Art History 270

**Art/Identity/Politics: Issues of Representation in Contemporary Art**



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**Course Description:**  
This course is designed to introduce participants to various ways contemporary artists and art movements, primarily in the U.S., have explored the intersection of visual representation, identity (gender, ethnic, racial, sexual) and politics, one of the most persistent themes in art since the 1960s. **Participants will work through sequences of materials and assignments organized in weekly “modules” on Canvas according to their own individual schedules with a great degree of flexibility.** In the few cases where there is a fixed time that students will need to adhere to, multiple time slots will be offered so that everyone will be able to participate as fits their schedule.

Course content will be delivered through a series of Panopto video lectures and coordinated readings where participants will explore how artists have contested dominant representations of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, as well as other minority/marginalized “subjectivities,” and how artists have proposed alternatives for the representation of these constituencies. Online discussion forums, summary/reflective papers on readings and lecture topics, and more formal writing assignments have been designed to engage students with course topics, foster creative and critical thinking, allow dialogue concerning the stakes involved in visual representations, allow instructor assessment and evaluation of participants’ progress, and develop participants’ writing skills.

**“W” Credit Component:**

This course has been designated as a “W” or writing intensive course; this is not optional. As such, you may expect a substantial amount of writing assignments, writing tutorials, and feedback on your writing over the course of the quarter. An important method to improve writing proficiency is through revision in response to feedback. You are required to revise three writing assignments this quarter. (You must complete both the initial assignment and the revision in order to receive credit for this course.) The writing assignments you are required to revise are:

1. Week 2, Module 3 Summary/Reflective Essay
2. Formal Essay #1
3. Formal Essay #2

**Required Readings:**

There is no text for this course. Pdf files of course readings are posted on Canvas. Each weekly “module” on Canvas contains the course readings for that week. For most readings, I will provide an introduction and “reading guides” that will help you focus on and engage with key ideas.

**Student Responsibilities:**

**3 Formal Essays: (50% of overall grade)**

Each “Formal Essay” will require students to write longer essays (5-8 pages) on topics covered in the Panopto lectures and course readings. These essays are more formal and directed than the Summary/Reflective essays, requiring students to both summarize and synthesize course materials, and to cite sources. You will be required to revise the first two Formal Essays in response to feedback. You will find a detailed prompt, video introduction to the assignment and various writing tutorials on Canvas in the module associated with each Long Essay. These Formal Essays will be graded on a 100-point scale. See the prompts on Canvas.

**Summary/Reflective essays on reading/lecture assignments (25%)**

To ensure that participants have on strong comprehension of key ideas from course readings and lectures, and to allow me to offer feedback, students will write several Summary/Reflective essays on the readings and lecture materials. I will provide you with two “guides” to help you compose these informal essays. First, you will get a specific, if general prompt for each Summary/Reflective Essay. Second, you can refer to the reading and lecture guides, or even answer the questions provided in them for that week as you compose your essays. These essays will be graded on a 10-point scale. You will be required to rewrite the “Week 2, Module 3 Summary/Reflective Essay” based upon feedback you will receive. See the prompts on Canvas.

**Participation in weekly Discussion Forums (25%)**

The topics of this course lend themselves to rich discussion and manifold perspectives. Candidly, this is often difficult to achieve in an online course. My hope is that you will engage with each other, respectfully and thoughtfully in the weekly online Discussion Forums. Each week I will provide you with specific topics, ideas and issues raised in the lectures and reading. Each student will be required to make one post in the Discussion Forum before the end of the day on Wednesdays. Once you have posted, you will be able to see others students’ posts. You are required to respond to at least one of these posts from another student by the end of the day on Fridays. You are welcome and encouraged to post/respond as many times as you desire. Your posts/responses will be graded on a 10-point scale.

**Late papers and discussion post policy:**

Papers will be marked down 1 point for each day they are late and will not be accepted more than five calendar days following the due date. Discussion posts will be marked down 2 points for each day they are late and will not be accepted if more than 3 days late. If you have a serious conflict or emergency, please talk to me about it in advance of the due date and I will work with you.

**VeriCite anti-plagairism software:**

**Notice**: The University has a license agreement with VeriCite, an educational tool that helps prevent or identify plagiarism from Internet resources and work submitted by previous students of this course. I will use the service in this class; all assignments and quizzes you submit will be checked by VeriCite. The VeriCite Report will indicate the amount of original text in your work and whether all material that you quoted, paraphrased, summarized, or used from another source is appropriately referenced. All instances of intentional plagiarism will result in zero credit on the assignment, and a report of indicating academic dishonesty to the School of Art and the University of Washington. For further information, visit: <https://itconnect.uw.edu/learn/tools/canvas/canvas-help-for-instructors/assignments-grading/vericite/plagiarism-faqs/>

**Course Outline and Schedule:**

**(Specific prompts for the assignments listed below will be found on Canvas.)**

**Week 1: *Introduction: Setting the stage:***

Module 1: **Introduction to the course: overview**

**Assignments:**

1. Panopto video lecture

2. Discussion forum—write a brief personal bio and reflection on your sense of your own identity and post. See prompt on Canvas.

Module 2: ***Problems in the Field of Representation*: overview of how “woman” and “femininity” have been represented historically in western culture.**

**Assignments:**

1. Panopto video lecture

2. Summary/Reflection essay

**Readings**:

▪Brian Wallis (excerpt) “What Wrong with this Picture: An Introduction,” from *Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (1984): xi-xvi.

▪John Berger, Chapter 3 from *Ways of Seeing* (1972): 45-64.

▪Jean Robertson and Craig McDaniel, “Identity” in *Themes of Contemporary Art* (2013): 40-76.

▪Key terms from David Macey, *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory*

(2000): *Browse this, and use it as needed throughout the quarter*.

**Optional reading:**

▪David Summers, “Representation” from *Critical Terms for Art History* (1996): 3-16.

**Week 2:  *First Generation Feminist Arts in the United States:***

Module 3: “**First Generation” Feminist Arts in the United States: strategic essentialism**

**Assignments:**

1. Panopto video lectures

2. Discussion forum

3. Summary/Reflection essay

**Readings:**

▪Norma Broude and Mary Garrard, “Introduction: Feminism and Art in the

Twentieth Century,” from *The Power of Feminist Art* (1994): 10-29.

▪Rebecca Schneider, “Eye/Body: Carolee Schneemann

beside Herself,” *The Explicit Body in Performance* (1997): 32-42.

▪Gloria Feman Orenstein, “Recovering Her Story: Feminist Artists Reclaim the Great Goddess,” from *The Power of Feminist Art* (1994):

174-189

**Optional Readings:**

▪Claudia Mesch, “Feminisms,” from *Art and Politics* (2013): 99-124.

▪Simone de Beavoir, (excerpt) *The Second Sex* (1949): xv-xviii.

▪ Judith Butler, “Gendering the Body: Beauvoir’s Philosophical Contribution,” from *Women, Knowledge and Reality: Explorations in Feminist Philosophy* (1989): 253-262.

▪Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (excerpt) (1963): 62-72

**Week 3: *First Generation Feminist Arts in the United States***

Module 4: **Case Study: West Coast Feminist Arts: Herstory and “visibility”**

**Assignments:**

1. Panopto video lectures

2. Discussion forum

3. Summary/Reflection essay

**Readings:**

▪Arlene Raven, “Womanhouse,” from *The Power of Feminist Art* (1994):

48-63.

▪Lucy Lippard, “Setting a New Place: Judy Chicago’s *Dinner Party*,”

(1974), *Get the Message: A Decade of Art for Social Change* (1984):

109-113.

▪Jeff Kelley. “The Body Politics of Suzanne Lacy,” *But is It Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism* (Seattle: Bay Press 1995): 221-49.

▪Elizabeth Hess. “Guerilla Girl Power: Why the Art World Needs a Conscience,” in *But is It Art?* (1995): 309-332.

**Optional Reading:**

▪Amelia Jones, “The Sexual Politics of the Dinner

Party: A Critical Context,” from *Reclaiming Female Agency: Feminist*

*Art History after Postmodernism* (2005): 409-433.

**Week 4: Second Generation Feminists Arts: “decentered subjectivity”**

Module 5:

**Assignments:**

1. Panopto video lectures

2. Discussion forum

3. **Week 2 Summary/Reflective Essay-Revision due**

Readings:

▪Hal Foster, et al., *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Anti-modernism,*

*Postmodernism*, v. II (2004): 580-583.

▪Margaret Iversen, “Fashioning Feminine Identity,” *Art International*

(Spring 1988): 52-57.

▪Kate Linker, (excerpt) *Love for Sale: The Words and*

*Pictures of Barbara Kruger* (1990): 12-18, 27-30, 59-64.

**Optional Reading:**

▪Kate Linker, “Representation and Sexuality,” from *Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (1984): 391-415.

**Week 5: Recap, preparation for Formal Essay #1, and discussion**

Module 6:

**Assignments:**

1. Panopto video lecture

2. Discussion forum

3. **Formal Essay #1**

**Week 6: Representing Race:**

Module 7 **Black/African American U.S. Women Artists and Feminism**

**Assignments:**

1. Panopto video lectures

2. Discussion forum

**Readings:**

▪Hal Foster et. al., *Art since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*, Vol. 2 (2004): 639-44.

▪bell hooks, “Marginality as Site of Resistance,” from *Out There:*

*Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures* (1990): 341-43.

▪Adrian Piper, “The Triple Negation of Colored Women Artists,” from

*The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader* (2003): 239-248

**Optional Readings:**

▪Yolanda Lopez and Moira Roth, “Social Protest: Racism and Sexism,”

from *The Power of Feminist Art* (1994): 140-57, 293-94.

▪ Lowery Stokes Sims, “Aspects of Performance in the Work of Black American Woman Artists,” from *Feminist Art Criticism: An Anthology* (1988): 207-225.

▪Claudia Mesch, “Postcolonial Identity and the Civil Rights Movement,” from *Art and Politics* (2013): 44-67.

**Week 7: Black/African American U.S. Male Artists:**

Module 8

**Assignments:**

1. Panopto video lectures

2. Discussion forum

3. **Formal Essay #2**

**Readings:**

▪Claudia Mesch, “Postcolonial Identity and the Civil Rights Movement,” from *Art and Politics* (2013): 44-67.

▪Hal Foster, et al. (excerpt) *Art since 1900* (2004): 639-644.

▪Thelma Golden, “My Brother,” from *Black Male Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art* (1994): 19-43.

**Optional Reading:**

▪bell hooks, “Feminism Inside: Toward a Black Body Politic,” from *Black Male Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art* (1994): 127-139.

**Week 8: LGBTQ Arts**

Module 9 **Assignments:**

1. Panopto video lectures

2. Discussion forum

3. **Formal Essay #1 Revision due**

**Readings:**

▪Anne D’Alleva, “Sexualities, LGBTI Studies and Queer Theory” *Look*

*Again: Art History and Critical Theory* (2005):70-74.

▪ Claudia Mesch, “Gay Identity/Queer Art” from *Art and Politics* (2013): 125-147.

▪Hal Foster, et al. from *Art since 1900* (2004): 607-611.

▪Richard Meyer, “Vanishing Points: Art, Aids, and the Problem of

Visibility,” *Outlaw Culture* (2002): 225-275.

**Optional Readings:**

▪Douglas Crimp, “Mourning and Militancy,” from *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures* (1990): 233-245.

▪Robert Atkins, “Goodbye Lesbian/Gay History, Hello Queer Sensibility,”

*Art Journal* (Winter 1996): 80-85.

**Week 9: Case Study: The Culture Wars**

Module 10

**Assignments:**

1. Panopto video lectures

2. Discussion forum

3. **Formal Essay #2 Revision due**

**Readings:**

▪Richard Bolton et al, (excerpts) from *Culture Wars: Documents from the*

*Recent Controversies in the Arts* (1992): 3-26 (Bolton), 27 (Wildmon),

33-36 (Gorton), 90-91 (Hughes), 201-204 (Lippard).

▪Various newspaper articles: see Canvas

## **Week 10 & 11: Contemporary American Indian Arts and Postcolonialism**

Module 11

**Assignments:**

1. Panopto video lectures

2. Discussion forum

3. Discussion forum reflection on personal “identity”

4. **Formal Essay #3**

**Readings:**

▪Anne D’Alleva, “Cultural Studies and Postcolonial Theory,” *Look Again* (2005): 76-81.

▪Lisa Corrin, “Mining the Museum: Artists Look at Museums, Museums

Look at Themselves, *Mining the Museum* (1994): 1-22.

▪Jean Fisher, “In Search of the Inauthentic: Disturbing Signs in Recent Native American Art,” *Art Journal* (Fall 1992): 44-50.

▪Richard Shiff. “The Necessity of Jimmy Durham’s Jokes,” *Art Journal*

(Fall 1992): 18-27.

▪James Luna. “”I’ve Always Wanted To Be an American Indian,” *Art Journal* (Fall 1992): 44-50.