ARH 377 African Art and Cont. Diaspora

Dr. Spies

**Exam #1 Study Guide**

Exam #1 will consist of a combination of short definitions, short answers, and longer essays. Questions may be on the characteristics of a peoples, an artform, and/or a concept.

**I. Peoples**

Know rough locales, general characteristics, and major artforms and concepts.

* Fulani (summary, personal adornment)
* Mande (Bamana)
* Dogon
* Mende (know Poro/Sande societies, mainly Sande)
* Akan (Asante)
* Yoruba
* Fang and Kota
* Kongo
* Chokwe
* Kuba

**II. Artforms/Terms**

A. Ancient Arts (know generally: Terracotta Sculptures, Nok, Export Ivories, Yoruba early arts of the pavement period)

B. Contemporary Art (know generally)

C. Traditional Arts (know any stylistic characteristics and associated meaning; know how, why, and when they are used)

1. Bogolanfini Textile (Bamana)
2. Ntomo Masks/Masquerade (Bamana)
3. Ci Wara Masks/Masquerade (Bamana)
4. Komo Kun Masks/Masquerade (Bamana)
5. Boli (Bamana)
6. Togu Na (Dogon)
7. Dogon Masquerades
8. Seated Couple Sculptures (Dogon)
9. Sande Masks/Masquerade (Mende)
10. Kente Textile (Akan)
11. Akua Ba/Akua Ma Sculptures (Akan)
12. Asante Leadership Arts, be able to mention various artform examples (linguist staffs) (Akan)
13. Yoruba Royal/Leadership Arts
14. Reliquary Guardian Figures (Fang/Kota)
15. Nkisi/Minkisi (Congo peoples generally)
16. Divination Arts (of Yoruba and Congo peoples generally)
17. Chokwe/Kuba Masks

**III. Concepts and Artistic Tendencies**

* Abstraction (Pan-African)
* Parallel Asymmetries (Pan-African)
* Nyama (Bamana)
* Clarity/Obscurity (Bamana)
* Visual-Verbal Nexus (Akan)
* Ensemble/assemblage (Pan-African)
* Multiplicity of Meaning (Pan-African)

**IV. Larger Concepts/Pan-African Practices and Arts**

This will likely be used for larger essays that will address African art more broadly. I will ask you to a particular artform and its function, and to discuss a few examples of your choice from various peoples.

* Personal Adornment
* Masquerades
* Leadership Arts
* Shrines/Altars and Associated Sculptures
* Divination
* Rites of Passage (Initiation/Age Grade Societies)

**V. Sample Short Answer/Essays:**

* Discuss the masquerades of the Bamana peoples. When are they usually performed and for what purpose? How does the form/style of the masquerade artforms express meaning. Use at least two specific mask types as examples in your discussion.
* Do the same for Dogon masks.
* Broadly discuss the art forms aligned with divination. When, why, and how are they used? Which cultures/peoples are most closely aligned with divination practices?
* Using at least two artworks as examples, write a brief argument to dispel the stereotype that African art is primitive, simplistic, and unchanging. Broadly reference the ancient or early arts and the contemporary arts of Africa in your discussion.
* Briefly discuss changing Western perceptions of African art through history.
* Briefly discuss some of the current challenges in studying African art (i.e., looting, dating, etc.)