

Art 539.001: History of Contemporary Art
Dr. Emily Newman
Texas A&M University - Commerce

MW 9:30-10:45AM, ART 111
Office Hours: by appointment only
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OUTCOMES

By exploring art from all over the world since the 1960s, this course examines the way that contemporary art reflects shifting political trends, the explosion of popular culture, the conflation of high art and kitsch, activist movements, and a total reimagining of the potential of art. Not only will this course serve to introduce students to contemporary art and artists, but we will also explore curatorial and exhibition practices. Students will complete a major research project for this course, developing their own thematic exhibition and writing the accompanying labels and brochures. Additionally, students will have two exams that will require memorization and analytical discussion of artwork and artistic movements.

ENHANCED LEARNING OUTCOMES

The graduate student will be expected to respond to articles with more insight, sophistication, and breadth, demonstrating appropriate understanding for their level, on top of completing additional assignments. Students will be expected to show thorough research skills and critical thinking practices, beyond the undergraduate level. They should be leaders in the class, helping guide the discussions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- discuss and explain historically significant works of contemporary art
- become acquainted with the characteristic features of the major styles and movements from 1960 to present
- learn to analyze the relationships among content, context, and style
- acquire a working knowledge of the specialized vocabulary used in art history
- develop ability to analyze important documents, artist writings, and criticism
- enhance visual literacy and critical thinking skills

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ASSESSMENT

Students' ability to meet the course objectives and learning outcomes will be evaluated through written assignments, class participation, exams, and essay questions.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK: Michael Archer, *Art Since 1960*, 3rd Edition, ISBN: 0500204241 AND Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, eds., *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art* (September 2012) ISBN - 9780520257184

You are required to bring the Stiles/Selz text to class everyday.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK: Jonathan Fineberg, *Art Since 1940*, 3rd Edition (July 2010) ISBN - 0131934791

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Available on ecollege or will be handed out in class. You are expected to bring the assigned readings to class.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Internet Access: An Internet connection is necessary to participate in discussions and assignments, access readings, transfer course work, and receive feedback from your professor. View the requirements as outlined in Technology Requirements above for more information.

Software: To fully participate in online courses you will need to use a current Flash enabled browser. For PC users, the suggested browser is Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox. For Mac users, the most current update of Firefox is suggested.

At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

For FULL computer and technical requirements and specifications, please visit the help section on eCollege or this webpage:

http://help.ecollege.com/LS_Tech_Req_WebHelp/en-us/

WEB-ENHANCED COURSE

This is a web enhanced course through eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A & M University-Commerce. To use the eCollege features associated with this course go to: <https://leo.tamuc.edu/login.aspx>. You will need your CWID (Campus Wide I.D.) and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact technology services at 903-468- 6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Technical Support: Texas A&M University-Commerce provides students technical support in the use of Pearson LearningStudio. Technical assistance is available 24 hours a day / 7 days a week. If at any time you experience technical problems (e.g., you can't log in to the course, you can't see certain material, etc.) please contact the Pearson LearningStudio Help Desk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The student help desk may also be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- Chat support: Click on 'Live support' on the tool bar with the course to chat with a Pearson LearningStudio Representative.
- Phone: 1-866-656-5511 (Toll free) to speak with a Pearson LearningStudio Technical Support Representative.
- E-mail: helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with a Pearson LearningStudio Technical Support Representative.

Accessing Help from within Your Course: Click on the '*Tech Support*' icon on the upper left side of the screen inside the course. You then will be able to get assistance via online chat, email or by phone by calling the Help Desk number noted below.

Note: Personal computer problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, an Internet cafe, etc.

HANDING IN ASSIGNMENTS

All written assignments must be turned in online to eCollege by 11AM (the start of class) the day that they are due. **Assignments will NOT be accepted over ONE week late.** For each class day late, the grade will be reduced by ½ a letter grade.

FORMATTING

All written assignments must be typed using the following guidelines: 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1" margins, double-spaced, with page numbers. Failure to format properly will result in a lower grade. Artwork titles MUST be italicized.

EMAIL POLICY: For all emails sent, please **include full name, student ID, and the class** that you are attending (this is a school policy). Do not send emails to myself and other professors at once, as each professor has different issues to address. Emails will be answered in the span of two weekdays (so an email on Fri will be answered by Tue).

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

CAMPUS CONCEALED CARRY

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to (<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Statement on Student Behavior:

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenet of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct).

All students must show respect toward the instructor and the instructor's syllabus, presentations, assignments, and point of view. Students should respect each others' differences. If the instructor determines that a student is not being respectful towards other students or the instructor, it is the instructor's prerogative to ask the student to leave, to refer the student to the department head, and to consider referring the student to the Dean of Students who may consider requiring the student to drop the course. Please refer to pages 42 – 46 of the Texas A&M University-commerce Student guidebook's Codes of Conduct for details.

Prohibited during class:

- **Cell Phones/Blackberries/MP3 Players:** Please keep these devices off while class is in session. It is disrespectful to your classmates. No cell phones are allowed during exam sessions. If you need to check the time, consult the clock in the classroom. Repeated use of these devices will result in being asked to leave.
- **Computers and tablets**
- **Headphones of any kind**
- **Sleeping**
- **Sunglasses**
- **Disruptive or distracting behavior:** Texting, conversing with other students during class, loud eating, etc.
- **Repeated entering/exiting the classroom:** Please be on time to class. Not only is disruptive to the class environment, but you could miss important class announcements. This is a short class, so there should be no need to come in and out throughout the class period. Additionally, repeated tardiness will count with your absences, and could result in a lower grade.

Academic Dishonesty: There is **no tolerance** for any kind of academic dishonesty in this course. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on exams, theft of instructional material or exams, representing the work of someone else as one's own, and misrepresenting absences. Academic dishonesty is a severe transgression and may result in referral to the Dean of Students, expulsion from class and/or the University, and a failing grade.

Discussion: In this class, we will look at a wide array of artwork, some of which might include nudity, intense language, violence, etc. Each person will bring their own experiences to the art, and should feel comfortable expressing their opinions and vulnerabilities. The classroom is a safe environment, and each student should behave with integrity and treat their peers with respect.

TEST AND GRADE POLICY:

Make-up exams will be administered **only** in instances of excused absences (and acceptable documentation) and may not be designed in the same format as the regularly-scheduled exam. When an excused absence causes a student to miss an exam, it is the student's responsibility to inform--or to have someone else notify--the instructor within **4 days** of the exam. If permitted, these exams **must** be made up within two weeks of the scheduled date, at a time and place determined by the professor.

Assignments are due at the start of the class on the assigned date. Late work will only be accepted for one week after the due date, and the grade will be penalized. Concerning grade decisions, I will not discuss specific grades on ANY assignment or test the day it is returned. If you have concerns regarding a grade, email me **within one week of receiving the assignment back** clearly explaining why you think the assignment was addressed incorrectly. After the email is received, we will then set up an appointment to discuss the concern.

***** THERE WILL BE NO EXTRA CREDIT*****

STATEMENT ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ADA ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services, Texas A&M University-
Commerce, Gee Library, Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835, Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

After contacting the Office of Student Disability Resources and Services, it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor of what accommodations are needed **IN ADVANCE** of when they are needed (for example, if testing accommodations are necessary, please inform the instructor with appropriate documentation at LEAST one week before the test date).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Grade Breakdown:

15% Participation
15% Reading Responses
20% Exhibition Project
15% Exam #1
20% Exam #2
15% Seeing Art Project

Grade Scale:

A = 90%-100%
B = 80%-89%
C = 70%-79%
D = 60%-69%
F = 59% or Below

Participation: Each person is expected to come to class prepared, which means having completed the reading, brought appropriate textbook, paper, and writing utensils, and ready to engage in the class. The class should not just be a lecture, rather, people are encouraged to speak up, contribute to the conversation and ask questions. A major part of the participation requirement is ATTENDANCE, which is mandatory.

Attendance: Each student in this course is allowed no more than **three** unexcused absences. Each absence after this results in the lowering of the grade by 1/3 of a letter grade. When a student accrues **more than eight unexcused absences** the instructor has the right to drop the student from the course or to give them a failing grade.

Unexcused absences require no explanation. For an absence to be considered excused, appropriate documentation must be presented. Excused absences are defined in The Student Guidebook and various university policies, but the policy employed in this class is confined to the following: (1) Participation in pre-approved University activities such as athletic events, sponsored field trips, and travel for specific University-related academic reasons; (2) Verifiable legal proceedings; (3) Documented cases of illness, injury, or emergencies. **All such excuses must be shown to the instructor in original, written, documentary form within 7 days of the absence(s) together with a photocopy for the instructor's records.** (Please understand that this copy is a student's only record of an absence.) In lieu of documentation, absences become unexcused and are counted as such.

Exams: Throughout the course, you will have two exams. They will have the following components: slide identifications (where you must identify the artist/title/date/style of the photograph), short answer questions, compare/contrast problems, and essay questions. These exams will NOT be cumulative; they will only cover material preceding the exam.

Exhibition Project: A major part of this course is the research project where you will curate a thematic exhibition. This is your chance to envision an ideal show – you can include paintings, sculpture, performance art pieces, video, installation art, etc. This requires you think about how different works relate to one another, exhibition design, the research that is incorporated into creating exhibitions and the materials that the public can take with them after the show, such as brochures. This project will also require significant research, as well as an annotated bibliography, artwork labels, and the production of a diorama.

Seeing Art: There will be one ongoing project throughout the semester that requires students to work independently and seek out opportunities in the area to see different exhibitions and artwork.

Reading Response Papers:

Must complete short responses for ALL of the six articles listed below (everyone **must** write a response to Fried's "Art and Objecthood" AND the three articles on Basquiat on Oct 20. The other two articles are your choice). The response is due on the date the reading is to be completed.

Sept 12 - Fried, "Art and Objecthood"

Sept 21 - Krauss, "Sculpture in an Expanded Field"

Oct 5 – Piper, "The Triple Negation of Colored Women Artists"

Oct 24 - Hughes, "Jean-Michel Basquiat: Requiem for a Featherweight;" Gopnik, "Madison Avenue Primitive;" hooks, "Altars of Sacrifice: Re-membering Basquiat"

Nov 7 - Fusco, "Passionate Irreverence: The Cultural Politics of Identity"

Nov 28 - Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics"

These responses are designed to show that you have a critical understanding of the reading. They should be 2-4 pages, and composed of three parts.

1. Make very clear the thesis and main argument of the article.
2. Summarize the article in YOUR WORDS. Use quotes from the article only sparingly. *If you use quotes, you must make sure to put the page number from where the quote is taken. Artwork titles must be italicized.*
3. Address the author's argument. What were its strengths? What worked? At the same time, be critical and address the issues and the problems the article brings up.

FORMATTING

All written assignments must be typed using the following guidelines: 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1" margins, double-spaced, with page numbers. *Artwork titles must be italicized.* Failure to format properly will result in a lower grade.

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR A RESPONSE PAPER

- I. **Introduction**
 - a. Identify the article being criticized
 - b. Present thesis of the article discussed
 - c. Preview your argument – what are the steps you will take to prove your argument (this could be something like- the author successfully supports her/his thesis with strong evidence or the author makes a good point, s/he fails to support it, etc.)
- II. Short **summary** of the article
 - a. Does not need to be comprehensive
 - b. Present only what the reader needs to know to understand your argument
- III. Your **argument** - likely will involve a number of sub-arguments –mini-theses you prove to prove your larger argument true. For example, if your thesis was that the author's presumption is that photography is not art, you might prove this by:
 - i. Clarifying how the author is defining art
 - ii. Explaining how photography does not meet that definition
 - iii. Outlining the author's discussion of how that affects the photography.
- IV. **Conclusion**
 - a. Reflect on how you have proven your argument.
 - b. Point out the importance of your argument.

Contemporary Issues Schedule*

8/29 - 1950s

8/31 - Performance Beginnings

TDCA: Allan Kaprow, "Guidelines for Happenings," 833-8; and Pierre Restany, "The Nouveaux Réalistes' Declaration of Intention," 352-3.

9/5 – NO CLASS

9/7 – Pop Art and 1960s Photography

TDCA: Richard Hamilton, "Popular Culture and Personal Responsibility," 344-7 and "Propositions," 347; Andy Warhol, "Warhol in His Own Statements," 390-6; and James Rosenquist, "The F-111: An Interview with G.R. Swenson," 396-8.

9/12 - Minimalism

Reading: Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood" *Artforum*, June 1967, 116-147.

TDCA: Donald Judd, "Specific Objects," 138-140.

9/14 - Sculpture Developments Beyond Minimalism

TDCA: Louise Nevelson, "*Dawns and Dusks*," 603-5; Bruce Conner, "Interview with Mia Culpa," 378-384; and Edward Kienholz, "The Beanery," "The State Hospital," and "The Portable War Memorial," 609-611.

9/19 - Conceptual Art/Performance Developments

TDCA: Sol Lewitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," 987-991, and "Sentences on Conceptual Art," 991-2; Vito Acconci, "Steps into Performance (And Out)," 913-9 and "Biography of Work 1969-1981," 919-921; Ferreira Guillar et al., "Neo-Concrete Manifesto," 98-100; Lygia Clark, "The Death of a Plane," 100-101.

9/21 - The Environment of Art

Reading: Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in an Expanded Field" *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 30-44.

TDCA: Walter de Maria, "*The Lightning Field: Some Facts, Notes, Data, Information, Statistics and Statements*," 629-3; and Robert Smithson, "The Spiral Jetty," 633-6.

9/26 - Painting in the 1960s

TDCA: Ellsworth Kelly, "Notes of 1969," 118-20; Kenneth Noland, "Color, Format, and Abstract Art: Interview by Diane Waldman," 120-4; Bridget Riley, "Statement," 136.

9/28 - Politically Charged Art and Architecture

TDCA: Romare Bearden, "Interview with Henri Grant," 245-8; Nancy Spero, "Woman as Protagonist: Interview with Jeanne Siegel," 269-72; Gordon Matta Clark, "Building Dissections: Interview with Donald Wall," 655-658.

*subject to change

TDCA=Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art

Contemporary Issues Schedule*

10/3 - Feminist Art

TDCA: Miriam Schapiro and Melissa Meyer, "Waste Not/Want Not: An Inquiry into What Women Saved and Assembled - Femmage," 173-6; Valerie Jaudon and Joyce Kozloff, "Art Hysterical Notions of Progress and Culture," 176-186; and Judy Chicago, "*The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage*," 407-411.

10/5 - Activist Art

Reading: Adrian Piper, "The Triple Negation of Colored Women Artists" in *Next Generation: Southern Black Aesthetic*, ed. Devinis Szakacs and Vicki Kopf. Winston-Salem, NC: South-Eastern Center for Contemporary Art, 1990: 15-22.

TDCA: Faith Ringgold, "Interview with Eleanor Munro," 411-14; and David Hammons, "Interview with Kellie Jones," 417-19.

10/10 - Figurative Developments

TDCA: Philip Guston, "Philip Guston Talking," 285-290; Eric Fischl, "I Don't Think Expressionism is the Issue," 290-1; Lucian Freud, "Some Thoughts on Painting," 243-5; and Philip Pearlstein, "Figure Paintings Today Are Not Made in Heaven," 250-3.

10/12 - Test #1

10/17 - TBA

10/19 - Pictures Generation

TDCA: Barbara Kruger, "Pictures and Words: Interview w/Jeanne Siegel," 435-7.

Reading: Douglas Crimp, "Pictures," *October*, 8 (Spring 1979): 75-88.

10/24 - Late 70s and 80s NY

Readings: Robert Hughes, "Jean-Michel Basquiat: Requiem for a Featherweight," reprinted in *Nothing if Not Critical*. New York: Penguin Books, 1992, 308-312; Adam Gopnik, "Madison Avenue Primitive," *New Yorker*, November 9, 1992: 137-139; and bell hooks, "Altars of Sacrifice: Re-membering Basquiat," *Art in America* 81, no. 6 (June 1993): 69+, bring TDCA to class

10/26 - Postmodern Art in Germany

TDCA: Gerhard Richter, "Interview with Rolf-Gunter Dienst" and "Interview with Rolf Schön," 359-363.

Reading: Donald Kuspit, "Beuys: Fat, Felt, and Alchemy", *Art in America*, May 1980: 78-89.

10/31 - 1980s and Painting

TDCA: Elizabeth Murray, "Statement," 67; Susan Rothenberg, "When Asked If I'm an Expressionist," 279-281; and Julian Schnabel, "Statements," 281-283

*subject to change

TDCA=Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art

Contemporary Issues Schedule*

11/2 - Questions of Class, Portraiture, and Space / **PROJECT INTRO**

TDCA: Wangechi Mutu, "Magnificent Monkey Ass Lies" and "My Darling Little Mother," 320; and Andrea Zittel, "*A-Z Management and Maintenance Unit*," 684.

11/7 - Identity in the 1990s and 2000s / **PROJECT DISCUSSION & HANDOUT DUE**

Reading: Coco Fusco, "Passionate Irreverence: The Cultural Politics of Identity" in *1993 Whitney Biennial Exhibition* edited by Elisabeth Sussman et al. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1993, 74-85.

11/9 - Commercialism

TDCA: Jeff Koons, "From Full Fathom Five," 438-442; Takashi Murakami, "The Super Flat Manifesto," 323-4.

11/14 – TBA

11/16 - Contemporary Chinese Art/ **PROPOSAL DUE**

TDCA: Cai Guo-Qiang, "Foolish Man and His Mountain," 789-90; Xu Bing, "An Artist's View," 1048-1051; Ai Weiwei, "Making Choices," 1069-70.

11/21 - YBAs

Reading: Steven C. Dubin, "When Elephants Fight: How Sensation Became Sensational" in *Displays of Power*. New York: NYU Press, 2001, 246-275.

TDCA: Damien Hirst, "*On the Way to Work*: Discussion w/Gordon Burn," 447-50.

11/23 – NO CLASS / THANKSGIVING

11/28 - Relational Aesthetics and Street Art

Reading: Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* 110 (Autumn 2004): 51-79.

TDCA: Rirkrit Tiravanija, "Interview with Mary Jane Jacob," 795-797.

11/30 - Global Concerns / **THEME PARAGRAPH AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**

Reading: TBD.

12/5 – TEST #2

12/7 - Project Discussion, Peer Review

Reading: Ingrid Schaffner, "Wall Text," in *What Makes a Great Exhibition?* edited by Paula Marincola. London: Reaktion Books, 2007.

12/12 or 12/14 - Project Presentation

*subject to change

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