**Eastern Europe and Global Contemporary Art**

Professor Adair Rounthwaite

Spring quarter, Fridays 9-12 (alternating synchronous Zoom and asynchronous weeks)

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This seminar examines questions about the global nature of contemporary art production and art’s relationship to its context, via the analysis of modern and contemporary art in Central and Eastern Europe. Art of this region coalesced as a focus within English-language art history in the 1990s. Since that time, the field has come a long way from viewing this art as something repressed and isolated that struggled to thrive “behind” the Iron Curtain and has begun to look at the lively forms of intellectual exchange that connected artists to each other and to colleagues across the world. Moreover, even under the most repressive state conditions, censorship didn’t unilaterally determine creative possibilities, but rather set in motion complex, uneven power relationships between artists and the state. Our seminar will use Central and Eastern Europe as a case study to think through questions about how art is connected to its context, specifically, how it can respond to difficult political circumstances without being unilaterally determined by them. Our readings will place texts about the region in conversation with others written on themes of transnational and postcolonial modernism from other fields, in order to develop a comparative understanding of how to approach the art histories of a given geographic area. Regardless of whether you have an existing interest in the region, the seminar will provide opportunities to reflect on trenchant questions about art, politics, and social worlds that have wide-ranging importance for artists and scholars today.

The course is organized with a synchronous Zoom discussion on Friday from 9 to 12 every *other* week. On the alternate weeks, we will work together to annotate texts using hypothes.is and will use discussion tools to share our thoughts about material we view online. Students can choose either to write a major paper, or to write two shorter response papers that address directed prompts.

This course is designed primarily for graduate students in Art, Art History, and related Arts and Humanities fields. Advanced undergraduates may also enroll if they have done significant relevant coursework; if that is your situation, please contact me to discuss registration.

**Evaluation**

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| **Option A:** Two 5-page response papers, due in weeks 5 and 10. These response papers will be based on prompts posted to Canvas. This option is strongly recommended for MFAs.  **Option B:** A 15-page seminar paper, due in week 10. PhD students in the arts and humanities should choose this option unless there are compelling reasons to do otherwise. Students will submit a one-page proposal by week 4. | 50% |
| Participation in Hypothes.is group annotations in non-synchronous weeks, and contribution to reading questionnaire. See Assignments on Canvas for a description of the criteria. | 25% |
| Oral participation in synchronous weeks. | 25% |

**Weekly Schedule**

Please note that for the weeks we meet, you must complete the assigned readings *before* the meeting. For the asynchronous weeks, you must begin your annotation work by Wednesday at the latest (i.e. for the asynchronous week of April 9, start annotating no later than Wednesday the 14th). All readings will be available on Canvas as PDFs, both in the Files section and organized by week in Modules. Note that the amount of reading required is much shorter for the weeks where we meet synchronously on Friday.

Our class is participating in a UW pilot of the Hypothes.is LMS app in Canvas, which will help our learning technology staff decide whether to adopt the app system-wide. I am excited about the potential of this tool to deepen your individual reading and create conversation amongst the class about the texts. Please see Assignments in Canvas for instructions on how to approach annotation.

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| **Date +**  **Deadlines** | **Method** | **Topic and Readings** |
| April 2 | SYNC, Friday meeting | **Introduction**  Éva Forgács, “How the New Left Invented East-European Art.” *Centropa* III, no. 2 (May 2003): 93-104.  David Joselit, “Synchronization,” *Heritage and Debt: Art in Globalization*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2020, pp. 37-84. |
| April 9 | ASYNC | **Nationalism and Internationalist Modernism**  Bojana Videkanić, “Non-Aligned Modernism in the Making: Building Parallel Transnational Culture,” *Non-Aligned Modernism: Socialist Postcolonial Aesthetics in Yugoslavia, 1945-85*. Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2020, pp. 111-175.  Chika Okeke-Agulu, “Introduction: Postcolonial Modernism,” *Postcolonial Modernism: Art and Decolonization in 20th-Century Nigeria*. Durham: Duke UP, 2015, pp. 1-19.  Aniko Szucs, “The Theatre of Hungarian Indians and Informants,” *Performance Research* 17 3 (2012): 95-101. |
| April 16 | SYNC, Friday meeting | **Life Inside/Outside Ideology**  Slavoj Žižek, “Why Are Laibach and NSK Not Fascists?” in *NSK: From Kapital to Capital*, eds. Zdenka Badovinac, Eda Čufer and Anthony Gardener. Cambridge and Ljubljana: MIT Press and Moderna galerija, 2015, pp. 202-4.  András Forgách, *No Live Files Remain*, trans. Paul Olchváry. London: Scribner, 2018 [1997]. |
| April 23  Option B submit 1-page proposal by April 22nd at midnight | ASYNC | **Alternatives and Undergrounds**  Klara Kemp-Welch, “Introduction” and “Reticence,” *Antipolitics in Central European Art: Reticence as Dissidence under Post-Totalitarian Rule 1956-1989.* London: I.B. Taurus, 2014, pp. 1-11 and 185-220.  Ksenya Gurshtein, “Dissecting Dissent and Its Discontents [Review of Klara Kemp-Welch's Antipolitics in Central European Art].” *ArtMargins* 5, no. 1 (2016): 96-107.  Alexei Yurchak, “Ideology Inside Out: Ethics and Poetics,” *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005, pp. 77-125. |
| April 30  Option A submit 1st response paper by April 29th at midnight | SYNC | **Conceptualisms**  Mladen Stilinović, *Texts*. Zagreb: self-published, 2011. |
| May 7 | ASYNC | **Encounters with Dominant Discourse – Comparative Perspectives**  Piotr Piotrowski, “The Geography and History of Art in Eastern Europe,” *In the Shadow of Yalta: Art and the Avant-garde in Eastern Europe, 1945-*1989. Trans. Anna Brzyski. London: Reaktion Books, 2009, pp. 11-30.  Piotr Piotrowski, “How to Write a History of Central‐East European Art?” *Third Text* 23, no. 1 (January 2009): 5-14.  Mari-Carmen Ramirez, “Beyond ‘The Fantastic’: Framing Identity in U.S. Exhibitions of Latin American Art,” *Art Journal* 51 4 (Winter 1992): 60-68.  Copeland, Huey, and Thompson, Krista. "Afrotropes: A User's Guide." *Art Journal* 76, no. 3-4 (2017): 7-9. Online at <http://artjournal.collegeart.org/?p=9755>  Leah Dickerman et. al., “Afrotropes: A Conversation with Huey Copeland and Krista Thompson,” *October* 162 (Fall 2017): 3-18. |
| May 14 | SYNC | **Body Art**  Zdenka Badkovinac, introduction to *Body and the East*. Ljubljana: Moderna galerija, 1998, pp. 9-18. |
| May 21 | ASYNC | **Architecture and Urbanism**  Christina Schwenkel, *Building Socialism: The Afterlife of East German Architecture in Urban Vietnam*. Durham: Duke UP, 2020, pp. 106-128, 131-58.   |  | | --- | | Łukasz Stanek, *Architecture in Global Socialism: Eastern Europe, West Africa, and the Middle East in the Cold War*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2020, pages TBA. | |
| May 28 | SYNCH | **Politicized Art of the Post-Socialist Period**  Anya Bernstein, “An Inadvertent Sacrifice: Body Politics and Sovereign Power in the Pussy Riot Affair.” *Critical Inquiry* 40, no. 1 (Fall 2013): 220-41. |
| June 4  **By the end of Tues. June 8th**, Option A submit 2nd response paper, and Option B submit final research paper | SYNCH | **Concluding discussion**  Read “The Wayland Rudd Collection and the Network of Mutuality: An Interview with Yevgeniy Fiks” on *ArtMargins Online* (<https://artmargins.com/the-wayland-rudd-collection-and-the-network-of-mutuality-an-interview-with-yevgeniy-fiks/>) and a selection of four other recent book reviews or short features from the same site, in preparation for a closing discussion about the future of the field.  Students who selected Option B, the research essay, will also speak for five minutes about the topics of their papers. |

# Communication Policy

Especially as this is a digital course, you MUST check your UW email and Canvas notifications multiple times a week and respond promptly to emails from me and from your peers. I aim to reply to you within 24 hours during the week for urgent issues, however I am typically unable to respond to email between 4:30pm on Friday and 7pm on Sunday due to the demands of caring for two kids under the age of five. If it’s been a couple of days since you emailed me and I haven’t answered, please go ahead and send a reminder email. I will not be at all insulted, as I probably have just lost track of your message.

# Participation policy

Excellent participation consists in doing the readings, being present for all synchronous class sessions and contributing thoughtfully to discussion every session. Class sessions missed without prior discussion will result in a steep decrease in the participation grade.

# Grading policy

Lateness: I reserve the right to deduct 5% for every day, including weekends, that a written assignment is late. If you are experiencing circumstances that will prevent you from submitting work on time, please talk to me as soon as possible, without waiting until the deadline has passed.

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.

# Accommodation

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

official School of Art policy, see supplementary document). If you are registered with Disabled Student Services, 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. As an able-bodied, cys-gendered white woman, I am committed to the ongoing act of taking responsibility for my position of power within the digital classroom, and working to make it a welcoming space for others who don’t share my experiences or opinions. The School of Art’s official Equal Opportunity policy is available on the School website.