San José State University Department of Art & Art History
Art 282A, Seminar in the Theory and Criticism of Contemporary Art, Fall 2015

Amy M. Ho, Blue, 2012

Instructor: Dr. Dore Bowen, Associate Professor of Art History & Visual Culture
Office Location: Art Bldg. 123
Telephone: (408) 924-4721
Email: dore.bowen@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday 1-3pm and by appointment
Class Days/Time: Thursday 3:00-5:45pm
Classroom: Art Bldg. 110

Course Description
This graduate seminar provides an overview of significant topics in contemporary art. The course is organized around issues that have been and continue to be relevant to the arts such as modernism/postmodernism, issues of gender and race, and the role of popular culture and new technology. By the end of the semester students will be able to read complex essays, discuss, and write about culture with an understanding of the theoretical and practical stakes involved, and situate contemporary artists within these intellectual currents.

Course Learning Outcomes
On successful completion of this course students shall be able to:
CLO 1) understand major ideas that currently inform art practice and theory;
CLO 2) be able to articulate and debate these ideas in verbal discussion;
CLO 3) be able to elaborate upon these ideas through written argumentation.

Required Texts/Readings
1) Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985, Second Edition, editors Z. Kocur and S. Leung (London: Blackwell Press, 2010). You ought to order the book ASAP online or purchase at the Spartan bookstore. This is the required textbook for this course.

2) Additional texts will be made available via online links in the course schedule.

Library Liaison
Rebecca Kohn, rebecca.kohn@sjsu.edu or (408) 808-2007.
**Course Requirements and Assignments**

It is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf).

1) **Weekly In-Class Assignments (CLO 1, 2):** This is 30% of the final grade. The assignments are graded Pass/No Pass.

   Each week students will need to read the assigned essays at least twice before class, take notes, and prepare the weekly assignment for in-class presentation. The “Assignment” listed on the course schedule will be the topic of discussion for the second half of the class. Be prepared to discuss your response to the reading and assignment. Participation is mandatory.

2) **One Class Presentation (CLO 1, 2):** This presentation is 30% of the final grade.

   A) **Preparation for your presentation:**
   The two students assigned to present together for a designated class ought to meet and discuss the assigned essays outside of class. Analyze the text(s) together. Ask questions. Debate the ideas. After discussing the essay(s) and summarizing the argument and key terms from the reading your team will choose a contemporary artwork(s) that you would like the class to consider in relation to the readings. (If the schedule lists an artwork in relation to the week’s topic you must address this work but can choose another as well.)

   B) **On the day of your presentation in class from 3:15-4:15pm:**
   On the day of your presentation your team should prepare to:
   1) define the essay(s) argument and points; 2) define at least three significant terms; 3) discuss one exemplary quotation from the essay; and 4) project and discuss examples of contemporary art that you believe productively complicates the essay.

   *Note: If you would like to use a projector on the day of your presentation you must be sure to reserve it with Bob in Art 139. Be sure to let Bob know if you need speakers too. Your group is responsible for fetching the projector, bringing a laptop, setting up/breaking down, and returning the projector to Art 139 at the end of class.*

3) **Theory/Praxis Final Paper (CLO 3):** The final 10-page paper is due on the final day of class and is worth 30% of your final grade.

   Your final paper concerns the relationship between theory and praxis. You will analyze one of the essays discussed during the semester. (You may choose an essay not assigned in class with the instructor’s prior consent.) You are responsible for explaining the essay’s topic and argument, and for conducting research on a contemporary artwork(s) that addresses—and usefully complicates—this argument. In your conclusion you are to reconsider the essay’s argument in light of your example. Does the art example challenge the theoretical argument? Introduce new information? Confirm the author’s view? Or, on the contrary, does the theoretical argument reveal aspects of the artwork that were not apparent? The paper is to be a minimum of 10 and maximum of 15 pages, typewritten in 12-point font, with 1”
borders, and footnote citations. See the Chicago/Turabian Manual of Style for issues regarding style and formatting: http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocChicago.html. If you have questions about writing make an appointment at the Writing Center, Clark Hall, 408/924-2308. Contact Rebecca Kohn, the library liaison, at rebecca.kohn@sjsu.edu or (408) 808-2007 for information about research.

4) Summary (CLO 3): A 2-page summary and creative presentation of your paper topic is 10% of your final grade.

A two-page summary of your final paper is due a week before the final paper. Along with your summary you should be prepared to provide a creative response to your topic in a medium other than writing.

Grading information
No late assignments are accepted except in the case of a medical emergency. In the case of a medical emergency students will need an original, signed and dated doctor’s note explaining the condition and declaring that you are unable to attend class and complete work. No make-up credit for late or incomplete assignments. Students must be present in class to receive credit for in-class assignments.

Assignment Weight
In-class Assignments Pass/No Pass 30%
Class Presentation 30%
Final Paper 30%
Summary and Creative Response to Paper Topic 10%

Grading Criteria

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<td>(1) Responds appropriately to the assignment</td>
<td>EXCELLENT</td>
<td>VERY GOOD</td>
<td>ADEQUATE</td>
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<td>(2) Presents a clear topic and position</td>
<td>EXCELLENT</td>
<td>VERY GOOD</td>
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<td>(3) Exhibits good critical thinking</td>
<td>EXCELLENT</td>
<td>VERY GOOD</td>
<td>ADEQUATE</td>
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<td>(4) Uses a variety of appropriate college-level resources and cites sources</td>
<td>EXCELLENT</td>
<td>VERY GOOD</td>
<td>ADEQUATE</td>
<td>WEAK</td>
<td>POOR</td>
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<td>(5) Provides adequate supporting arguments with evidence and examples</td>
<td>EXCELLENT</td>
<td>VERY GOOD</td>
<td>ADEQUATE</td>
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<td>(6) Focused and organized</td>
<td>EXCELLENT</td>
<td>VERY GOOD</td>
<td>ADEQUATE</td>
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(7) Uses language that is appropriate for the discipline

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8) Is free of errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and format

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(9) Displays originality and creativity

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**Classroom Protocol**

You are expected to attend all classes on time and remain in the classroom while in session, unless otherwise arranged with the instructor. Absolutely no web surfing or phone calls will be allowed in class.
Course Schedule **Art 282A, Fall 2015.** Note: All reading and assignments are due the day listed on schedule. Internet readings are hyperlinked with web address included. Other links are for your consultation and are not required. *Schedule subject to change with fair notice.*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
<th>Present</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/20</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Present</td>
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<td>Art Theory Timeline</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/irvinem/visualarts/art-theory-intro.html">http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/irvinem/visualarts/art-theory-intro.html</a></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>8/27</td>
<td>Emotion and Contemporary Art</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment:</strong> Pick an artwork to discuss in relation to the reading. Bring in a visual example of it to share.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9/3</td>
<td>Periodising Contemporary Art</td>
<td>team 1</td>
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<td><strong>Read:</strong> Intro to Part I</td>
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<td><strong>Read:</strong> Thierry de Duve, “When Form Has Become Attitude—And Beyond”</td>
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<td><strong>Read:</strong> Alexander Alberro, “Periodising Contemporary Art”</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment:</strong> Bring in a map and be prepared to discuss it in class. This map is to be on an 8 ½ x 11 piece of paper and to represent “the contemporary art world.” Put “talent,” “creativity,” and “attitude” on your map (from de Duve essay). You may add a temporal element but this is not necessary. Be as creative as you like within the size constraints. The assignment will be collected in class and returned at the end of the semester.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>What is Cultural Production?</td>
<td>team 2</td>
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<td><strong>Read:</strong> Pierre Bourdieu, “The Intellectual Field: A World Apart”</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment:</strong> How much autonomy do artists have in Bourdieu’s description of the “the dominated fraction of the dominant class”? How much autonomy do you think artists have? Give examples from your own experience in class.</td>
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| 5   | 9/17   | **The Site of Cultural Production**  
**Read:** Miwon Kwon, “One Place After Another”  
**Assignment:** Discuss one local artwork in relation to at least two types of site specificity as described by Kwon. | team 3 |
| 6   | 9/24   | **Site-Specific Field Trip TBA** | |
| 7   | 10/1   | **Relational Aesthetics**  
**Read:** Grant Kester, “Conversation Pieces”  
**Read:** Claire Bishop, “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics”  
**Read:** Liam Gillick, “Contingent Factors: A Response to Claire Bishop’s ‘Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics’” (486)  
**Assignment:** What is Bishop’s objection to dialogic (at times called social engaged or relational) art as put forth by Kester and others? And Gillick’s rebuttal? Use one of the artworks in Bishop’s essay to explain these positions on the topic. | team 4 |
| 8   | 10/8   | **Art and Politics**  
**Read:** Jacques Rancière, “Contemporary Art and the Politics of Aesthetics”  
**Read:** Anthony Downey, “Zones of Indistinction”  
**Assignment:** How do you understand, in your own words, Rancière’s notion of “the politics of aesthetics”? | team 5 |
| 9   | 10/15  | **The Architecture of Life**  
**Read:** Beatriz Preciado, “The Architecture of Porn: Museum, Urban Detritus, and Cinematic Stag-rooms”  
**Read:** Rosalyn Deutsche, “The Architecture of the Evicted”  
**Assignment:** What does each author intend by the term “architecture” and how does each relate this to art practice? Give an example from each reading. | team 6 |
| 10  | 10/22  | **Exoticization**  
**Read:** Gerardo Mosquera, “the Marco Polo Syndrome”  
**Read:** Olu Oguibe, “In the ‘Heart of Darkness’” | team 7 |
Optional Viewing: Alfredo Jaar at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G89kO0DQpt0&](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G89kO0DQpt0&) Lecture by curator Okwui Enwezor at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kPfwQTAACs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kPfwQTAACs)

**Assignment:** Olu Ouguibe writes that “to reject the exoticization of Africa is to destroy an entire world-view” (231). What does he mean?

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<td>FIELD TRIP TBA</td>
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| 11/5 | **Hybridity and Syncreticism**  
**Read:** Jean Fisher, “The Syncretic Turn”  
**Assignment:** Why does Jean Fisher employ the term “syncretic” rather than using the more common term “hybrid” to discuss work by [Jimmie Durham](http://www.sprovieri.com/artists/jimmie-durham/biography/) and [Gabriel Orozco](http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/gabriel-orozco); [http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2009/gabrielorozco/]? |
| 11/12 | **Popular Culture and Art**  
**Read:** Laura Kipnis, “Repossessing Popular Culture”  
**Assignment:** Bring in an example of popular culture to discuss. |
| 11/19 | **Getting Beyond Binaries**  
**Read:** John Rajchman, “The Lightness of Theory”  
**Read:** Lev Manovich, “The Database”  
**Assignment:** Bring in an example of the creative organization of data in contemporary art. |
| 11/26 | NO CLASS FOR THANKSGIVING |
| 12/3 | **2-Page Summary Of Your Paper Due along with a Creative Presentation Of Your Idea** |
| 12/8 | **Final Paper Due and Winter Celebration** |
University Policies

General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU’s policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises. See University Policy S90–5 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf. More detailed information on a variety of related topics is available in the SJSU catalog, at http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html. In general, it is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not serve to address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as a next step.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester’s Catalog Policies section at http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the Academic Calendars webpage at http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/. The Late Drop Policy is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

University Policy S12-7, http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf, requires students to obtain instructor’s permission to record the course:

- Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor’s permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.
- Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.

Academic integrity

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/.
**Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. [Presidential Directive 97-03](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center (AEC)](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec) at [http://www.sjsu.edu/aec](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec) to establish a record of their disability.

**Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays**

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See [University Policy S14-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf).

**Student Technology Resources**

Computer labs for student use are available in the [Academic Success Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/) at [http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/](http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/) located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

**SJSU Peer Connections**

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit [Peer Connections website](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu) at [http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu) for more information.
SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook. (Note: You need to have a QR Reader to scan this code.)

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit Counseling Services website at http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling.