

revised - 12.31.11

Art 150C – Critical Issues in Contemporary Art - Winter 2012

Social Critique: The Artist's Impact

Tu-Th 6-7:45pm

Kresge 327

Instructor: Christina Waters, PhD – Office Hours: Thurs. 10-11 & by appt.

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Required text: ***After Modern Art***, Oxford University Press, 2000.

Syllabus subject to change at instructor's discretion.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This writing-specific course is concerned with the role of the artist in society — the dialogue between artists and their cultural environment. How do social stereotypes and expectations influence style and identity construction? How do artists comment upon the society in which they live, and how do these interventions and transformations take place? We will explore these questions by viewing and commenting upon a selection of documentary films that explore the creative, intellectual and political lives of artists. During the course we will act as cultural anthropologists of key visual strategies probing the ideological agendas of artists,.

The course is designed to explore contemporary thought within the visual arts. Special emphasis will be placed on current trends and shifts in artistic production, theory and criticism. Emphasis will be placed on art works that are artistically and intellectually inventive, as well as those that produce controversial, and often challenging results.

The intention is to understand how artists and visual producers respond to and are influenced by an increasingly shifting society where rapid cultural change, advances in technology, and the effects of globalization reconfigure how we perceive the world.

REQUIREMENTS:

This course places emphasis on the development of sound reading, writing, and visual interpretation skills. You will engage in short, in-class writing assignments and will produce weekly interpretive essays of roughly 2 pages in length. The final product in the course will be a 4-5 page analytic essay.

Art 150C is a lecture course augmented by intensive writing and discussion. Participation is key. You are required to come to class having completed all written assignments and to be prepared to discuss issues. Your peers are relying on you to discuss your responses to film screenings as well as your written work, so you must be both present and prepared.

Your grade will be determined 25% by in-class participation (including in-class writing and quizzes), 25% by discussion section participation and 50% by your performance on written assignments.

STUDENT OUTCOMES:

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Increase their ability to write effectively, both in terms of the mechanics of writing, and the conventions of writing within the discipline of visual art.
- Develop their critical thinking and visual interpretations skills.
- Attain a deeper understanding of their discipline and gain an awareness of the various intellectual currents that shape the development of visual art.
- Receive needed feedback and criticism on their writing through instructor and peer review—which will help student’s gain confidence, and develop a strong critical voice.
- Learn to develop your writing through the process of building a sustained argument over time through a process of careful revision.

READINGS:

Several chapters from the textbook, *After Modern Art*, will be read, discussed and examined. And while most of the course is rooted in visual analysis, any other assigned readings will be distributed via email in PDF format, or will be handed out in class. It is *essential* that you bring your readings to class on the days they are to be discussed.

IN-CLASS RULES:

No laptop computers in the classroom. Cell phones are to be turned off during class. Electronic accessories encourage frequent checking of email, Facebook, Twitter and the internet in general. I encourage you to take notes by hand and transcribe them electronically at a later date.

No headphones. No cell phones. No kidding.

Please check your email at least once a day, as there may be important updates on assignments and material transmitted during the quarter.

Art 150C - Winter Quarter, 2012 - Weekly SCHEDULE

Week 1

Tuesday: January 10 – brief introductions

Introduction to course requirements: grading, writing assignments, peer review process, etc. will be discussed in detail.

One-page in-class writing exercise – visual culture that makes the biggest impression.

Non-narrative, non-Hollywood

Kenneth Anger's post-modern pastiche

Avant Garde mini-films – **DVD 7116 v. 1**

Thursday: January 12: Challenging the Status Quo: Artistic Self-invention

Film screening: *Beautiful Losers* 90mins ("street art" and neo-pop crossing all categories through appropriation, fusion of graphic design, illustration, pop iconography.)

Week 2

Tuesday: January 17:

Hand-out on writing response papers

in-class writing about *Beautiful Losers*

2-page response draft due on Thursday

Thursday: January 19: Extreme Social Manipulation

Film screening *Warhol: DVD1536*

2-page response paper draft on *Beautiful Losers* due

Read Ch 4 - pp.93-128 - The Rise and Critique of Pop Art, in *After Modern Art* text

Week 3

Tuesday: January 24:

Film screenings: *The Legend of Leigh Bowery* (DVD 4847) Final response paper on *Beautiful Losers* due

Reading for Tues, Jan 31: Jameson article, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" (handout)

Thursday: January 26

Sexual Politics & Performance culture

Issues raised by Warhol and Bowery

Assignment for Tuesday - 3-page critical essay draft on Warhol and Bowery

Week 4

Tuesday: January 31: Artist as Social Critic

Close reading and analysis of the Jameson article

Draft paper due on Warhol/Bowery

Film Screening - William Kentridge: *Art from the Ashes* (DVD 3249)

3-page analytic essay on Warhol/Bowery due next Tuesday

Thursday: February 2:
Discussion of Kentridge- & in-class writing

Week 5

Tuesday: February 7

Discussion of chapters from *After Modern Art*

Film Screening : Art21 : PBS selections

Warhol/Bowery essay due

Reading: Ch. 7, *After Modern Art*, pp. 197- 231 - Postmodernism

Thursday: February 9:
Review of *After Modern Art* chapters

Week 6

Tuesday: February 14 Imaging the Spectacle of Celebrity

Film screening: *Annie Leibovitz: Life Through a Lens* (2007)

In-class discussion & writing

Thursday: February 16 - Film Screening: tba
2-page critical paper on Leibovitz due next class

Week 7

Tuesday: February 21

Autobiography as Social/Visual Response In-class discussion & writing

Film Screening: Madonna selected videos (DVD 359)- review of the Jameson article - relate to Madonna's creation of the moment and as a lens through which to consider multiple artistic styles & identities

Film screening: *Michael Jackson*

Response paper on Leibovitz due

3-page essay draft on *Madonna & Michael Jackson* due in next class

Thursday: February 23:
Film Screening: *Basquiat* - DVD 2641 106 mins.

Week 8

Tuesday: February 28-

Modernist & postmodern film - directors as artists with socially-relevant POV

Film Screening: *River & Tides: Andy Goldsworthy*

Draft 2-page essay on Goldsworthy due next Tuesday

Final essay on *Madonna/Michael Jackson* due

Thursday: March 1 Discussion of Goldsworthy film - and of independent film assignment

Assignment: to screen one of these films on reserve in Library Media Center:

Blade Runner (DVD 234)

The Matrix (DVD 309)

Children of Men (DVD 5977)

Prepare a draft film analysis essay of 4-5 pages, focusing on the film as a work of art and the director as artist with a unique vision and socio-cultural agenda

- * how does the film make its visual impact?
- * how is the director's point of view portrayed/conveyed?
- * who are the heroes? the anti-heroes? the "establishment"?

Week 9

Tuesday: March 6: **Visual Dystopia**

in-class discussion about paper strategies

handout of essay topics

Draft essay on Goldsworthy due

bring film essay notes to next class

Thursday: March 8 - independent meetings with students

Discussion of film analysis strategies

Goldsworthy essay due

Week 10

Tuesday: March 13 - discussion & review of final essay drafts

Thursday: March 15- LAST CLASS - **final paper due**

REQUIREMENTS:

In-class preparation and participation are crucial. Non-participation will influence your final grade. **Late assignments will be marked down one-half grade point for each day late. And yes, drafts are considered as assignments.**

Incompletes will NOT be given, except in cases of death in immediate family or serious illness, for which a note from student's doctor is mandatory.

CLASS ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION (25% OF FINAL GRADE)

During class we will be viewing and discussing an array of visual material. There may be an occasional quiz. In addition, there will be discussion and analysis, so attendance and punctuality are essential. You must attend all lectures. Be sure to let me or your TA know **in advance** if you are unable to attend class. If you are absent from class, you are

responsible for contacting a classmate for the information you missed. Three absences (for any reason!) will jeopardize your grade.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (50% OF FINAL GRADE)

Each week you will be required to write either a critical essay (two pages - 700 words). You will also write short in-class responses to film presentations.

DISCUSSION SECTION PARTICIPATION (25% OF FINAL GRADE)

STANDARD FORMATTING for papers

- Use only 12 point **black** type in Times or Times New Roman font.
- Essays should be 1 1/2 spaced or double-spaced
- Use 1.25 inch margins on the left and right, 1-inch margins top and bottom.
- Insert page numbers at the bottom of each page of your essay.
- All essays must have your name, date of submission, and "ART 150C" on them.
- Use a stapler. USE A STAPLER.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM (FROM THE STUDENT POLICIES AND REGULATIONS HANDBOOK)

—**102.011:** Cheating is defined as fraud, deceit, or dishonesty in an academic assignment, or using or attempting to use materials, or assisting others in using materials, which are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment in question. This includes, but is not limited to: A. Providing answers to or receiving answers from others for any academic assignment. In "group assignments" and "cooperative learning" situations, it is the responsibility of the student to ascertain from the instructor to what degree the work must be done exclusively by the student or may be done in collaboration with others; B. Using notes, information, calculators, or other electronic devices or programs during exams or for assignments from which they have been expressly or implicitly prohibited; C. Improperly obtaining or using improperly obtained information about an exam or assignment in advance of its availability to other students, or assisting others in doing so; D. Putting one's name on another person's exam or assignment; or E. Altering previously graded work for purposes of seeking a grade appeal.

—**102.012:** Plagiarism is defined as the use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging its source. This includes, but is not limited to: A. Copying from the writings or works of others into one's academic assignment without attribution, or submitting such works as if it were one's own; B. Using the views, opinions, or insights of another without acknowledgment; or C. Paraphrasing the characteristic or original phraseology, metaphor, or other literary device of another without proper attribution.

Citing Sources (Adapted 3/20/08 from: <http://nettrail.ucsc.edu/ethics/index.html>)

The ethics of research and academic communities demand that writers be credited for their work and their writing. To intentionally or unintentionally appropriate the ideas, language, or work of another without sufficient acknowledgement that such material is not one's own is plagiarism.

Paraphrasing Material

- Use a statement that credits the source somewhere in the paraphrase or summary, e.g., "According to Jonathan Kozol . . ."
 - Check your paraphrase or summary against the original text; correct any errors in content accuracy, and be sure to use quotation marks to set off any exact phrases from the original text
- Check your paraphrase or summary against sentence and paragraph structure, as copying those is also considered plagiarism.

