San José State University
Department of Art and Art History
ARTH 191a: Issues in Contemporary Art, Section 2
Spring 2019

Course and Contact Information
Instructor: Dr. Liz Linden
Office Location: Clark Hall 414K
Telephone: (408) 924 4715
Email: liz.linden@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Monday, 12:00pm - 1:00pm
Class Days/Time: Wednesday, 3:00pm – 5:45pm
Classroom: Art 135
Prerequisites: 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 Description
This upper-division undergraduate course is devoted to exploring contemporary art practices with a particular focus on conceptual and contextual practices exploring the idea of representation. “Representation” is a word with multiple complex and overlapping meanings, and “ARTH191A/Issues in Contemporary Art” will examine ideas about representation in at least two of its senses: both the aesthetic sense of presenting something visual to a viewer; and, also, the political sense, of telling us whose interests are “represented” by particular legislation or actions.

This course will take contemporary art operating at the intersection of representation and politics as its subject, through both case studies of the practices of individual artists, to broad overviews of contemporary modes of practice developed in response to our changing political and technological landscape, to specific examinations of how such artworks are changing the way we curate and exhibit (in other words, represent) such art.

Students are expected to read the required essays before class, attend weekly lectures, participate fully in the group discussions and projects, prepare “partial” research paper, in-class quizzes, and the final exam. The final exam will be based on the assigned readings and class lectures. Students should take legible notes throughout the semester.
Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Course Skill and Content Learning Outcomes

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

CLO1 - read critical texts (from art history and criticism, but also related disciplines in the humanities, such as anthropology, literature, etc.) and demonstrate an understanding of the ideas therein,

CLO2 - apply these ideas verbally and in writing toward an understanding of contemporary art practices, and

CLO3 - be able to identify significant works of contemporary art.

Required Texts/Readings

Required Readings

Greensheet:  
http://www.sjsu.edu/art

Textbook:
There is no single textbook for this course. All course readings will be provided as PDFs available on Canvas as excerpted from a variety of texts including, but not limited to:


Course Web Materials

- ARTH191a 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.
- ARTH191a 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

Gareth Scott  
email: gareth.scott@sjsu.edu  
phone: (408) 808-2094  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library  
4th Floor Administration Offices  
Art and Art History Resources: https://libguides.sjsu.edu/Art
Course Requirements and Assignments

Final grades consist of an assessment in several major areas that count as follows towards a possible 167 points for the course. More guidelines on grading information and class attendance can be found in the following two university policies:

University Syllabus Policy S16-9 (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf)
University Policy F15-12 (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment type</th>
<th>Relative weight of course requirements</th>
<th>TOTAL Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation (in class &amp; on Canvas)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial Paper: Thesis and Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial Paper: Outline, Introduction and References</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop Quiz #1</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop Quiz #2</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50</td>
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</tbody>
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Participation:

For full participation credit, you must: participate in class discussions and also on the course website on Canvas; complete all of the readings in a timely manner & demonstrate basic understanding of content; regularly contribute to class conversations by raising relevant questions or sharing relevant information; note that attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading according to University policy—that means it can be neither counted for or against you.

Assignments:

Class time consists of some lectures, discussion of the readings, activities, a field trip, and student presentations. All assignments and quizzes are turned in electronically on Canvas unless administered on paper in class.

Group Project Presentation
For the Group Project Presentation, students will be assigned a small group to work with to research and present to the class on the work of an artist engaging with politics and representation in their practice. More details to be provided on a prompt in class.

The Partial Paper assignment consists of two parts, designed to make students think deeply about a particular issue, and closely follow steps towards researching and producing a paper on that topic, right up to the point of writing. Over the course of the two part assignment students will: pick a paper topic and write a thesis statement, research their topic and write an annotated bibliography, write a thorough outline of their paper including quotations and in-text citations in the body of the outline, write a compelling and clear introduction, and provide a properly-formatted reference list for their partial paper.

Pop Quizzes
There will be two unannounced pop quizzes that will take place in class over the course of the term. These quizzes may include multiple choice questions, true-or-false questions and/or short essay questions.
Final Exam
The final exam will include a number of multiple choice questions, true-or-false questions and one or more short essay questions, building on the work we have done over the semester.

“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 three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

Final Examination or Evaluation
We will have our final required class meeting during exam week. More details can be found in University Policy S06-4 (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S06-4.pdf), which states that “There shall be an appropriate final examination or evaluation at the scheduled time in every course, unless specifically exempted by the college dean who has curricular responsibility for the course.”

Additional Grading Information
No extra credit assignment is planned for this class at this time. If a student requests extra credit and the request is honored, that extra credit assignment will be offered to the entire class at that time.

If you are going to miss class or an assignment, it is always better to tell me in advance so that we can work out an alternative way for you to receive the materials or turn in your work with a minimum of points lost for tardiness.

Work turned in late WILL be marked down, a half a grade for each day delayed unless an alternative plan for submission is discussed in advance.

Relative weight of course requirements:

1) Group Project Presentation (20%)  
2) Partial Paper: Thesis and Annotated bibliography (15%)  
3) Partial Paper: Outline, Introduction and References (15%)  
4) 2x Pop Quizzes (10% total)  
5) Final Exam (30%)  
5) Class Participation (10%)  

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](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/](http://www.sjsu.edu/art/) or the Art & Art History department office in ART(H)/(PHOT) 116, 408-924-4320, [art@sjsu.edu](mailto: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 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/).

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**Course Schedule**

**ARTH191a: Issues in Contemporary Art, Spring 2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>IN CLASS WE WILL COVER:</th>
<th>AFTER CLASS, FOR THE FOLLOWING WEEK, YOU WILL:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | 1/30 | **WHAT IS CONTEMPORARY ART?**  
Introduction to the class, and each other  
Reading lab: Peter Kalb, “Introduction” (excerpt), *Art Since 1980: Charting the Contemporary*, pp. 10-17 | READ:  
Drucker, Johanna. “Art,” in *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, WJT Mitchell and Mark RB Hansen (eds)  
AND  
| 2    | 2/6  | **STRUCTURES OF CONTEMPORARY ART:** Some Definitions | READ:  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</table>
| 4/2/14 | APPROPRIATION<br>Up until now we have mirrored art world tradition of thinking about images as representations—but (how) is text a representation too?<br>Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer, Martin Creed, Liz Magic Laser, and more…<br>context and text

PREPARE:<br>Group Project Presentation (due in class 3/13) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3/6</th>
<th>Time to work on group projects</th>
<th>PREPARE: Group Project Presentation (due in class 3/13)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>Group project presentations</td>
<td>WORK ON: partial paper: thesis and annotated bibliography (due 3/26 by 9am)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction to partial paper assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3/20</td>
<td>WAR</td>
<td>READ: Jennifer Gonzales, <em>Subject to Display</em>, pp. TBA AND WORK ON: partial paper: thesis and annotated bibliography (due 3/26 by 9am)</td>
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<td>Today we’ll take a field trip to the San José Museum of Art to see Dinh Q Lê’s work representing legacies of the Vietnam war.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3/27</td>
<td>POSTCOLONIALISM</td>
<td>WORK ON: partial paper: paper outline with quotes and in-text citations, written introduction, and references (due 4/9 by 9am)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Art representing colonial histories and their consequences come in all formats and media. Today we’ll look at a diverse set of practices dealing with the colonialism of number countries, including our own.</td>
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<td>Tania Bruguguera, Nanna Debois Buhl, Yinka Shonibare MBE, Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, Pepon Osorio, and more…</td>
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<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>4/10</td>
<td>GLOBALIZATION</td>
<td>READ: Nicolas Bourriaud, <em>Relational Aesthetics</em>, pp. 11-48</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Damaged Goods</em>, then and now</td>
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<td>Reading lab: Brian Wallis, “A Product You Could Kill For,” (excerpt) <em>Damaged Goods</em>, pp. 24-34</td>
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<td>(When) Is participation inherently utopian?</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Rirkrit Tiravanija, Andrea Zittel, and more…</td>
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sometimes magical moments where disbelief is suspended. They are also often politically motivated. Why?


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/30</td>
<td>FEMINISM</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/8</td>
<td>In-class exam review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/20</td>
<td>EXAM 12:15-2:30pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One thing feminist art does is interrogates representations of women in the (art) world, but how do some feminist theorists (namely Judith Butler, below) frame performing one’s gender as a representation itself?

Reading lab: Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, pp. 1-16

Exam review