings are defined culturally and globally, and we will look at a range of contemporary art practices used to challenge, highlight, confront, and ultimately encourage recognition of the complex systems of representation that give way to ideas about race and gender and their relationship to identity performance and subjective experience. We will also learn methods used to interrogate the representation of race and gender, and consider how viewing art through this critical lens may enrich our understanding of art in general. While art historians have focused extensively on questions of gender since the late 1960s, robust research on issues of race is a more recent phenomenon in the discipline and there is still much work to do. Much of this scholarship has focused on African American/Black identity, especially as it is closely tied in with larger themes of American art and society, so while we will address other racial and ethnic identities, the content of this course skews heavily in this direction. Students are encouraged to bring into class discussions additional examples of contemporary artists addressing cultures and identities not explicitly covered in the course material.