San José State University

Department of Art & Art History ART282B-01 (22939), Critical Practice in Contemporary Art, Spring 2019, Section 1

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<tr>
<th>Instructor:</th>
<th>Janet Silk</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office Location:</td>
<td>Art 115</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:janet.silk@sjsu.edu">janet.silk@sjsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Hours:</td>
<td>Tues: 2:00-3:30/Thurs: 2:00-2:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone:</td>
<td>(408) 924-4361</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Days/Time:</td>
<td>Thurs. 3:00-5:45</td>
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<td>Classroom:</td>
<td>ART 110</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prerequisites:</td>
<td>Graduate MFA student or the consent of the instructor. Advanced MFA students who need the class to graduate will be given preference.</td>
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Course Description

Critical Art Practice in Contemporary Art

Hammam Aldouri posits that any artist who wishes to found a critical art practice must first examine his/her/their basic beliefs about creating art, in order to discover who s/he[they] is as an artist and form a sense of why art is necessary. –Artblog editor

This graduate level seminar is focused on critical art practice history and theory. The cultural work created by some of the many artists and writers who investigate social and economic relationships of power and marginalization is the basis of our study. Our exploration is located in the questions raised by those artists, art critics, and art historians associated with conceptual art, postmodernism, institutional critique, critical race theory, feminism, and queer theory. We will analyze selected texts to better understand the context of post-1960s avant-garde discourses and concerns that continue to develop and be relevant for contemporary art practitioners, agents, agencies, and institutions.

Student Learning Objectives

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

LO1 understand major currents in contemporary art
LO2 articulate their understanding through verbal discussion, debate, and presentation
LO3 demonstrate their knowledge of contemporary art through research, writing, and projects
LO4 recognize the value of critical thinking in contemporary art practice in general and their own art work and research interests in particular

Required Texts/Readings

Required Readings

All readings will be posted as PDFs online through the Canvas course website and or as a hard copy distributed in class. If necessary, readings may be eliminated, changed, or augmented.

Suggested supplemental material for reading assignments and topic discussion will be communicated through Canvas announcements or as part of the specific assignment posting.

Some Online Resources:

ARTNET NEWS
Art Price
Art Market Monitor
Critical Theory
List of Art Magazines
Posture
Widewalls

Library Liaison

Gareth Scott
email: gareth.scott@sjsu.edu
phone: (408) 808-2094
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library
4th Floor Administration Offices

Classroom Protocol

We all need to work on classroom civility. This is key in order to develop an engaged, mutually respectful learning space.

Be on time.

Attend class and keep up with coursework. It is your responsibility to manage your time for this class and your life/work/education endeavors. (See University Policy S12-3.)

As a courtesy to others, eat before class. We have a 15-20 minute break usually halfway through class.
Participate fully in discussions of the assigned reading material and presentations shown in class. No cell phone or laptop use during class. If you have to use your cell phone for an emergency, leave quietly. Any use of laptops for note taking or presentations has to be cleared/discussed with me.

**Course Requirements and Assignments**
SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, 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.

**Participation in class discussion and activities** is part of your grade, and you are expected to take initiative to contribute. (20%) LO1, LO2

**Writing response to reading assignments (20%) LO1, LO3**
Students will write responses to weekly readings, the specifics of which will be given in class and posted on Canvas. Supplementary videos and/or activities may be included. Only after discussion and approval, you are allowed one late writing response.

**Projects (20%) LO1, LO3, LO4**
Students will be assigned projects related to the content of the readings. The projects are due on time.

**Student facilitated discussions and presentation (25%) LO1, LO2, LO3 LO4:**
Students will be assigned in pairs to facilitate class discussion and create a formal presentation and/or activity related to the readings following the guidelines provided by the instructor. Students are expected to attend and be prepared on the day of their presentation.

**Final Exam/Project (15%) LO1, LO3, LO4**
Students will participate in a final project that will meet the final exam requirements for the course. According to SJSU policy, this requirement is non-negotiable and will require students to be present on the scheduled exam day. No late work.

**Grading Policy**

**Participation in class discussion and activities**
A guideline for performance:
A=Excellent work, energetic participation, engaged demeanor, sustained effort throughout the semester.
B=Good work, proficient participation, involved demeanor, attentive effort
C=Average work, adequate participation, standard effort
D=Below average work, minimal participation, inconsistent effort
F=Unsatisfactory work, participation, effort

**Writing response to reading assignments**

**20 point scale guidelines**
20 insightful content, engaged; precise, clear writing, complete
18, 17 engaged, clear writing, complete
16, 15 satisfactory engagement, fairly clear writing, fairly complete

**Projects**
Projects will have specific rubrics presented in class and or posted on Canvas.

**Student facilitated discussions and presentation**
20 points total: 10 for content/class discussion; 10 for organization/preparedness
Scale: 20=excellent; 18= very good; 17=good; 16=sufficient

**Final Exam/Project**
A specific rubric will be created and presented in class and or posted on Canvas.

**Final grades** will be assigned according to University policy from A to F as outlined in the SJSU catalog. All work must be finished and turned in according to ascribed deadlines and instructions. I do not use an online available gradebook, so if you want to know your grade, communicate with me directly.

**Grade Scale:**

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100%</td>
<td>A (no grades above &quot;A&quot;)</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-83</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>63-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>0-59</td>
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**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. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic calendar. The Late Drop Policy is Where students can find out 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/](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/).
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

University Policies

Academic integrity
Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University’s Academic Integrity policy, located at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm, 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.
Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

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 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessibility Education Center (AEC) to establish a record of their disability.

SJSU Writing Center
The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers.

Peer Mentor Center
The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required.
ART282B-1 / Critical Practice in Contemporary Art  
Spring 2019, Course Schedule

*Agenda as of January 16, 2019. The instructor reserves the right to change the schedule and content if necessary. Any errors in this schedule will be addressed in class. All readings are available as PDFs or links on Canvas and or distributed as hardcopies in class.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments</th>
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| 1    | January 24 | Introductions and Syllabus  
**Reading/Writing Assignment #1:** Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, 1998 edition, preface, due: 1/31 |
**Reading/Writing Assignment #2:** Julia Bryan-Wilson: *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era*, 2009, chapter 1, pp. tba, due: 2/7 |
| 3    | February 7 | Discussion: Art work/Art labor, the impact of the Vietnam War, seeds of social practice, critique of the art market  
Organize sign-up for Student Lead Discussions  
**Project/Activity Assignment #1,** due: 2/14 |
| 4    | February 14| Project/Activity Assignment #1  
**Reading/Writing Assignment #3:** Douglas Crimp, *Pictures*, 1977, due: 2/21 |
| 5    | February 21| Discussion: Postmodern sensibilities, signifier/signified, historical contexts for Pictures exhibition, art world issues  
**Student facilitation and presentation #1:** Crimp  
**Reading/Writing Assignment #4:** Anna C. Chave, *Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power*, 1990, due 2/28 |
| 6    | February 28| Discussion: Minimalism, compare/contrast with Lippard’s “6 Years,” feminist critique  
**Student facilitation and presentation #2:** Chave  
**Project/Activity Assignment #2,** due: 3/7 |
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<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>March 7</td>
<td>Project/Activity Assignment #2</td>
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<td><strong>Reading/Writing Assignment #5:</strong> Pierre Bourdieu, <em>Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste</em>, 1984, intro, due: 3/14</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>Discussion: Cultural capital, economic capital, taste, art market, value, social class signifiers and status</td>
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<td><strong>Student facilitation and presentation #3: Bourdieu</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading/Writing Assignment #5:</strong> Andrea Fraser, <em>From the Critique of Institutions to the Institution of Critique</em>, 2005, due: 3/21</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>Discussion: Institutional critique, who is the institution?</td>
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<td><strong>Student facilitation and presentation #4: Fraser</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading/Writing Assignment #6:</strong> Kirsi Peltonaki, <em>Situation Aesthetics: The Work of Michael Asher</em>, 2005, intro or other (tba), due: 3/28</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>March 28</td>
<td>Discussion: “Situation aesthetics,” critique of museum, relations with viewers, participants, and institutional representatives</td>
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<td><strong>Student facilitation and presentation #5: Peltonaki</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading/Writing Assignment #6:</strong> Douglas Crimp, <em>AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism</em>, 1987, due: 4/11</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>April 4</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>Discussion: Activism/activation/audience relationships; can art save lives?</td>
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<td><strong>Reading/Writing Assignment #7:</strong> Claire Bishop, <em>Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics</em>, 2004, due: 4/16</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>Discussion: Relational Aesthetics, audience “relationships”</td>
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<td>Organize field trip to San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art</td>
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<td><strong>Reading/Writing Assignment #8:</strong> Jack Halberstam, <em>Queer Art of Failure</em>, 2011, due: 4/30</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>FIELD TRIP</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>Discussion: museum experience, critique based on theory to date, queer failure</td>
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<td><strong>Reading/Writing Assignment #9:</strong> Elizabeth Garber, <em>Implications of Feminist Art Criticism for Art Education</em>, 1990, due: 5/7</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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| May 7 | Discussion: feminist art criticism, art education  
Last day of instruction  
Final Exam project/paper discussion |
| May 21 2:45-5:00 | Final Exam |