

San José State University
Department of Art & Art History
ART 282A, Seminar in the Theory and Criticism of Contemporary Art, Section 01
Fall 2017

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Dore Bowen, Associate Professor of Art History & Visual Culture
Office Location:	ART 121
Telephone:	(408) 924-4394
Email:	dore.bowen@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Tuesday 12:30-1:30pm and 3-4pm, and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Thursday 3:00-5:45pm
Classroom:	ART 110
Prerequisite:	ARTH 191A and admission to classified MFA status or instructor consent
Department Office:	ART 116
Department Contact:	Website: www.sjsu.edu/art Email: art@sjsu.edu

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 the idea of “the contemporary,” issues pertaining to identity, such as gender and race, and the role of popular culture and new technology in contemporary art. By the end of the semester students will be able to read complex essays, discuss ideas drawn from these essays, write about art and culture with an understanding of the stakes involved, and situate contemporary artworks within these intellectual currents.

Aside from two field trips, class will consist of an introduction by the professor, a 45” presentation by a team of approx. two students, class discussion, and student presentations of the weekly assignment.

Course Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course students shall be able to:

- CLO 1) read theoretical texts pertaining to issues in contemporary art;
- CLO 2) articulate and debate arguments and ideas drawn from these essays;
- CLO 3) elaborate upon these ideas in writing and with examples from contemporary art.

Required Texts/Readings

1) *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, **Second Edition**, editors Z. Kocur and S. Leung (London: Blackwell Press, 2012). You will need to order the book ASAP either online or at the Spartan bookstore.

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

Other technology requirements / equipment / material

- 1) This course is managed on Canvas. The greensheet, assignment instructions, updates, and the course dropbox for your projects are all on this site. Announcements will be made on Canvas. You will need to check regularly.
 - How to access: Go to <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/canvas/> and use your SJSU ID and password to login.
 - For problems and issues contact the Help Desk at 408-924-2377
- 2) A notebook for taking notes in class.

Library Liaison

Elisabeth Thomas, elisabeth.thomas@sjsu.edu

Course Requirements and Assignments

- 1) **Weekly In-Class Assignments (CLO 1, 2):** Weekly assignments are 40% of the final grade and are graded Pass/No Pass. Engaged participation is required. Each week students will need to read the assigned essays *at least twice* before class, take notes, and prepare the weekly assignment with the essays in mind. The weekly assignment will be presented and discussed the latter part of the class. **Each weekly assignment is listed in the schedule.**
- 2) **Class Presentation (CLO 1, 2):** This presentation is 30% of the final grade. The presentation will be with a partner and concerns one weekly topic. **See details of the assignment on Canvas.**
- 3) **Paper Prep Assignment (CLO 2, 3):** There is a required Paper Prep Assignment due the week prior the final paper is due. Students will write a one-page summary and present their ideas (and the topics presented by their peers). **See the details of the assignment on Canvas.**
- 4) **Final Paper (CLO 1, 3):** A 7-10 page paper is due on 12/7, the final day of class, and is worth 30% of the final grade. The final paper concerns the relationship between theory and practice. Students will discuss the ideas drawn from an essay in the textbook in relation to an artwork that usefully complicates the essay argument. **See the details of the assignment on Canvas.**

Assignment Weight

10 In-class Assignments Pass/No Pass (3 pts per assignment)	30%
Class Presentation	30%
Paper Prep Assignment	10%
Final Paper	30%

Grading Information

Grading Criteria in Three Categories: What, How, and Why

WHAT:

- (1) Responds appropriately to the parameters of the assignment
- (2) Clearly presents the artwork(s) to be explored
- (3) Clearly presents the essay(s) to be explored

HOW:

- (4) Exhibits critical thinking and independent thought
- (5) Uses college-level resources (and cites sources)
- (6) Complicates the topic by providing supporting or counter arguments
- (7) Organized into appropriate sections with an introduction and conclusion
- (8) Uses language that is appropriate for the discipline
- (9) Language is free of errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and format

WHY:

- (10) Displays originality, creativity, and interest in the chosen topic

Grading Chart

- A+ Superb within all three categories above, original research, well documented
- A Excellent work in all of the categories
- A- Overall Excellent work in most of the categories, but uneven
- B+ Very Good to Excellent work in all categories
- B Very Good work in all of the categories
- B- Overall Very Good work in most of the categories, but uneven
- C+ Sufficient to Very Good work in all of the categories
- C Sufficient work in all of the categories
- C- Overall Sufficient work in in most of the categories, but uneven
- D+ Sufficient to Poor work in all of the categories
- D Poor work in all of the categories
- D- Overall Poor to Not-passable work in most categories, but uneven
- F Not-passable, does not fulfill any of the criteria necessary for the assignment, or plagiarized in part or whole

- *No late assignments are accepted except in the case of a medical emergency, in which case 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 or extra credit for late or incomplete assignments.*
- *Students must be present in class to receive credit for in-class assignments.* As the University Policy states, "Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading. However, students are expected to attend all meetings for the courses in which they are enrolled.... Participation may be used as a criterion for grading when the parameters and their evaluation are clearly defined in the course syllabus and the percentage of the overall grade is stated."

Classroom Protocol

Cell Phones and Computer Use

Students will turn their cell phones off while in class. Students may use electronic devices to take notes or follow lecture. Students who use electronic devices for other activities will be asked to leave the class.

Personal Responsibility

- Timeliness, attention, missed classes. Please arrive to class on time and wait until the break to use the restroom or get a snack. If you miss class for any reason you are responsible for acquiring the lecture notes from a fellow student. If you can't make it to class do not email me. This is your personal responsibility. If you miss an assignment there is no extra credit.
- You are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, withdrawal, etc. above. No adds will be accepted after the deadline. You are responsible for dropping the course.

Plagiarism

- Plagiarism is taken very seriously and will result in an F on the assignment and possibly the course. Canvas is equipped with plagiarism detection so do not try it! A definition of plagiarism can be found on Judicial Affairs website.
- If you would like to include material you have submitted, or plan to submit, for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Integrity policy S04-12 requires approval by instructors.

University Policies: Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs maintains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc." You may find all syllabus related University Policies and resources information listed on GUP's [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Course Schedule Art 282A, Fall 2017. Note: All reading and assignments are due the day listed on schedule. Internet readings are linked to a web address. *Schedule subject to change with fair notice. Please check Canvas announcements for changes.*

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines	Presentations
1	8/24	<p>Introduction to an Introduction: Art Theory and Its Discontents</p> <p>Read before first class: Introduction to <i>Art Since 1900</i>: https://pwad2.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/art-since-1900-intro.pdf</p> <p>Read before first class: Critique of art theory: https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2005/mar/23/3</p>	
2	8/31	<p>Contemporary Art as Difficult Art</p> <p>Read: Selections from Jennifer Doyle, <i>Hold it against me: difficulty and emotion in contemporary art</i> (2013) at http://hemi.nyu.edu/courses/sp2016-performance-and-activism/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/03/Doyle.pdf.</p> <p>Read: Kellie Laham, On Doyle's <i>Hold it against me</i> at http://hauntjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Lanham_HAUNT_Vol1_online.pdf</p> <p>Review: We may also address the reading from last week</p> <p>Assignment 1: Pick an artwork that you think is “difficult” and upload an image of it to Canvas. In class introduce this artwork and explain the intellectual framework you are (implicitly) using to understand the meaning of this work (and its status as “difficult”).</p>	team 1
3	9/7	<p>Charting the Contemporary</p> <p>Read: Intro to Part I</p> <p>Read: Thierry de Duve, “When Form Has Become Attitude—And Beyond”</p> <p>Read: Alexander Alberro, “Periodising Contemporary Art”</p> <p>Assignment 2: After reading the essays make a map on 8 ½ x 11” paper. Bring to class and upload to Canvas. This map should represent the world of contemporary art. Put “talent,” “creativity,” and “attitude” somewhere on your map (from de Duve essay); include other tags. Think about scale, color, and the relationship of parts. Include a</p>	team 2

		legend, topographical shading, North/South directions, and a title. Be creative. Monsters in the sea? Artworld personalities? The assignment will be collected in class and returned at the end of the semester.	
4	9/14	<p>What is Cultural Production?</p> <p>Read: Pierre Bourdieu, "The Intellectual Field"</p> <p>Assignment 3: How much autonomy (freedom) do artists have in Bourdieu's description of the artworld? How much autonomy do you think artists have today? Which artists have it? In what circumstances? Bring in an example from <i>ARTnews</i>, <i>Modern Painters</i> or <i>Art Journal</i> (or another) that lends an interesting slant to this discussion of the way artists navigate the artworld. You will need to locate the publication on the SJSU library website.</p>	team 3
5	9/21	<p>Field Notes: Public Sculpture on Campus</p> <p>View: a map of public sculpture on and around campus at https://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/26100</p> <p>View: Info on Mel Chin's "Recolecciones" @ King Library at http://www.sjlibrary.org/melchin-art-list</p> <p>Assignment: After touring the campus and environs choose a public sculpture. Study it. Spend time with it. Take notes and a few photos. Do research on it for next week (see full assignment description on Canvas).</p>	
6	9/28	<p>The Site of Cultural Production</p> <p>Read: Miwon Kwon, "One Place After Another"</p> <p>Assignment 4: Upload an image and a few sentences on Canvas addressing the public artwork that you discovered last week. In class use Kwon's three stages of site-specific art (phenomenological, social/institutional, and discursive) to describe the ways in which it is, and is not, site specific.</p>	team 4
7	10/5	<p>Art as Dialogue</p> <p>Read: Grant Kester, "Conversation Pieces"</p> <p>Read: Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics"</p>	team 5

		<p>Suggested: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwJQHDIudhM Suggested: Liam Gillick, “Contingent Factors: A Response to Claire Bishop’s ‘Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics’” (486)</p> <p>Assignment 5: Participate in a “Dialogic Drawing Experiment” – to be explained in class.</p>	
8	10/12	<p>Art and Politics</p> <p>Read: Jacques Rancière, “Contemporary Art and the Politics of Aesthetics” Read: Ben Davies, “Rancière for Dummies” at http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/books/davis/davis8-17-06.asp View (see below): http://pastexhibitions.guggenheim.org/moving_pictures/flash.html</p> <p>Assignment 6: Rancière writes, “The question is not: are we still modern, already postmodern or even afterpostmodern? The question is: what exactly happened to the dialectical clash? What happened to the formula of critical art?” He then goes on to discuss contemporary art, including an exhibition titled “Moving Pictures” at the Guggenheim Museum. Pick an artwork from this exhibition and consider it in light of Rancière’s assessment of contemporary, politically-minded art. Is your example political? What is your definition of political art? Upload your response to Canvas and be prepared to discuss.</p>	team 6
9	10/19	<p>The Architecture of Life</p> <p>Read: Beatriz Preciado, “The Architecture of Porn: Museum, Urban Detritus, and Cinematic Stag-rooms” Read: Rosalyn Deutsche, “The Architecture of the Evicted”</p> <p>Assignment 7: What do you think each author means by the term “architecture”?</p>	team 7
10	10/26	Museum/Gallery Field Trip TBA	

11	11/2	<p>Resisting Exoticization</p> <p>Read: Gerardo Mosquera, “The Marco Polo Syndrome” Read: Olu Oguibe, “In the ‘Heart of Darkness”</p> <p>Assignment 8: Upload to Canvas an image of an artwork from last week. Discuss it in class in terms of exoticization. How does the artwork pertain to exoticization?</p>	team 8
12	11/9	<p>Hybridity and Syncretism</p> <p>Read: Jean Fisher, “The Syncretic Turn”</p> <p>Assignment 9: Why does Jean Fisher employ the term “syncretic” rather than using the more common term “hybrid” to discuss multi-cultural works 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/gabriel-orozco/)? Pick an artwork by one of these artists to discuss and upload an image to Canvas. Is it hybrid? Syncretic? What is the difference?</p>	team 9
13	11/16	<p>Popular Culture and Art</p> <p>Read: Laura Kipnis, “Repossessing Popular Culture” View: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvXr5QQbkqc</p> <p>Assignment 10: How does Candice Breitz (above) use popular culture? Be prepared to discuss in class.</p>	team 10
14	NO Class	NO CLASS THANKSGIVING	
15	11/30	<p>Getting Beyond Binaries</p> <p>Read: John Rajchman, “The Lightness of Theory” Read: Lev Manovich, “The Database”</p> <p>Paper Prep Assignment: Upload to Canvas and present in class. See assignment on Canvas.</p>	

16	12/7	Paper Prep Assignment (cont.) - Final Paper Due – Maps returned	
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17	12/14 2:45-5p m	Winter Celebration (on Final Exam Day, but no final exam in this class)	
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