

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History

Semester II Year 84-5

<u>COURSE NO.</u>	<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR</u>
397 379	African Art and History	Vansina

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The visual arts in Africa have developed for many millenia. Apart from rock art architecture and sculpture as well as painting are now known to have been practiced for well over two thousand years. The continent, the second largest in the world, has housed many different traditions of art, some (in the north) linked to the great traditions of Christianity and Islam following the flowering of Pharaonic, Phoenician and Hellenistic or Roman art, many autonomous in their own regions, but just as old. And such works of art cannot be fully appreciated, if they are not shown as expressions of their particular time and place. Hence Art History is a necessity.

The history of the visual arts and architecture of Africa is a field that still is so recent that one cannot, in a single course, give an account of it. What this course does is to present a methodology. How can we know the history of the arts in Africa and hence what must be studied and what must readers or admirers of African art ask themselves when confronted with works of art from the past. In the last third of the course one area of the continent, usually West Africa (North Africa is an alternate option) is studied more in depth and a standard art historical account is given of its arts.

LECTURES

MWF 12:05, Elvejehem 150

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS and EXAMINATIONS

Paper on a case study due week 9. Midterm (eight identifications) week 7. Final (essay questions). Grade percentages: week 7 (20%), week 9 (40%), final (40%). Graduate students should consult with instructor, as should those interested especially in Islamic and Ethiopian art.

GRADING SYSTEM

20% (week 7) identifications.
40% (week 9) paper.
40% (final) essay questions.

REQUIRED READINGS

J. Vansina Art History in Africa, 1984 Longman (pap)
F. Willett African Art, N.Y. 1971 (pap)
P. Ben Amos The Art of Benin, London 1980 (pap)
M. MacLeod The Asante, London(B.M.) 1984 (pap) original 1981
E. Eyo and F. Willett Treasures of Ancient Nigeria, Knopf N.Y. 1980 (pap)

(each of these cost about \$10.00. The first two are most used. The first may be available only by Feb.)