



AVT472.002 | Fall 2014 | 3 credits | Syllabus
Instructor: Thomas Stanley | tstanle1@gmu.edu
Office Hours: T (3:00 -4:00) by appt. | AB 2014
T 12:00-1:15 | AB 1005

Critical Theory – Syllabus

This is a course about how we talk about art. It encompasses serious criticism of contemporary art and theoretical discussions of the ideas that explain and inform the production and reception of art. Seen through a variety of theoretical lenses, artistic activity will be shown to be an important contributor to the formation of social, cultural, economic, spiritual, and political meaning.

In this course, we will learn how to read theoretical statements about art, society, and the individual and to make sense of them in their intellectual, historical, and phenomenological context. We will explore artistic practice as a way of making theory – as a means by which artists explore the problems of our day in the idiom of the visual. We will see how visual and written statements expand and explain each other and we will see how the arenas in which ideas about art are discussed impact the form and content of that discussion. The doing of art will thereby be seen as much less about making objects or self expression than conducting research and “publishing” its results.

Course Objectives:

Students who complete this course should be better able to:

- 1) Read contemporary art criticism
- 2) Write about art within a theoretical framework
- 3) Discuss conceptualism as an artistic movement
- 4) Orient their own work as artists in relationship to an ongoing discourse about creative praxis in the world.

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 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. Two short (5-7 double-spaced pages) essays will be submitted in acceptable academic format. A midterm **gallery project** will be required and there will be a **final project** that addresses the theoretical context of the student’s production of art. Specific guidelines for the midterm and final projects will be given in class. Other assignments, including quizzes, are also a distinct possibility.

Writing-Intensive Course:

This course fulfills the writing intensive requirement in the AVT major. It does so through the long and short essays described above. The instructor will provide written and/or verbal feedback to any draft(s) turned in prior to the due date of the assignment. 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 this website <http://beauty.gmu.edu/AVT395/AVT395-001/format_guidelines.pdf> 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 472” and the name or number of the assignment.**



Final Grade:
 Essays: 40%
 Gallery Project: 30%
 Final Project: 30%

Schedule:

The instructor reserves the right to modify schedule at his discretion. *This includes the assignment of additional readings not indicated here.* All readings will be available at <<http://beauty.gmu.edu/AVT472/AVT472-002/>> and/or the Johnson Center Library.

date	reading	assignment
8.26	Welcome !	
8.28	P. deBolla: "Barnett Newman's <i>Vir Heroicus Sublimis</i> " and H. Rosenberg: "The American Action Painters" and W. Benjamin: "Art in the Age of Mechanical Production"	
9.02		
9.04	A. Danto: "Modernism, Postmodernism, and Contemporary" and Hockney: "Through the Looking Glass"	Essay One
9.09		
9.11	J. Baudrillard: "Precession of the Simulacra" and D. Crimp: "On the Museum's Ruins"	
9.16		
9.18		
9.23	M. McLuhan: "The Media is the Message" and A. Weiss: "The Art of Fascination" and H. Innis: "Minerva's Owl"	Essay Two
9.25		
9.30		
10.02	P. Miller: excerpt from "Rhythm Science"	
10.07		
10.09	J.Chapman: "A gallery visit? Leave the children at home, says top artist"	
10.11		
10.14	NO SCHOOL	LOST PIRATES DAY
10.16		Gallery Project
10.21	D. Siegel: "Designing our Own Graves" and B. Massumi: "Event Horizon"	
10.23		
10.28	J. Lethem: "The Ecstasy of Influence, A Plagiarism Mosaic" and A. Mlinko: "Bluer Rather than Pinker"	
10.30		
11.04		
11.06	A. Lucier: "Origins of a Form: Acoustical Exploration, Science and Incessancy"	
11.11		
11.13		
11.18	M. Whitelaw: "Andy Gracie: Symbiotic Circuits"	Essay Three
11.20		
11.25		
11.27	NO SCHOOL	GIVE THANKS
12.02	Final project presentations	
12.04	Final project presentations	Final Projects Due

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 Fall 2014

September 20

October 18

November 15

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 Fall 2014

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.

August 28 Anne Smith, Jay Hendrick, Sarah Irvin, Patrick Sargent "Here and Now:Praxis in the Mason Studios"

September 4 Rob Graziani "E(ART)H History

September 18 Dale Culleton "Improvising a Living Beyond the Studio"

October 16 Carmon Coangelo "Psychogeographies: Jack Kerouac, Sputnik & Disneyland"

October 23 Ann Fesler "A Girl Like Her"

Important Deadlines

Last Day to Add Tuesday, September 2

Last Day to Drop (No Tuition Penalty) Tuesday, September 2

Selective Withdrawal Period – September 29- October 24

Incomplete work from Spring 2014 due to instructor

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 ittraining.gmu.edu to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.