

San José State University
Department of Art and Art History
ART 003, Medium and Message, Section 03, Spring, 2020

Instructor:	Shannon Wright
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Office Hours:	Tues 1.300-2.30 PM Thurs 11.00 AM to noon and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	T/TH 9.00-10.15
Classroom:	Art 108

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Copies of the course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, etc. may be found on our class Canvas page. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU. Please make sure your email notifications are turned on, or you will miss announcements.

Course Description

This undergraduate seminar introduces intermediate-level artists to a research and project-based approach to art-making with a focus on contemporary, idea-appropriate media and methods.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

Contemporary artists choose or invent the media that will best convey specific ideas. When their chosen medium lies outside of their previously acquired skill-set, they either "farm out" aspects of a project or collaborate with others with skills appropriate to the project. In the case of extremely ambitious projects, an artist may function more as an art director than a sole author and maker of his or her work. This course will introduce multiple approaches to thinking about medium, authorship, the relationship between process and project, and the roles of the artist, community and audience in the development of public art projects.

This course is a seminar with readings and studio-practice homework to be done outside of class time. University policy requires that six hours of homework per week be assigned for any three-unit class. There will be at least one field trip to an art museum or public art venue, and students will be expected to attend at least one lecture outside of class time.

Course Content Learning Outcomes

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

CLO1: demonstrate knowledge about different media

CLO2: demonstrate and apply knowledge about the relationship of medium and content

CLO3: demonstrate fluency in the language of visual critique

CLO4: demonstrate sensitivity to a variety of media and cultural modes of representation

CLO5: track their own iterative working process

Required Texts/Readings

Online Course Reader: Six readings will be posted on Canvas.

Other Media: Videos and MP3s will be posted on Canvas

Other equipment / material requirements

A notebook or binder for taking notes, a sketchbook for visual problem-solving. Some materials will need to be purchased at hardware stores, art supply stores, etc. Total materials cost will be between \$50 and \$80.

The Shop Safety Test

This is optional in this class, for students who would like to gain access to the Shop facilities to make their projects.

Students who use the shop facilities will be required to pay a \$20 fee to take the Shop Safety Test before they can use the facility. The fee must be paid prior to the student taking the Shop Safety Test. Students may pay at the Bursar's Office, located in the Student Services Center, directly into Fund 62089 with cash or check. The test and fee are required only once a calendar year, so if you took the test during the Fall 2015 semester, you will not be required to pay this fee again until Fall 2016. If you paid the fee in Spring 2017, you must pay the fee again for Spring 2018. The shop test is valid for one (1) calendar year.

In order to take the Shop Safety Test and use the School of Art & Design Shop Facilities, you must:

- Bring a receipt for the fee paid at the Bursar's Office into Fund 62089. The Bursar's Office accepts cash or check only.
- Be enrolled in at least one 3-unit Art or Design course during the Spring 2020 semester.

You may watch the Shop Safety Test online at:

<http://www.sjsu.edu/at/atn/webcasting/events/shopysafety/>

The test is an open-notes test. I suggest writing EVERYTHING down that you can as you watch the video.

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) must be on file for all potentially hazardous materials before they can be used in any of the Art & Design facilities. Submit one copy of the material's MSDS to the department in Room 104 and a second copy to the faculty member or technician responsible for the facility where the material will be used. Please explain this to the students in your classes. This is a commonly missed question on the shop safety test and should be discussed with your class prior to the shop test.

The safety orientation and test are given only during the first 3 weeks of the semester, from **August 21st to September 13th**.

If a student misses more than three (3) questions on the safety test, or fails the Second Chance Test, your presence is required in the shop at all times while that student is working in the facilities. All students who wish to use the shop facilities must pass the shop safety test, no exceptions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

~PLEASE INCLUDE THIS INFORMATION ON YOUR GREEN SHEET FOR THE FALL 2019 SEMESTER~

Material Data Safety Sheets (MSDS) must be on file for all potentially hazardous materials before they can be used in any of the Art & Design facilities. Submit one copy of the material's MSDS to the department in Room 104 and a second copy to the faculty member responsible for the class in which the material will be used. **Please explain this to the students in your classes. This is a commonly missed question on the shop safety test and should be discussed with your class prior to the shop orientation.**

DATES AND HOURS OF OPERATION- FALL 2019

August 21st to December 9th.

NOTE: the operating hours below are based on historic allocations and do not reflect the impact(s) of any budget cuts that may occur. Check the posted schedule outside the shop for updated hours of operation. Please be aware that clean-up starts 30 minutes before closing.

MONDAY 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

TUESDAY 8:30 AM – 7:30 PM

WEDNESDAY 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

THURSDAY 8:30 AM – 7:30 PM

FRIDAY 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

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/>

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>

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.

No headphones or earbuds may be worn in class.

Assignments and Grading Policy

Students will respond to course readings and videos with short written responses on Canvas. The three primary projects will be "studio practice" projects informed by the readings.

30% Written Responses to Course Readings: Six short written entries, minimum of 450 words each, responding to the course readings and videos. Each written entry should address a specific question which will be assigned for each reading, and may additionally address how the reading will tie into the studio project that the class is currently working on. CLO1, 2, 3, 4. These responses on Canvas will be due every other Tuesday.

5% Reading Response #1

Due Tues, Feb 4

5% Reading Response #2

Due Tues, Feb 18

20% Project 1

Due Thurs, Feb 27

5% Reading Response #3

Due Tues, Mar 3

5%	Reading Response #4	Due Tues, Mar 17
20%	Project 2	Due Tues, April 7
5%	Reading Response #5	Due Tues, April 7
20%	Project 3	Due Tues, April 28
5%	Reading Response #6	Due Tues, May 7

10% Class Participation: Involvement in class discussions of the weekly readings, group discussions of projects in progress, participation in field trips, participation in project critiques.

Students will make a written entry, with one piece of information from the day's technical demonstration; the in-class critique; the day's lecture, or the in-class discussion of the current course reading, that they deem relevant to a current project or a potential future project. **Students will submit these on Canvas** at the end of each class to count towards their Class Participation grade. Set an alarm on your phone or laptop to remind you to submit this every Tuesday and Thursday. It matters to your grade!

NOTE that University policy F69-24, "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."

CLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

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.

Your grade will be based on my assessment of your work, based on the criteria listed for each project. The three assignments are designed to test your ability to creatively apply the concepts from lectures and readings to specific problems. These skills will improve as you apply them to solving incrementally more difficult problems over your college career and beyond.

97-100 = A+

93-96 = A

90-92 = A-

87-89 = B+

83-86 = B
80-82 = B-
77-79 = C+
73-76 = C
70-72 = C-
67-69 = D+
63-66 = D
60-62 = D-
59 and below = F

A= Excellent work
B= Above average work
C= Average work
D= Below average work
F= Unsatisfactory work

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>.

Your projects will be judged against a standard based on college-level artwork made in universities and art schools in the United States.

To earn an A:

1) Concept Development: The "concept" behind the piece must exhibit inspiration, research, and evidence of consideration of topics discussed in class. Great projects don't materialize out of thin air. Participation in our class critiques contributes exponentially to the conceptual sophistication of student projects. Not being present for lectures, discussions and critiques often results in projects that might be read as "one-liners," lacking conceptual depth and the richness of multiple associations. Sometimes such projects also appear derivative of other projects found online. When we discuss ideas as a class, I generally inform students about ways to avoid making something that closely resembles a project already made by another artist.

In my classes, written responses to course readings are a crucial forum for iterative development of concepts.

2) Craftsmanship and Presentation: A piece must exhibit craftsmanship that is competitive with the work of top art students nationwide. An A could be achieved by a student with minimal training in technical processes if it shows ingenuity, evidence of immense trial and error, and the tenacity and enthusiasm required to overcome obstacles and find a way to "make it work" in spite of financial and technical challenges. Your professors have looked at enough art in their years of teaching to be able to distinguish the difference between a project with minimal time invested in it, and a project with many hours invested in it. "Hours invested" factors into this craftsmanship component of the grade.

ART 3 is a 3 unit class: this means that the *minimum* number of hours of expected work outside of class per week is 6.5 hours. This doesn't mean only the weeks when a major project is due; this means every week. "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." (SJSU greensheet mandatory information.)

Presentation: in ART 3 we have a classroom that is not the ideal setting for exhibiting art. However, an A project will show foresight in terms of presentation. If the piece needs to be hung or mounted on the wall, it's essential to inquire about this before your assigned critique day. Maybe you will need to come in the night before to mount or install your project. If your project will be a projection mapping, you will likewise need to set up before class and put up a sign requesting that the objects to be projected onto be left alone until your presentation.

3) Technical Skill, Stylistic Sophistication, Innovation, and Risk-Taking: This part of the equation often lies outside of what is commonly referred to as "effort." However, because this is a college-level class, work must be judged relative to other college-level work, if it is to be graded legitimately. (Grade inflation leads to false confidence and disappointment once a student graduates and encounters the nationwide competition.) With this category, I am referring to things like drawings that show a keen grasp of proportion and expressive line quality; paintings that show ability in handling paint; digital projects that are truly innovative and show mastery of a program, and so on. Work that appears tentative or hesitant may earn fewer points in this category. With very high points in all categories except this one, a project may still earn a "B."

4) Integration of concept and method of realization: in art-making, there is not a clean divide between an "idea" and its embodiment in material (or digital/ virtual) form. As discussed in the course readings in this class, an idea and its "form" are brought up together in a circuitous, iterative process in which each is informed by and altered by the other. Even when a project is abandoned one day before it is due to be presented because an artist had an epiphany: that epiphany (or "better idea") would not have ever occurred without the many hours the artist already invested in problem-solving.

Project Deadlines

Deadlines are listed in the Course Calendar. Any work not turned in on the date it is due is considered late. Seven percent will be deducted from the grade for every week it is not turned in. **Special circumstances** will be taken into consideration (e.g. Illness, court appearance, death of a relative.) Please bring documentation once you return to class. The instructor reserves the right to alter assignments and change project due dates with sufficient notice to the students.

"Turning a project in" is not a concept in this class. I do not "collect" projects; we collectively *critique* them. It is better to be present and contribute to the group critique without having your project here, than to miss the critique and run in at the end of class with a finished project, having missed the critique. The critique *is* the teaching.

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

Attention!!!

Recycling projects already turned in in another class counts as cheating. All work made in this class must be new work—a “customized” response to each assignment. It is essential that I see your work in progress in the weeks prior to each critique, for your piece to receive credit. Work that appears completely out of the blue will be considered highly suspect. I will invite other instructors from the department to view photographs from our class critiques in Dropbox, in order to make sure no project is recurring from another class.

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.

A note about Canvas: If you have not turned in a project or submitted a reading response, and I have not yet entered a zero for that assignment: be aware that Canvas will give you a falsely inflated grade reading. It won't include that assignment until a grade has been assigned. Furthermore, assignments lose a point (out of 100) for each day they are late. These points do add up, so do not be surprised!

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

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Glossary for Medium and Message

Abstract: (adjective) referring to art that simplifies, emphasizes, or distorts qualities of a real-life image rather than art that tries to represent its surface details accurately. In some cases, the intent is to present the essence of an object rather than its outer form.

Abstract: (verb) to simplify, emphasize or distort qualities of a real-life image. "The verb *abstrahere*, from which *abstraction* is derived, literally means to pull or draw away. Thus *abstraction*, in the purest sense, begins with *reality* and *draws away* from it, revealing the underlying lines and geometric shapes, transforming a figure or potted plant into something hardly recognizable."—Kendall Buster and Paula Crawford

Allusion: a reference made by an artwork to a recognizable thing from the world, or to another artwork, literary work etc. Jean Arp's abstract biomorphic sculptures *allude to* the human body without literally depicting body parts.

Assemblage: a work generated from a variety of objects and/or forms originally intended for other purposes.

Cliché: an overused expression or a predictable visual treatment of an idea.

Content: the substance of a work of art, including its emotional, intellectual, symbolic, thematic, and narrative connotations.

Craft: the tradition of the manipulation of a given material; the act of “working” a given material using time-honoured techniques.

Critique: any means by which strengths and weaknesses of designs are analyzed.

Craftsmanship: aptitude, skill, or quality workmanship in use of tools and materials.

Cultural critique: Artists engage in cultural critique when they use their artwork to question societal norms and expectations.

Decorative: pertaining to elements which enhance the surface of a designed object but which are not integrated into the structure of the object.

Disparate: separate, distinct, dissimilar (often applied to objects or elements placed together in a composition).

Economy: the use of only the bare essentials needed to perform the intended task.

Elegant: with respect to design (or mathematics): ingeniously simple and effective, free of extraneous detail.

Emotive qualities: the qualities of an object or an image that arouse feeling or emotion in the viewer.

Fabrication: the action or process of manufacturing or constructing something.

Figurative: drawing, painting and sculpture based on the human form.

Form: “The means by which one gives substance to an idea”—Kendall Buster and Paula Crawford. The embodiment of a concept in a material state. “Form” can also be used in place of the word “shape” when describing a three-dimensional object.

Formal: concerning the form, shape, appearance, arrangement, or external qualities of an object (as opposed to its “meaning”, for example.)

Found Object: in an artwork, any object that was not made "from scratch" by the artist. The term usually refers to a recognizable "thing" more often than a “raw material.”

Function: the goal that must be achieved by a design, or the work to be done by a designed object (a chair’s function is usually to seat a person more or less comfortably.)

High-Profile Materials: in a piece of artwork, materials that maintain a clear identity even after being manipulated to form the artwork. An example would be Tim Hawkinson's use of orange extension-cords as a material from which to crochet a pair of shorts.

Hybrid: a fusion of two unlikely or incongruous elements; the new, unnamed form created by the blending of two recognizable forms.

Illusionistic space: the illusion of “real”, three-dimensional space created on a two-dimensional surface by painting, drawing, photography etc.

Installation Art: “ A kind of art making which rejects concentration on one object in favour of a consideration of the relationships between a number of elements or the interaction between things and their contexts.”

In-the-round: viewed from all angles. When we say that a piece of sculpture or a designed object functions well *in the round*, we usually mean that it doesn’t have an obvious “front” or “back”--- it is equally interesting from any angle.

Juxtaposition: placement side by side; relationship of two or more elements. in a composition.

Kinetic: construction that contains moving elements set in motion by air, motors or gravity.

Kitsch: “Kitsch” artworks are artworks designed to have mass appeal, often through the use of “cute” or sentimental imagery. Kitsch is associated with cheapness, marketability, and gaudiness.

Lamination: the connection of two or more layers of a given material into a larger unit, by means of glue. The process of gluing multiple “plies” of wood into a curved form is known as “bent lamination.”

Low-Profile Materials: materials that seem to lose their distinct identity as they are manipulated to become a piece of artwork. Clay is a low-profile material, which is often used to mimic the textures of a variety of other materials.

Maquette: a small, scale model for a work intended to be enlarged.

Material: the substance that an object or a work of art is made from, whether steel, stone, wire, wood, etc. In the past century, artists and designers have often “celebrated” materials by designing *for* a given material, rather than hiding it under surface treatments.

Meaning: the idea that a piece of art conveys, or aspires to convey. Often, viewers will see a variety of meanings in the same piece, based on their differing experiences.

Mechanical fastening: connecting two parts using hardware or interlocking joinery, instead of adhesives.

Medium, media (pl): The material(s) and tool(s) used by the artist to create the visual elements perceived by the viewer.

Minimal: in art, characterized by the use of simple or primary forms, structures, etc., often geometric and massive.

Modular: involving the systematic use of a single unit of design, repeated and varied in position, angle, or combinations creating larger forms or units.

Multiple: a single unit repeated many times to form an artwork. A multiple may be produced by a moldmaking process, printmaking process, or by another means of mechanical reproduction.

Nonrepresentational: works of art that are purely self-referential, as opposed to those that allude to known things in the world.

Object: anything that is visible or tangible and stable in form. A thing.

Objective (adjective): an objective description of a piece of art refers to undisputable “facts” about the artwork, as opposed to opinion. “The sculpture is made of stainless steel and is six feet long” would be an objective description.

Presentation: The way a piece of art is displayed to the viewer, including its method of support. Methods of presentation include mounting a piece of sculpture to the wall, “plopping” it on a pedestal, or hanging it by fishing line. Methods of presenting a two-dimensional work like a drawing include framing it or pinning it directly to the wall.

Process: In art, the means by which an object is produced. Sometimes, the obstacles posed by a particular fabrication process influence the look and even the meaning of the final work of art.

Representational: forms that resemble other known objects, figures etc (as opposed to entirely abstract, *non-representational* forms.)

Self-supporting: In sculpture, an object’s ability to present itself to the viewer by standing directly on the floor or ground surface, rather than relying on a pedestal or other external means of presentation to support it.

Scale: the relationship between the size of an object and the size of its surroundings.

Sculpture: the art of expressive shaping of three-dimensional materials.

Site: “a particular place or location in the world at large”.

Site-specific: a site-specific project is one that was conceived and fabricated specifically for a given site. The piece may or may not still function if moved elsewhere (and will probably not have the same meaning once moved.)

Subjective: dependent on interpretation, not clearly quantifiable or easily verifiable. (“The sculpture is beautiful”, is a subjective statement, as opposed to “the sculpture is shiny and red,” an objective statement.)

Structure: The means by which an object is put together; a system of connections of parts.

Style: the specific artistic character and dominant trends of form noted during periods of

history and art movements. Style may also refer to artists' expressive use of media to give their works individual character.

Stylization: The simplification of a form to emphasize its design qualities. In representational drawing or sculpting, stylization can mean working from preconceived ideas about the figure as opposed to drawing or sculpting “what is there.”

Symbol: “conventionalized images that convey commonly held cultural values” (Stephen Luecking). An example is the flag of the United States.

Tableau: In O’Doherty’s use of the term, a tableau is like a perspective picture made three-dimensional—or like a self-contained diorama which, according to O’Doherty, “impersonates” other spaces. In most tableaux, the viewers do not have access to wander among the objects and figures as in some installation art.

ART 003, Section 3 / Medium and Message, Spring 2020, Course Schedule

The following schedule is subject to change with fair notice—by announcement(s) made in class

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Th 1/23 Tu 1/28	Course intro and intro to Project 1. Assign critique days, alphabetically. Enter Participation Notes! Reading response #1 due 9/3. Lecture pertaining to Project 1: The Nature of a Medium Homework: if you have not watched the Shop Safety Video in another class, please watch it and fill out the review form I gave you. https://www.sjsu.edu/at/atn/webcasting/events/shopysafety/ YOU MUST PAY FOR THE SHOP TEST TODAY and keep your receipt!
2	Th 1/30 Tu 2/4	Review, then Shop Safety Test Present proposals for Project 1, to the class. Sketches or projected digital images are appropriate. We will discuss whether each idea could be strengthened by using a different medium, or by expanding on the concept in some way, and I will make recommendations on where to acquire materials, etc. You are expected to be involved in the discussion even once you have presented your own idea. Participation notes will be collected. I will show materials available to students. Reading Response #1 due by midnight.
3	Th 2/6 Tu 2/11	Day two of presentations Video: Maya Lin: A Strong, Clear Vision
4	Th 2/13 Tu 2/18	Lecture: Olafur Eliasson, Chris Burden, and others. How to change someone's behavior through creative projects. Individual meetings to discuss Project 2. First half of class roster. Reading Response #2 due by midnight.
5	Th 2/20 Tu 2/25	Individual meetings to discuss Project 2. Second half of class roster. Graduate Advancement to Candidacy in MLK Library Rm 225

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
6	Th 2/27	Project 1 Critique, day 1.
	Tu 3/3	Project 1 Critique, day 2. Reading Response #3 due by midnight
7	Th 3/5	Project 1 Critique, day 3
	Tu 3/10	Project 1 Critique, Day 4
8	Th 3/12	Towards project 2: medium is not a transparent vessel for "message." Discussion of Tony Cragg reading, iterative process, getting away from the literal. Discussion of Tom Stoppard's quote. Intro to public art competitions online, discussion of current competitions such as the Maya Angelou memorial and the proposed monument to Silicon Valley.
	Tu 3/17	Introduction to Project 3. Kerry James Marshall video. Video: Christopher Walken reads Where the Wild Things Are. Grinling Gibbons, David Esterly, and trying to get into the head and soul of an old master. Reading Response #4 due by midnight.
9	Th 3/19	Meet at ND section of MLK Library, 4th Floor, to find source material for third project.
	Tu 3/24	One-on-one meetings: First half of roster
10	Th 3/26	One-on-one meetings: Second half of roster
	Tu 3/31	Spring Break
11	Th 4/2	Spring Break
	Tu 4/7	Project 2 Critique, day 1 5th reading response due
12	Th 4/9	Project 2 Critique, day 2
	Tu 4/14	Project 2 Critique, day 3

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
13	Th 4/16 Tu 4/21	Project 2 Critique Day 4 Reading Response #6 due. Watch Creative Growth video and part of the Henry Darger movie. ("Outsider Art" theme.)
14	Th 4/23 Tu 4/28	Jeff Koons and "farming out" of fabrication. Discussion of appropriation and intellectual property issues. Also, the role of "craft" in contemporary art, and the endless debate around this subject. (The related reading response is due May 7) Project 3 critique, day 1
15	Th 4/30 Tu 5/5	Project 3 critique, day 2 Project 3 critique, day 3
16	Th 5/7	Project 3 critique, day 4
Final Exam	Tues, May 19, 7.15-9.30	Classroom cleanup/ Photo shoot, with potluck breakfast.