Art History 209 A W: Art Now

Winter 2020

Lecture T/TH 12:30-1:50pm in Sieg Hall 134, compulsory writing sections on Wednesday

Professor Adair Rounthwaite, [vadair@uw.edu](mailto:vadair@uw.edu), office hours Tuesday/Thursday 10:30-11:30am or by appointment, Art Building 367

TA Genevieve Hulley, [ghulley@uw.edu](mailto:ghulley@uw.edu), office hours Tuesdays 2-4pm in Art Building 008

# Course description

Contemporary art today confronts viewers with a bewildering array of images, objects, and processes. This can leave viewers thinking: can anything count as “art?” And what’s the point of it all? In this class, we explore how contemporary art connects artists and viewers in forms of creative engagement with pressing social and political issues. We will see how artists use diverse strategies to help us consider who we are, how our world is changing, and how we can best inhabit it together. Across a set of themes that address the state of contemporary global culture, students will discuss how today’s art speaks to both individual and collective life.

The course trains students how to express these ideas in clear, structured pieces of writing. We focus on the levels of description, contextualization, and analysis as key steppingstones in writing about art.

# Learning goals

In this class, students will:

* Become familiar with a wide range of contemporary art practices of the past twenty years, and with important milestones in the modern art from which they evolved.
* Learn to describe artworks in detail, both orally and in writing.
* Learn how to write in a way that uses historical, social, and political context for to help the reader understand contemporary art.
* Craft their own written analyses of contemporary artworks that draw on description and context to make convincing arguments about what the work achieves and the kinds of experience it creates for viewers.

# Evaluation

The course evaluation consists of quizzes, writing assignments including a graded revision, and participation. You must complete all assignments in order to pass the course.

Quizzes

There are five Canvas quizzes throughout the quarter, which are designed to build the skills in description, contextualization, and analysis you will use in your writing. The first quiz is designed to help you practice the format and is graded based on completion for 1% of the total course grade. Among the remaining four quizzes, you will drop the lowest grade, and your three strongest will be averaged for 14% of your total course grade. For each quiz, you will do a reading in advance, and be expected to answer questions based on it (the other questions are based on lecture material). Each quiz also requires you to submit a short piece of writing via Canvas, which will be graded on completion for one point and used in exercises in section designed to strengthen your writing.

Quizzes take place every two weeks and are not timed. For the first Quiz you have an infinite number of attempts so that you can view it early and begin getting a hang of the format. For each subsequent quiz, you have one attempt.

Papers

There are two major 5-page papers, one of which has a compulsory graded rewrite. The papers will draw on class material and on visits to local art galleries and museums. Paper #1 is worth 25%, its rewrite is worth 20%, and paper #2 is worth 30%.

Participation

Participation takes place in class orally and via Poll Everywhere. Answering PE questions in class will make up 10% of your final grade. Oral participation is encouraged but not mandatory. Students with excellent oral participation (i.e. who offer constructive, relevant contributions in class at least once a week) can earn up to a 1% bonus on their final course grade.

There is no final exam during the exam period.

# Evaluation overview:

Paper #1 (5 pages, double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font; in response to

prompt available on Canvas) = 25%

Revision of paper #1 = 20%

Paper #2 (5 pages) = 30%

First quiz = 1% (for completion)

Remaining four quizzes = average of 14%, with your lowest grade dropped

Class and section participation via Poll Everywhere = 10%

Oral participation = potential 1% bonus for excellent contributions

# Readings

You are required to purchase Gilda Williams’ book *How to Write About*

*Contemporary Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2014), which is available online and at the

bookstore. Each quiz is also accompanied by a reading that you complete in advance of doing the quiz, in preparation to answer questions about it.

# Writing section

The Wednesday writing section is compulsory for everyone enrolled in the course. It is not

possible to take the course without a W credit. Like the lecture, sections will employ

Poll Everywhere to facilitate participation, and so you must come to class with your

device to join the session. Because of the participation component via Poll Everywhere, and because of the occupancy limitations of our classrooms, it is not possible for you to attend a different section than the one for which you are signed up.

# Class lecture schedule

Please note that you need to read the required reading from Gilda Williams **before** your Wednesday section in the week for which it’s listed. So for example you must read pages 9-17 before section in the second week of class.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Topic** | **Work due** |
| T 1/7 | Introduction  Syllabus review |  |
| TH 1/9 | The Visual Vocabulary of Contemporary Art |  |
| T 1/14 | Art and the Environment, Part 1 |  |
| TH 1/16 | Art and the Environment, Part 2 | Before Wednesday’s section: read Williams pages 9-17  Canvas Quiz #1 due Thursday by 11:59pm |
| T 1/20 | Race and Ethnicity, Part 1 |  |
| TH 1/22 | Race and Ethnicity, Part 2 | Before Wednesday’s section: read Williams pages 18-41 |
| T 1/28 | Art and Protest, Part 1 | Paper #1 due Tuesday by 11:59pm via Canvas  Required viewing: *The Yes Men Are Revolting*, dir. Andy Bichlbaum and Mike Bonanno, U.S.A., 2015. Available for purchase on platforms including Amazon, iTunes, and Vimeo (https://vimeo.com/ondemand/  theyesmenarerevolting) |
| TH 1/30 | **Class cancellation due to illness** | Canvas Quiz #2 due Thursday by 11:59pm |
| T 2/4 | Art and Protest, Part 2 | Before Wednesday’s section: read Williams pages 41-68 |
| TH 2/6 | Art and Public Space |  |
| T 2/11 | Gender and Sexuality, Part 1: Feminist Art and Feminist Politics | Before Wednesday’s section: read Williams pages 68-105 |
| TH 2/13 | Gender and Sexuality, Part 2: Queer Desire and Creativity | Canvas Quiz #3 due Friday by 11:59pm |
| T 2/18 | Art and Technology, Part 1 | Before Wednesday’s section: read Williams pages 106-25  Paper #1 revision due Tuesday at 11:59pm via Canvas |
| TH 2/20 | Art and Technology, Part 2 |  |
| T 2/25 | Art and War, Part 1 | Before Wednesday’s section: read Williams pages 126-62 |
| TH 2/27 | Art and War, Part 2: Monuments and Counter-Monuments | Canvas Quiz #4 due Thursday by 11:59pm |
| T 3/3 | Art and Finance, Part 1 | Before Wednesday’s section: read Williams 163-209 (last section of Williams, 220-35, is optional) |
| TH 3/5 | Art and Finance, Part 2 |  |
| T 3/10 | Art and Migration, Part 1 |  |
| TH 3/12 | Art and Migration, Part 2 | Canvas Quiz #5 due Thursday by 11:59pm  Paper #2 due on Friday, March 13th at 11:59pm via Canvas |

# Panopto

Panopto recordings are available on Canvas after all lectures.

# TLC at the Writing Center

I encourage students to participate in a TLC group at the Odegaard Writing Center, which will provide group writing support for English Language Learners that is specific to this course. Students who participate will likely see their grades go up organically, because of the improvement it brings to their writing skills.

# Participation policy

Participation in this class is graded via Poll Everywhere and also involves oral contributions in lecture and section. The PE questions are part of your core grade, but the oral participation is for a bonus point. We start counting participation points from the second week of class except for students who demonstrate they didn’t register until later in the quarter. In addition, each student will have two classes of participation waived to account for illness, forgetting your device, or other events that may prevent you from participating in an occasional class. As such you don’t need to contact me for individual, one-off class absences. If, for example, you miss a week of class for severe illness, get in touch at that point.

# Grading policy

Extra credit: The only extra credit opportunity consists in the potential 1% bonus point for oral contributions.

Lateness: We will deduct 5% for every day, including weekends, that a written assignment is late, counting from the time of the original submission (11:59pm).

Rescheduling: We cannot reschedule the online quizzes or provide extensions. But we will drop your lowest grade from the quarter, which provides a cushion if you need to miss a quiz because of illness or travel.

Grade revision: You are welcome to come and discuss with me a grade that you think to

be unfair. However, should you choose to reopen consideration of the grade, I reserve the

right to lower as well as to raise it if I believe that the initial evaluation was inaccurate.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism and cheating carry a heavy grade penalty decided at my discretion, which can range from receiving a 0 on the assignment in question to failing the course. If you are tempted to cheat, I recommend that you consider a visit to the University’s Counseling Center to get support concerning stress and emotional coping.

# Technology policy

You are permitted to use your devices in class to take notes and to access Poll Everywhere. Texting, talking on your phone, or distracting yourself, other students and me through

extracurricular internet use will lead to a reduced participation grade. These policies hold

for both the lecture and the section meetings.

# Accommodation

I look forward to working with students who may need learning accommodations (for the

official School of Art policy see the accompanying PDF). If you are registered with Disabled Student Services, or documentation concerning travel for varsity sports, please make sure I

receive it within one week of the start of class.

# Anti-discrimination

As your instructor I am committed to making our classroom a space without discrimination, where each one of you feels comfortable expressing yourself, and equally, is willing to listen to your peers express themselves. If discrimination does arise, I invite you to discuss it with me and we can make a plan for how to rectify it. Being committed to anti-discrimination doesn’t mean that you need to be nervous about saying the “wrong” thing. Rather, it’s a commitment to process, in which all of us agree to remain generous and self-reflexive, and to help each other out in the collective work of establishing a positive group dynamic. See below for the School of Art’s official Equal Opportunity policy.

# Course grading scale

4-Point Scale              Percentage Scale

4.0                               96-100

3.9                               95

3.8                               94

3.7                               93

3.6                               92

3.5                               88-91

3.4                               87

3.3                               86

3.2                               85

3.1                               84

3.0                               80-83

2.9                               79

2.8                               78

2.7                               77

2.6                               76

2.5                               75

2.4                               74

2.3                               73

2.2                               72

2.1                               71

2.0                               70

1.9                               69

1.8                               68

1.7                               67

1.6                               66

1.5                               65

1.4                               64

1.3                               63

1.2                               62

1.1                               61

1.0                               60

0.9                               59

0.8                               58

0.7                               57 (lowest passing grade)

**University of Washington**

**School of Art Policies and Procedures**

Equal Opportunity

The School of Art reaffirms its policy of equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran in accordance with UW policy and applicable federal and state statutes and regulations.

Disability Accommodation

* If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz, (206) 543-8924 (V/TTY) or [uwdss@u.washington.edu](mailto:uwdss@u.washington.edu).
* If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodation, please present the letter to me so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for the class.

Participation Policy

* Absences from class prevent participation and may negatively affect grades.
* If you miss class due to illness or emergencies immediately notify your instructor and insure that all missed assignments and exams are completed.

Plagiarism

* Plagiarism is defined as using in your own work the creations, ideas, words, inventions, or work of someone else without formally acknowledging them through the use of quotation marks, footnotes, bibliography, or other reference.
* Please check with your instructor if you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism.
* Instances of plagiarism will be referred to the Vice Provost/Special Asst to the President for Student Relations and may lead to disciplinary action.

Incomplete Grades an incomplete is given only when you:

* Have been in attendance and done satisfactory work through the eighth week of the quarter.
* Have furnished satisfactory proof to the instructor that the work cannot be completed because of illness or other circumstances beyond your control.

Concerns about a course, an instructor, or a teaching assistant

* Talk with the instructor in charge of the class as soon as possible.
* If you are not comfortable talking with the instructor or are not satisfied with the response that you receive, contact the Director of Advising and Student Services, Judith Clark, Art 104, 206-543-0646
* If you are not satisfied with the response that you receive you may contact the Chair of the School o f Art, Christopher Ozubko, 102 Art.

Examination Schedule

* Students are required to take exams as scheduled.
* Exceptions are granted in cases of documented emergencies and must be approved by instructor.

Grade Appeal Procedure If you are concerned that the grade you received for a class is incorrect:

* Contact the instructor who issued the grade and discuss the matter with her/him.
* If not resolved to your satisfaction make an appointment with the Director of Academic Advising and Student Services, Judith Clark, 104 Art, 543-0646.
* If necessary submit a written appeal to the Director of the School of Art who will take the matter under advisement and call a faculty committee to review the student’s course work and make a final determination concerning the grade dispute.

Materials Fees

* All art and art history classes have materials fees that are billed on your tuition statement. Information is available in 104 Art.
* If you drop a class in the first five days of the quarter, the fee is automatically removed from the quarterly billing.
* If you drop after the first five days (and before using any class materials) you must petition for a refund. Studio Art Fee Refund Petitions are available in 102 Art.
* The School of Art cannot process any petitions received after noon on the last day of the quarter.

Building Use Policy

* The Art building is open to students 365 days a year from 6am to 11pm.
* Students wishing to work in the building after 11pm obtain a key and building pass from Ann Greene in 102 Art.
* For the safety of our students, the campus police frequently monitor the facility. Individuals found without a pass may be asked to leave the building.
* All students working after hours in the studios and classrooms must maintain quiet, refrain from tampering with the work of others, and follow all regulations established by the faculty for each classroom/studio.
* Students who are not enrolled in classes for the quarter may not use the facilities, classrooms or studios in the School of Art.
* All students taking studio classes are expected to follow faculty direction in terms of keeping classrooms clean, safe, and workable for themselves and others.

Copy Write Policy

The SoA regularly displays works of art that students create in class, images of student works, and images of students participating in SoA activities. We do this to promote our students, their work and the School, and the ways we display student works and related images vary widely. Use of such images is traditional among all art schools and we assume that by participating in UW SoA classes and activities students have no objection. However, if you do have concerns about these image uses, please contact Academic Advising and Student Services (206-543-0646 or uaskart@u.ashington.edu).