

**San Jose State University**  
**Department of Art and Art History**  
**ART 2, Section 03: The Artist in Contemporary Culture**

**Course and Contact Information**

**Instructor:** Léonie Guyer  
**Office Location:** Art 331  
**Telephone:** (408) 924-4374  
**Email:** leonie.guyer@sjsu.edu  
**Office Hours:** Tues. 6–7pm  
**Class Days/Time:** Tues. 3pm–5:45pm  
**Classroom:** Art 110

**Additional Information:**

- \* Email is generally the best method of contact outside office hours.
- \* 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 formants such as Braille, large print, sign interpreters, assistive listening devices, audio tape and accommodations for physical accessibility.

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](mailto:art@sjsu.edu)

**Course Description**

This is an introductory course examining the roles that artists play in contemporary culture. Through critical reading, writing, discussions and problem-solving, students will consider principles of form, theory and research as they are applied to real-world situations confronted by contemporary artists.

**Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives**

Artists think creatively and visually across media, and have many roles in society. This course will expand notions of contemporary art practice – the myriad ways in which artists work and contribute to culture and community life, intellectual and social discourse, and history. Roles to be considered (but not limited to) include philosopher, cultural anthropologist, archivist, environmentalist, activist, healer, trickster.

This course is a weekly seminar with reading, writing, and studio assignments. Students will also be expected to attend at least one artist lecture outside of class and one museum and/or gallery exhibition.

## **To successfully complete this course, students will:**

1. Attend all class sessions on time;
2. Be attentive to image presentations; read and be prepared to discuss all assigned readings; actively participate in discussions and critiques – **note:** if you never speak in class you will not pass this course;
3. Complete all studio assignments and submit in class on time;
4. Complete written assignments and submit in class on time.

## **Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) (Required)**

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

1. Build on skills in creative problem-solving, brainstorming, and visual communication
2. Deploy their skills in visual research and in applying theory to new situations
3. Demonstrate familiarity with the language of visual critique
4. Expand skills in writing and speaking to include formats of written proposal, formal description and analysis, and critical essay
5. Decipher the cultural roles played by various contemporary artists

## **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 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

## **Project Deadlines**

Deadlines are listed in the Course Schedule and will be posted on Canvas throughout the semester. Students are responsible for knowing the deadlines and assignment requirements. Deadlines are well-documented – check your assignment hand-outs, on Canvas, or ask a fellow student. If you are having a problem with an assignment, I encourage you to discuss this with me as soon as possible. Any work not turned in on the due date is considered late, and will be graded down.

**Special circumstances** will be taken into consideration (e.g. illness, court appearance, death of relative).

The instructor reserves the right to alter assignments and change project due dates with sufficient notice to the students.

## **Classroom Protocol**

Students are expected to be punctual for class and actively engaged during all class meetings. Cell phones or other devices that detract from full attention should be turned off or silenced. Cell phones, laptops and other devices must be put away during all lectures, videos and discussions.

Students are expected to attend all meetings for the course as they are responsible for material discussed. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to find out what you have missed and how to catch up with the work (e.g. exchange phone numbers with a classmate and ask to look at their class notes;

speak with me in class and/or during my office hours, etc.).

### **Communication**

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns regarding an assignment, the course in general, or any other relevant topic. If you have an issue or problem that may impact your participation in class, it is advisable that you communicate with me 24 hours in advance, directly or by email:

[leonie.guyer@sjsu.edu](mailto:leonie.guyer@sjsu.edu). If you can't give me advance notice, email me as soon as possible.

### **Determination of Grades / Grading Policy**

Your grade will be based on my assessment of your effort and your work, attention to learning, development of skills throughout the semester, and participation in class.

Grading determined as follows:

#### **10% Class Participation**

#### **20% Weekly Assignments** (details on Canvas)

#### **10% Writing Assignments** (details on Canvas)

#### **30% Studio Project: Spiral | Labyrinth (Part 1)** (details on Canvas)

#### **30% Studio Project: Spiral | Labyrinth (Part 2)** (details on Canvas)

**NOTE:** University policy F69-24 states that “Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading.”

I will assign letter grades; letters correspond to numerical values as follows:

A+ = 97-100, A = 93-96, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D+ = 67-69, D = 63-66, D- = 60-62, F = below 60

### **Required Reading / Viewing**

Required readings and videos for the semester will be drawn from a variety of sources, including (but not limited to) critical essays, artists' writings/interviews, art periodicals, and reliable internet sources. These documents will be made available through hand-outs and on Canvas, and will be presented in conjunction with Course Topics. In addition to assigned readings, optional readings will available through the Canvas course website.

### **Other material requirements:**

Students will be required to procure their own materials to complete studio assignments; specific materials needed will depend on how they approach the project(s).

## **Library Liaison**

Gareth Scott is the Library Liaison for the Art & Art History Department. He is available to help students with their research. Contact info:

email: [gareth.scott@sjsu.edu](mailto:gareth.scott@sjsu.edu)

phone: (408) 808-2094

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library

4th Floor Administration Offices

Also note, SJSU Research Guides in Art and Visual Culture are available here: [libguides.sjsu.edu/art](http://libguides.sjsu.edu/art).

## **Art & Art History Department Image Database**

For your art research, you may also use the SJSU Art History and Visual Culture VRL Image Database.

This is an excellent resource which you can access here: [http://arth.sjsu.edu/image\\_db/index.php](http://arth.sjsu.edu/image_db/index.php).

username: arth

password: to be given in class

## **Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material**

[University Policy S12-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf), <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

“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.”

In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.

“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.”

## **Department Advising**

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## **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/>”

## How to Take Notes

It is essential to take notes during class. Primarily, because you will get more out of class by taking notes because you will remember and retain more information. Secondly, taking notes trains you to observe and think more carefully about the information the instructor presents. Finally, the notes you take in class may provide helpful language to refer to when you need to write artist statements, proposals, grant applications, etc.

- Don't worry that your notes may not be perfect. There is no way to know what information will be significant to you later. **A good guideline is if something perks your interest, make a note of it.** You can figure out what it means or doesn't mean later.
- The more you do it, the easier it becomes. Taking notes are essential in many art careers, and it is a good skill to have.
- Actually write your notes by hand – refrain from typing them on tablets or computers. Besides being distracting to others, actually writing your notes will mean that you remember them more coherently – and this will lead you to more developed thoughts and responses.
- If you take them seriously, your notes will start to reveal to you what you are paying the most attention to, what you are most interested in, what you are the most intrigued by – they may even start to reveal something about yourself. Reading someone else's notes, or just sitting there during lectures, group discussions and critiques, is no substitute for applying your own perceptions and thoughts. Becoming an active critical thinker is an important part of your artistic development.

## ART 2, Section 03: The Artist in Contemporary Culture, Spring 2020

**NOTE:** The instructor reserves the right to make adjustments at her discretion; schedule is subject to change with fair notice.

### Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/28/20	<b>Introduction</b> to course, review syllabus & course materials; student & professor introductions; John Cage, <i>4'33</i> ; <i>The Artist Project</i>   <i>The Metropolitan Museum of Art</i> . <b>Assignment:</b> review course materials (hand-outs); studio project research: Spiral   Labyrinth (to be discussed).
2	2/04/11	<b>Topic I: Materia Prima   Abstract</b> Artist as philosopher, contemplative <b>Lecture / Discussion:</b> Tantra paintings, <i>Zen ensō</i> , Hilma af Klint, Mondrian, Agnes Martin, Ad Reinhardt, Yves Klein, Myron Stout, Forrest Bess, Gee's Bend Quiltmakers, Dansaekhwa, Ryman, Fred Sandback, Stanley Whitney, et al. <b>Assignments:</b> weekly assignment (refer to hand-out & Canvas); required reading: writings by Franck André Jamme and Lawrence Rinder; continue work

		on studio project: Spiral   Labyrinth.
3	2/11/20	<b>Topic II: Materia Prima   Object</b> Artist as alchemist, cultural anthropologist, archivist <b>Lecture / Discussion:</b> Duchamp, Schwitters, Hannah Höch, Piero Manzoni, Anne Ryan, Joseph Cornell, James Castle, Bruce Conner, Eva Hesse, Arte Povera, Doris Salcedo, El Anatsui, Jimmie Durham, et al. <b>Assignments:</b> weekly assignment; required reading (tba); continue work on studio project: Spiral   Labyrinth; prepare for individual meetings on 2/13.
4	2/18/20	<b>Individual Meetings: Studio Project: Spiral   Labyrinth</b> <b>Assignments:</b> weekly assignment; required reading (tba); continue work on studio project: Spiral   Labyrinth.
5	2/25/20	<b>Topic II (cont.): Materia Prima   Action / Site</b> Artist as environmentalist, activist: Land Art, ecofeminism, social practice <b>Lecture / Discussion:</b> Jo Hanson, Agnes Denes, Robert Smithson, Michelle Stuart, Gordon Matta-Clark, Mierle Ukeles, Theaster Gates, et al. <b>Assignments:</b> weekly assignment; reading: “Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings” by Eileen Myles; continue work on studio project: Spiral   Labyrinth.
6	3/03/20	<b>Topic III: Art, Ritual and the Body</b> Artist as shaman, healer, trickster <b>Lecture / Discussion:</b> Yoko Ono, Joseph Beuys, Carolee Schneeman, Tehching Hsieh, Gina Pane, Terry Fox, Tehching Hsieh, Linda Montano, Ana Mendieta, Marina Abramovic, Eleanor Antin, James Luna, David Hammons, Guillermo Gomez-Pena and Coco Fusco, Nick Cave, et al. <b>Assignments:</b> weekly assignment; reading (tba); continue work on studio project: Spiral   Labyrinth.
7	3/10/20	<b>Topic IV: Mark making and Text</b> Artist as scribe, scholar, poet <b>Lecture / Discussion:</b> Rudolf Steiner, James Castle, Cy Twombly, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Hanne Darboven, Mark Lombardi, Ellen Gallagher, et al. <b>Assignment:</b> weekly assignment; required reading (tba); continue work on studio project: Spiral   Labyrinth; prepare for Crit on 3/17.
8	3/17/20	<b>Mid-Term Critique</b> <b>Assignments:</b> weekly assignment; required reading (tba); continue work on studio project: Spiral   Labyrinth.
9	3/24/17	<b>Topic IV (cont.): Conceptual Art and Text</b> Artist as philosopher, poet, activist <b>Lecture / Discussion:</b> Concrete Poetry, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Yoko Ono, Sol LeWitt, Bruce Nauman, Lawrence Weiner, Hans Haacke, General Idea, Guerilla Girls, Jenny Holzer, Glenn Ligon, Tracy Emin, et al. <b>Assignments:</b> weekly assignment; required reading (tba); continue work on studio project: Spiral   Labyrinth.
10	3/31/17	<b>SPRING RECESS – NO CLASS</b>
11	4/07/20	<b>View and discuss: Sol LeWitt: Wall Drawings</b> <b>Assignments:</b> weekly assignment; required reading (tba); continue work on

		studio project: Spiral   Labyrinth; prepare for individual meetings on 4/14.
12	4/14/20	<b>Individual Meetings: Studio Project: Spiral   Labyrinth</b> <b>Assignments:</b> weekly assignment; required reading (tba); continue work on studio project: Spiral   Labyrinth.
13	4/21/20	<b>Topic V: The Figure   Archetype, Identity, Narrative</b> Artist as observer, storyteller, constructor/de-creator of identity <b>Lecture / Discussion:</b> Claude Cahun, Lee Friedlander, Beauford Delaney, David Park, Bob Thompson, Albert York, Alice Neel, Philip Guston, Gerhard Richter, Luc Tuymans, Marlene Dumas, Laylah Ali, Chris Ofili, Kerry James Marshall, Louise Bourgeois, Simone Leigh, et al. <b>Assignments:</b> weekly assignment; required reading: writings by Bill Berkson; continue work on studio project: Spiral   Labyrinth.
14	4/28/20	<b>View and discuss:</b> Tracey Emin on Louise Bourgeois: <i>Women Without Secrets – Secret Knowledge</i> <b>Assignments:</b> weekly assignment; required reading: writings by Bill Berkson; continue work on studio project: Spiral   Labyrinth.
15	5/05/20	<b>FINAL CRIT Part 1: Attendance required</b>
16	5/14/20	<b>Final Class: Thursday, May 14, 2:45-5pm</b> <b>FINAL CRIT Part 2: Attendance required</b>