



AVT395.002 | Spring 2015 | 3 credits | Syllabus  
Instructor: Thomas Stanley | tstanle1@gmu.edu | AB 2014  
Office Hours: T (9:30-10:25, by appt.)  
T/Th 12:00-1:15 | AB 1007

## Writing for Artists – Syllabus

This course is designed to build competency in those kinds of writing most essential in the working life of an artist. It is not an English course, but rather a set of readings, written exercises, and lectures intended to strengthen the student's ability to build arguments about art and to incorporate those arguments into the specific kinds of documents most integral to an arts profession. This will be accomplished through a combination of the following:

- 1) Students and instructor will analyze readings drawn from a variety of sources.
- 2) Students will generate and discuss original written responses to a variety of "targets" presented in class (see below).
- 3) Instructor will present selected lesson plans intended to fortify the mechanics of student writing. These concentrated sessions will explore grammar, syntax, vocabulary, punctuation, and proper use of idioms.
- 4) Students will complete two major projects, numerous in-class and take home writing assignments and four formal essays.

### Course Objectives:

Students who complete this course should be better able to:

- 1) Write coherent, focused, and evocative artist statements, profiles and synopses.
- 2) Read with comprehension what is written about their own work and the work of others.
- 3) Understand the role of language in establishing and maintaining a wide panoply of social realities.

### Materials of a Potentially Objectionable Nature and Classroom Civility:

This is an advanced undergraduate course and we may be viewing or reading materials that some students find distressing or objectionable. These materials are presented as part of the educational process and not for any sensationalist value they may have. If these concerns apply to you, please see the instructor at the beginning of the term and we will explore our alternatives. Similarly, classroom discussions may enter controversial areas about which students and/or the instructor feel strongly. In these instances and all others, it is expected that students and the instructor should express their disagreement with the highest level of mutual respect and academic decorum.

### Course Requirements and Grading:

You are expected to check the website (<http://beauty.gmu.edu/AVT395/AVT395-001/>) weekly. You are expected to come to and participate in class. Personal comfort or language issues are no excuse for failure to participate. The instructor will make every reasonable effort to facilitate the participation of all students. There will be four short essays and two larger projects assigned. Additionally, there will be a number of in-class exercises that will be collected for grade or credit. Specific guidelines for these assignments will be given in class and/or posted on-line.

### Writing-Intensive Course:

This course fulfills the writing intensive requirement of the AVT major. It does so through the mid-term and final projects described above which should together total in excess of 3500 words. The instructor will provide written and/or verbal feedback on any draft(s) delivered reasonably prior to the due date of the assignment (i.e., *not* less than one week before). Your final work product should reflect this commentary.

### Finalizing and Submitting Assignments:

All assignments (except those completed during class) must be word processor-generated. Please refer to the website for guidelines on acceptable formats for your work. The instructor prefers to receive all assignments as a hardcopy on or before the posted due date. However, when this is not possible, **work may be submitted by e-mail**. When e-mail submission is approved, digital work must be attached in MS Word format (i.e., *.doc*, or *.docx* not *.wpd*). Images and other appended material should be submitted in the same email, but as a separate attachment. **The subject line must contain the tag "AVT 395" and the name or number of the assignment.**

### Final Grade:

Essays: 30%	In-class Assignments: 25%
Midterm Project: 20%	Final Project: 25%

**Schedule:**

The instructor reserves the right to modify schedule at his discretion. All readings will be announced with ample time for completion and will be available in the Johnson Center Library reserve system and/or on-line and/or handed out in class.

date	focus	reading	assignment
1.20	Course Introduction	Welcome !	
1.22	Writing as Package and Frame	Reading 01	
1.27			
1.29	Definition and Metaphor	Reading 02	<b>Essay 01</b>
2.03			
2.05	The Language of Art	Reading 03	
2.10			
2.12	Argument and Art	Reading 04	
2.17			<b>Essay 02</b>
2.19			
2.24			
2.26	Artist Profiles	Reading 05	
3.03			
3.05			<b>Artist Profile Due</b>
3.10		NO CLASS	SPRING BREAK
3.12		NO CLASS	SPRING BREAK
3.17			<b>Essay 03</b>
3.19		Reading 06	
3.24			
3.26			
3.31		Artist Statement	
4.02	Reading 07		
4.07			
4.09			
4.14	Reading 08		
4.16			
4.21	Reading 09		
4.23			<b>Essay 04</b>
4.28	<b>Final project presentations</b>		
4.30	<b>Final project presentations</b>		<b>Artist Statement Due</b>

**Assignments:**

The primary objective of this class is the generation of usable *Artist Profiles* and *Artist Statements*. In the real world “statement” and “profile” are often used to refer to very similar types of documents. For the purposes of this class, an *artist profile* will be understood to be a piece of text primarily about the artist, while the *artist statement* will be understood to be primarily about one or more specific works of art.

*Targeted responses* are intentionally open-ended, frequently (but not exclusively) in-class writing exercises in which the student is presented with a “target” and asked to generate a piece of writing that reflects their “response” to the target stimulus. In most cases the target will be a video clip, audio clip, writing sample, or work of art presented in class and the written response will be generated immediately after or during the presentation of the target. The student is encouraged to pursue his or her responses frankly, extensively, and creatively.

The Midterm Project is a usable *artist profile*, a piece of writing situating you, as artist, within your medium of creation and the discursive environment in which that medium functions. Strict parameters will be provided in class.

The Final Project is an *artist statement* exploring the context and impact of a *single instance* of your creative activity. Strict parameters will be provided in class.

## **University and School of Art Policies**

In accordance with George Mason University policy, turn off all beepers, cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class. The instructor of the class will keep his/her cell phone active to assure receipt of any Mason Alerts in a timely fashion; or in the event that the instructor does not have a cell phone, he/she will designate one student to keep a cell phone active to receive such alerts.

### **Commitment to Diversity**

This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran's status, or physical ability.

### **Statement on Ethics in Teaching and Practicing Art and Design**

As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the School of Art adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

### **Open Studio Hours**

SOA teaching studios are open to students for extended periods of time mornings, evenings and weekends whenever classes are not in progress. Policies, procedures and schedules for studio use are established by the SOA studio faculty and are posted in the studios.

### **ArtsBus - Dates for Spring 2015**

February 21

March 21

April 11

### **ArtsBus Credit**

\* Each student must have up to 5 AVT 300/Artsbus credits before graduation. For credit to appear on your transcript you must enroll in AVT 300. This also applies to anyone who intends to travel to New York independently, or do the DC Alternate Assignment.

\* If you plan/need to go on multiple ArtsBus trips during a semester and need them towards your total requirement, you must enroll in multiple sections of AVT 300. Please go to the ArtsBus website: <http://artsbus.gmu.edu> "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding ArtsBus policy.

\* Non-AVT majors taking art classes do not need Artsbus credit BUT may need to go on the Artsbus for a class assignment. You can either sign up for AVT 300 or buy a ticket for the bus trip at the Center of the Arts. Alternate trips must be approved by the instructor of the course that is requiring an ArtsBus trip.

## **Visual Voices Lecture Series Spring 2015**

Visual Voices is a year-long series of lectures by artists, art historians and others about contemporary art and art practice. Visual Voices lectures are held on Thursday evenings from 7:20- 9:00 p.m. in Harris Theater:

January 22, 2015 **Grad Students “Loading Content”**

January 29, 2015 **Ray Nichols & Jill Cypher “A colored letter at the bottom of a ditch”**

February 5, 2015 **Klaus Ottmann “Art and Contemplation”**

February 26, 2015 **Jame Anderson “I make things”**

March 5, 2015 **Steve Badanes & Linda Beaumont “Jersey Devils”**

March 26, 2015\* **Anil Revri [Bonus Speaker] “Evoking Memories”**

\*Anil Revri’s lecture will be held in Johnson Center Cinema on the lower level at 7:30 p.m.

## **Important Deadlines**

Last day to add classes or drop without financial penalty: January 27

Last day to drop classes with 33% penalty: February 10

Last day to drop classes with 67% penalty: February 20

Last day to file graduation intent: February 20

Selective withdrawal: February 23- March 27

Once the add and drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Requests for late adds (up until the last day of classes) must be made by the student in the SOA office (or the office of the department offering the course), and generally are only approved in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid being processed) , LATE ADD fee will apply. Requests for non-selective withdrawals and retroactive adds (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the academic dean of the college in which the student’s major is located. For AVT majors, that is the CVPA Office of Academic Affairs, Performing Arts Building A407.

## **Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences**

If you have a diagnosed disability or learning difference and you need academic accommodations, please inform me at the beginning of the semester and contact the Disabilities Resource Center (SUB I room 234, 703-993-2474). You must provide me with a faculty contact sheet from that office outlining the accommodations needed for your disability or learning difference. All academic accommodations must be arranged in advance through the DRC.

## **Official Communications via GMU E-Mail**

Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

## **Attendance Policies**

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor’s grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

## **Honor Code**

Students in this class are bound by the Honor Code as stated in the George Mason University Catalog. The honor code requires that the work you do as an individual be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas. (This does not prohibit collaborative work when it is approved by your instructor.) As a faculty member, I have an obligation to refer the names of students who may have violated the Honor Code to the Student Honor Council, which treats such cases very seriously. No grade is important enough to justify cheating, for which there are serious consequences that will follow you for the rest of your life. If you feel unusual pressure about your grade in this or any other course, please talk to me or to a member of the GMU Counseling Center staff.

Using someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is plagiarism, a very serious Honor Code offense. It is very important to understand how to prevent committing plagiarism when using material from a source. If you wish to quote verbatim, you must use the exact words and punctuation just as the passage appears in the original and must use quotation marks and page numbers in your citation. If you want to paraphrase or summarize ideas from a source, you must put the ideas into your own words, and you must cite the source, using the APA or MLA format. (For assistance with documentation, I recommend Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*.) The exception to this rule is information termed general knowledge—information that is widely known and stated in a number of sources. Determining what is general knowledge can be complicated, so the wise course is, "When in doubt, cite."

Be especially careful when using the Internet for research. Not all Internet sources are equally reliable; some are just plain wrong. Also, since you can download text, it becomes very easy to inadvertently plagiarize. If you use an Internet source, you must cite the exact URL in your paper and include with it the last date that you successfully accessed the site.

## **Writing Center**

Students who are in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). The services of the Writing Center are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis.

The Collaborative Learning Hub Located in Johnson Center 311 (703-993-3141), the lab offers in-person one-on-one support for the Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, Blackboard, and a variety of other software. Dual monitor PCs make the lab ideal for collaborating on group projects, Macs are also available; as well as a digital recording space, collaborative tables, and a SMART Board. Free workshops are also available (Adobe and Microsoft) through Training and Certification; visit [itraining.gmu.edu](http://itraining.gmu.edu) to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.