

San José State University
Department of Art and Art History
Art 200W: Professional Writing in Contemporary Art
Fall Semester 2017

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Anthony Raynsford
Office Location:	Art Building 116
Telephone:	(408) 924-4322
Email:	Anthony.Raynsford@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Wednesday, 2:00-4:00 PM
Class Days/Time:	Monday, 3:00-5:45 PM
Classroom:	Art 110
Prerequisites:	Graduate standing in Art and Design, or instructor consent. The course meets the university's Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement. Prior to enrolling in this course, all students must have taken and passed the university's Writing Skills Test (WST). More information about the WST can be found at: https://testing.sjsu.edu/twst.html . Students who graduated from SJSU or another CSU do not need to take the WST.

Units: 3

Additional Contact Information

- * E-mail is generally the best method of contact during non-office hours.
- * Please allow 48-hours for an e-mail response.
- * Emergency: 911 Campus Escort: 42222
- * Individuals with disabilities may contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC), Administrative Building 110, 408/ 924-6000, for a variety of formats such as Braille, large print, sign interpreters, assistive listening devices, audio tape and accommodations for physical accessibility.

Course Format

Seminar/Workshop

Course Description

This course provides an opportunity for graduate students to refine writing skills in both artistic and curatorial practices. Students will develop individual essays, including a final paper that meet professional standards in contemporary art practice. The course is designed to help both students in the fine arts to develop statements about their own work and art history students to develop curatorial writing skills in the context of an exhibition. The course is also intended as a forum for dialog between artists and art historians in writing about contemporary art. Students will be asked to submit final projects in the form, either of an artist's statement to be submitted as part of an MFA thesis, or as a formal section of a catalog to accompany the annual Lift-Off Exhibition.

One of the challenges of writing on contemporary art is the open-endedness of the goals and processes. For artists, there is a multiplicity of models to choose from, and the model chosen will depend very much on the nature of the particular work. For art historians, it is difficult to categorize and historicize artistic processes that are unfolding in the present. This course aims to build familiarity with a number of the major genres of writing on contemporary art in order that students might employ these rhetorical strategies in their own work. At the same time, it tackles problems that are basic to any verbal representation of the visual arts. How does one begin to describe an artwork or an artistic process? What should be said and what merely seen? How does one manage the gap between word and image? How does a description become argument that allows the work to be seen in a different way?

The course will begin with basic issues and theories in writing about art. It will then move into an analysis of genres of art writing, including journals, manifestos, cultural criticism, aesthetic criticism and contemporary art history. Finally, it will provide a forum for students to present their own writing and receive constructive feedback.

Course Goals

This course will be a seminar course, with strong workshop component. Discussions of readings will be complemented by student presentations of their own writing. Students will be expected to explore their own goals and desires through the processes of critical reading and writing. Peer discussion and dialog will form a significant component of the course.

This course meets the Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement. It seeks to provide students with essential writing skills in the context of professional practice. It also seeks to sharpen the ability of students to think critically about their own work through the use of writing.

Students in this course will:

Write a minimum of 30 pages, including a final 15-18 page paper (of at least 3,000 words).

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Course Skill Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

CLO1 - read texts closely and apply the knowledge gained to their own writing;

CLO2 - express (explain, analyze, develop, and criticize) ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse;

CLO3 - articulate their own artistic or art historical intentions;

CLO4 - write clearly, effectively, and critically to accomplish specific artistic or curatorial goals and address specific audiences according to standards of professional practice in art;

CLO5 - organize and develop essays and documents for both professional and general audiences, including appropriate editorial standards for citing primary and secondary sources;

CLO6 - employ a variety of voices, discourses and rhetorical modes, both in relation to certain kinds of artwork and in relation certain professional contexts.

Course Content Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have mastered:

CLO7 - a set of rhetorical strategies for discussing contemporary art;

CLO8 - some major issues and discourses in contemporary art;

CLO9 - the ability to contextualize their own practices within the larger world of practice;

CLO10 - an understanding and appreciation for the significant parallels and antecedents for their own professional practices.

Required Texts/Readings

Required Readings

All readings will be available on-line through the Canvas course website and the art history course website. Each reading will be available for download as a pdf file.

Optional Materials

Optional materials and supplementary learning materials, such as web resources and writing guides will be available through the Canvas course website and/or the art history course website.

Course Web Materials

- ART 200W Course materials on-line on the SJSU Canvas site for the course at: <https://sjsu.instructure.com>. Your Username is your 9-digit SJSU ID number, and your password is your SJSU-One account password.
- ART 200W Course Website. Available at <http://arth.sjsu.edu/>, select **Course Web Pages**. Access through User: and Password: (login instructions to be announced in class).
- **Optional Resources include:** Electronic Resources links to writing guides and Internet sites will posted to the Course Website and/or to Canvas.

Library Liaison

Elisabeth Thomas: <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/profile.php?uid=13289>

Email: elisabeth.thomas@sjsu.edu

King Library 4th Floor

Phone: (408) 808-2193

Art and Art History Resources: <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/ArtReference>

Course Requirements and Assignments

This course will be a seminar course, with strong workshop component. Discussions of readings will be complemented by student presentations of their own writing. Students will be expected to explore their own goals and desires through the processes of critical reading and writing. Peer discussion and dialog will form a significant component of the course.

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Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Final Examination or Evaluation

The final examination period will be reserved for student presentations.

Grading Information

Assignment Format and Submission: The course requires close readings of the assigned pages; the active reading and response to other students' work; active participation in class discussion; class presentation; and writing assignments. Students should be prepared to discuss all of the assigned readings for each class session. A final project, 15 pages in length, will be developed from a proposal and rough draft over the course of the semester. In addition to the major writing assignments, students will be expected to keep a weekly journal, containing written responses to each week's readings. There will also be four short, 1-2 page written assignments on specific themes. By the end of the semester, students will be expected to have written at least 35 pages. Evaluations will be based on the quality of written assignments, attendance, and verbal participation in class.

Type all assignments with one-inch margins and a 12-point font. Turn in the electronic copy through Canvas. Keep a back-up disk of all your work. Papers must be received in both hardcopy and electronic submission.

Determination of Grades

Relative weight of course requirements:

- 1) Short written assignments (20%)

Syllabus: Professional Writing in Contemporary Art

- 2) Weekly Journal (15%)
- 3) Proposal and Outline of Final Project (15%)
- 4) Final Project (40%)
- 4) Class Participation (10%)

Extra credit is not given for this course. Late assignments will only be accepted under unusual, extenuating, or emergency circumstances.

Numeric grade equivalents:

93% and above	A
92% - 90%	A-
89% - 88%	B+
87% - 83%	B
82% - 80%	B-
79% - 78%	C+
77% - 73%	C
72% - 70%	C-
69% - 68%	D+
67% - 63%	D
62% - 60%	D-
below 60%	F

Please note: Except in cases of documented emergencies, incomplete grades are not given in this course.

“All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades.” See University Policy F13-1 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-1.pdf> for more details.

Additional Note:

This syllabus is subject to change, in the event of unforeseen circumstances, or in the case that changes will significantly enhance the quality of the course. Students will collectively have the opportunity to shape the ways in which the course unfolds.

Department Advising

For information about majors and minors in Art & Art History, for change of major/minor forms and a list of advisors: <http://www.sjsu.edu/art/> or the Art & Art History department office in ART 116, 408-924-4320, art@sjsu.edu

Classroom Protocol

Students are expected to be punctual for class and actively engaged during all class meetings. Cell phones, smart phones, or other devices that detract from full attention should be turned off or silenced.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>"

Course Schedule

Art 200W: Professional Writing in Contemporary Art, Fall Semester 2017

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</u>
1	August 28	Course Introduction
2	September 4	[NO CLASS SEPTEMBER 4 th : LABOR DAY]
3	September 11	<p>Ekphrasis – The Art of Description</p> <p>Mark Titmarsh, “Walk the Talk: The Politics of Artists Who Write,” <i>Art Monthly Australia</i> 260/1 (June 2013) 33-37, 44-46. W.J.T. Mitchell, “Ekphrasis and the Other,” in <i>Picture Theory</i>, pp. 151-81; John Keats, “Ode on a Grecian Urn.”</p> <p><i>Ekphrasis assignment due in class</i></p>
4	September 18	<p>Form and Content</p> <p>John Ruskin, excerpt, “Of Water, as Painted by Turner,” in <i>Modern Painters</i>, Vol. 1, pp. 387-406; Adrian Piper, “Performance: The Problematic Solution,” in <i>Out of Order, Out of Sight</i> (1996), pp. 93-104.</p>
5	September 25	Word and Image

		<p>Michel Foucault, <i>This is Not a Pipe</i>, chapters 2 and 3, pp. 19-35; Nicolas Flynn, "The Last Modern Painting," <i>Oxford Art Journal</i>, V. 20, 1997, pp. 13-22.</p> <p><i>Form and Content assignment due in class</i></p>
6	October 2	<p>Art and Autobiography – Representing the Creative Self</p> <p>Louis Sullivan, <i>The Autobiography of an Idea</i>, pp. 285-303; Louise Bourgeois, <i>Destruction of the Father / Reconstitution of the Father</i>, pp. 66-79, 205-209; Martha Rosler, "Constructing a Life," <i>Blasted Allegories</i>, pp. 134-37.</p>
7	October 9	<p>Poetics and Phenomenology</p> <p>Martin Heidegger, excerpt "The Origin of the Work of Art," in <i>Basic Writings</i>, pp. 143-165; Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," in <i>The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader</i>, pp. 121-148.</p> <p><i>Autobiography assignment due in class</i></p>
8	October 16	<p>Art and Process – The Documentary Journal as Statement</p> <p>Robert Smithson, "The Spiral Jetty," in <i>The Writings of Robert Smithson</i>, pp. 109-116; Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture Part III" and Eva Hesse, "Untitled Statements" in <i>Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art</i>, pp. 588-596.</p>
9	October 23	<p>Artists Theorizing the Significance Their Own Art Part I – Victor Burgin</p> <p>Victor Burgin, "Seeing Sense," in <i>The End of Art Theory</i>, pp. 51-70 and "Looking at Photographs," in <i>Thinking Photography</i> pp 142-153; Roland Barthes, <i>Camera Lucida</i>, pp. 1-45.</p> <p><i>Project Proposal and Outline due in class</i></p>
10	October 30	<p>Artists Theorizing the Significance Their Own Art Part II – Mary Kelly</p>

		<p>Mary Kelly, <i>Imaging Desire</i>, pp. 20-25, 40-62; Jacques Lacan, “The Signification of the Phallus,” in <i>Écrits</i>, pp. 281-291.</p>
11	November 6	<p>Dialogues between Artists and Critics – The Interview</p> <p>W.J.T. Mitchell and Barbara Kruger, “An Interview with Barbara Kruger,” in <i>Critical Inquiry</i>, vol. 17, 1991, pp. 434-448;; Tim Griffin and Rhea Anastas, “Method Acting: The Artist-Interviewer Conversation [with Response],” <i>Art Journal</i>, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Fall, 2005), pp. 70-83.</p> <p><i>Theory and context assignment due in class</i></p>
12	November 13	<p>Art Criticism – Interpreting Contemporary Art</p> <p>Hal Foster, “An Art of Missing Parts,” in <i>October</i>, v. 92, Spring 2000, pp. 128-156; Elizabeth Legge, “Reinventing Derivation: Roles, Stereotypes, and ‘Young British Art,’” in <i>Representations</i>, Summer 2000, pp. 1-23; Jean Fisher, “The Syncretic Turn: Cross-Cultural Practices in the Age of Multiculturalism,” in <i>Theory in Contemporary Art Since 1985</i>, pp. 233-241.</p>
13	November 20	<p>Wall Labels and Artistic Appropriations of Language</p> <p>W.J.T. Mitchell, “Word, Image and Object,” in <i>Picture Theory</i>, pp. 241-79; Robert Smithson, “A Museum Language in the Vicinity of Art” in <i>The Writings of Robert Smithson</i>, pp. 67-78.</p> <p><i>Art Criticism assignment due in class</i></p>
14	November 27	<p>The Art of Social Engagement – Manifestos and Dialogs</p> <p>Joseph Beuys, “Untitled Statement” and “An Appeal for an Alternative,” in <i>Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art</i>, pp. 633-635; Mierle Laderman Ukeles, “A Journey: Earth/City/Flow” in <i>Art Journal</i>, vol. 51, 1992, pp. 12-14; Krzysztof Wodiczko, “Public Projections,” in <i>October</i>, vol. 38, 1986, pp. 3-22; Suzi Gablik, “Connective Aesthetics,” in <i>American Art</i>, Spring 1992, pp. 2-7.</p>

15	December 4	<p>Institutions of Exhibition – Invented Categories</p> <p>Jean Fisher, “The Syncretic Turn: Cross-Cultural Practices in the Age of Multiculturalism,” in <i>Theory in Contemporary Art Since 1985</i>, pp. 233-241; Mari Carmen Ramírez, “Beyond ‘The Fantastic’: Framing Identity in U.S. Exhibitions of Latin American Art,” in <i>Art Journal</i>, vol. 51, 1992, pp. 60-68.</p>
16	December 11	<p>Workshop and Discussion</p> <p>Student presentations of artist statements and art historical essays</p> <p><i>All final projects due in class!</i></p>
Final Exam	December 13 [Wednesday] 12:15-2:30 PM	<p>Final Presentations</p> <p>Student presentations of artist statements and art historical essays</p> <p><i>All final projects due in class!</i></p>