

San José State University

Department of Art & Art History

ART 282B-01 (22422), Critical Practice in Contemporary Art Spring 2020

Instructor:	Janet Silk
Office Location:	Art 115
Email:	<u>janet.silk@sjsu.edu</u>
Office Hours:	Tues./Thurs. 1:30-2:30
Phone:	(408) 924-4336
Class Days/Time:	Thurs. 3:00-5:45
Classroom:	ART 110
Prerequisites:	ARTH 191A and admission to classified MFA status in art or instructor consent. Note: This course satisfies graduate-level GWAR in this master's program.

Course Description

This three unit graduate seminar aims to facilitate discussion and critical thinking about the professionalization of the art world. For the first unit of coursework, we will explore our identities as art practitioners, researchers, historians, and cultural workers in the contemporary art world and art market. The second unit looks at the historic and current role of art criticism and art writing. We will read historically significant essays and discuss the continuing conversations in the contemporary art press about their relevance. The third unit seeks to deepen our understanding of present-day issues regarding art historical knowledge and education, with an emphasis on issues such as aesthetic relativism, posthistoricism, and multiculturalism.

For the most part, the first hour of each class will be a discussion of weekly reading material followed by a second hour of informal presentations, sharing of research, and or participating in content-related activities.

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 and assignments will be posted as PDFs online through the Canvas course website <https://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/teaching-tools/canvas/index.html> 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. Class changes or announcements will be posted on Canvas. Use your SJSU ID and password to log in; Help Desk is at 408-924-2377. Login website at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>

A static copy of the syllabus is posted on the [Department of Art and Art History website](http://www.sjsu.edu/art/documents/greensheets/) <http://www.sjsu.edu/art/documents/greensheets/>, but after January 21, it will be annotated and updated on the copy posted and available on Canvas.

Some Online Resources:

[Art in America/Art News](https://www.artnews.com/c/art-in-america/) <https://www.artnews.com/c/art-in-america/>

[Art Forum International](https://www.artforum.com/) <https://www.artforum.com/>

[ARTNET NEWS](https://news.artnet.com) <https://news.artnet.com>

[Art Price](http://www.artprice.com) www.artprice.com

[Art Market Monitor](http://www.artmarketmonitor.com) www.artmarketmonitor.com

[ArtSpace](https://www.artspace.com/) <https://www.artspace.com/>

[The Brooklyn Rail](https://brooklynrail.org/) <https://brooklynrail.org/>

[Black Art in America](https://www.blackartinamerica.com/) <https://www.blackartinamerica.com/>

[Critical Theory](http://www.critical-theory.com) www.critical-theory.com

[Frieze](https://frieze.com/) <https://frieze.com/>

[Hyperallergic](https://hyperallergic.com) <https://hyperallergic.com>

[List of Art Magazines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_art_magazines) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_art_magazines

[Posture Media](https://www.posturemedia.com/podcast) <https://www.posturemedia.com/podcast>

[Widewalls](https://www.widewalls.ch) <https://www.widewalls.ch>

Library Liaison

Gareth Scott

email: gareth.scott@sjsu.edu

phone: (408) 808-2094

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library

4th Floor Administration Offices

Department Advising

For information about majors and minors in Art & Art History, for a change of major/minor forms and a list of advisors: <http://www.sjsu.edu/art/advising/index.html> or the Art & Art History department office in ART 116, 408-924-4320, art@sjsu.edu

Classroom Protocol

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

Please, be on time.

Participate fully in discussions of the assigned reading material and presentations shown in class.

Attend class and keep up with coursework.

[University policy F69-24 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf) states, “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.

It is your responsibility to manage your time for this class and your life/work/education endeavors. “Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of forty-five hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf).

As a courtesy to others, please eat before class or excuse yourself and leave the classroom. Some people may be fasting, hungry, or have food allergies. We have a 15-20 minute break usually halfway through class. Beverages are acceptable.

Please, no cell phone during class and silence your phone. If you have to use your cell phone for an emergency, leave quietly. Any use of laptops or tablets for in-class work,

note taking, or presentations is acceptable, but if their use becomes a distraction, I will ask you to refrain from this behavior. Continuous disruption will be reported to the Chair of the Department of Art and Art History to determine disciplinary action (see SJSU Academic Integrity Policy http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/facultyandstaff/Academic_Integrity/)

Course Requirements and Assignments

Participation in class discussion and activities is part of your grade, and you are expected to **take initiative** to contribute. **(10%) LO1, LO2**

Writing response to reading assignments (15%) LO1, LO3, LO4

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.

Writing Projects (15%) LO1, LO3, LO4

Students will be assigned two cumulative writing projects at the end of the first two units related to the content of the readings. Writing Project #1 is a Narrative essay/manifesto, Writing Project #2 is an art criticism essay.

Student facilitated discussions and shared research or activity (20%) LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4:

Students will be assigned in pairs to be point persons to facilitate one of the weekly class discussions about reading material and to share supplemental research or activity about the topic. Students are expected to attend and be prepared on the day they have been assigned to facilitate.

Research Paper/Final Paper (30%) LO1, LO3, LO4

The final paper is a research paper approximately 3,000 words, 10-12 pages double-spaced (with additional pages for footnotes, images, etc.) following Chicago Manual of Style formatting. The content will be related to the last unit of the course.

Final Paper Presentation LO1, LO2

[According to SJSU policy S17-1,http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S17-1.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S17-1.pdf) , students will participate in a final exam, project, and or activity that will meet the final exam requirements for the course. This requirement is non-negotiable and will require students to be present on the scheduled exam day. Make sure in advance that you will have no conflicts with the final exam. Do not book flight tickets, make appointments, or in any other way compromise your ability to be present at the final exam. The final exam may not be taken early and can only be made up in the case of an unforeseen emergency which needs to be communicated in a timely manner and supported with a signed doctor's note or a signed letter from a legally established institutions and or professional individuals involved in the student's situation.

[Final exam schedule for Spring 2020 http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/final-exam-schedule-spring.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/final-exam-schedule-spring.html)

Late Work Policy

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. Please follow up with me as soon as possible regarding new coursework deadlines

Family emergencies require timely communication to me about the situation with a follow up letter communicating the reason for the absence and a request to meet with me to negotiate new coursework deadlines.

Please note: At SJSU in general, and in the Department of Art and Art History in particular, we value a sense of community and mutual compassion that will strengthen us to meet the challenges we face while attending, working, and or teaching at the university. However, your ability to manage your time is your responsibility. Employment in the private sector or on campus (for example, Teaching Assistant positions), exhibition schedules, department events, Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) presentations and activities, visiting artist or SJSU faculty studio visits, committee meetings, family reunions or weddings, or other projects not related to this course are not valid excuses for late or missing coursework and assignments. See [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

No make-up or extra credit for late or incomplete assignments.

Students must be present in class to receive credit for any 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."

Except in cases of documented emergencies, incomplete grades are not given in this course. It is the responsibility of the student to bring pertinent information to the attention of the instructor immediately (i.e., not at the end of the semester) regarding the unforeseen reason(s) for requesting an Incomplete. An Incomplete will not be considered if the student has completed under 85% of the coursework. An Incomplete will not be considered if the student has made no effort to communicate with the instructor regarding their emergency situation. Documentation includes doctor's notes and or signed letters from legally established institutions and or professional individuals involved in the student's situation. More information regarding Incompletes can be found in the course catalog at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/grades-incomplete.html> and at the [SJSU School of Information Department website https://ischool.sjsu.edu/incompletes](https://ischool.sjsu.edu/incompletes)

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

Writing Projects

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

Student facilitated discussions and shared research or activity

As a guideline, will be 20 points total: 10 for content/class discussion; 10 for organization/preparedness. Scale: 20=excellent; 18= very good; 17=good; 16=sufficient. A specific rubric will be created and presented in class and or posted on Canvas.

Final Paper presentation

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. Students can access their grades through Canvas. "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.

Grade Scale:

94-100%	A (no grades above "A")	90-93	A-
87-89	B+	84-86	B
80-83	B-	77-79	C+
73-76	C	70-72	C-
67-69	D+	63-66	D
60-62	D-	0-59	F

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](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/schedules/policies.html) <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/schedules/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the [current academic calendar](http://www.sjsu.edu/academics/) <http://www.sjsu.edu/academics/>. The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/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](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

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/>.”

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](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/policies/), located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/policies/> uires 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](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/) <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/> .

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](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf) <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf> 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 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 http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessibility Education Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/) <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/> (AEC) to establish a record of their disability.

SJSU Writing Center

The [SJSU Writing Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/) <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/> 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](https://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/) <https://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/> 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 2020, Course Schedule

Agenda as of January 16, 2020, 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.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments
Unit 1: Art/Work		
1	January 23	Introductions and Syllabus Discussion: Art/Work; Art/Criticism; Art/History Organize sign-up for Class Discussion facilitators Reading/Writing Assignment #1: <i>Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era</i> , Julia Bryan-Wilson, 2009, pp. 1-26, due: 1/30
2	January 30	Discussion: What is an “art worker”?, Art work/Art labor, the impact of the Vietnam War, seeds of social practice, critique of the art market Reading/Writing Assignment #2: <i>Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era</i> , Julia Bryan-Wilson, 2009, pp.26-39, due: 2/6

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments
3	February 6	<p>Discussion: define professionalization of the artworld, class mobility, U.S. labor 1960s-1970s, artist unions</p> <p>Reading/Writing Assignment #3: “The Artist as Double Agent,” Zachary Cahill and Philip von Zweck, 2014, due: 2/13</p>
4	February 13	<p>Discussion: Double agency</p> <p>Reading/Writing Assignment #4: “A Jeté Out the Window: Fred Herko’s Incandescent Illumination,” <i>Crusing Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity</i>, José Esteban Muñoz, due: 2/20</p> <p>Introduce Writing Project #1: Narrative essay/manifesto, due: 2/27</p>
5	February 20	<p>Discussion: Surplus value, failure</p> <p><i>Option (to be discussed): in-class work on Writing Project #1</i></p>
Unit 2: Art/Criticism		
6	February 27	<p>Writing Project #1: Presentations</p> <p>Reading/Writing Assignment #5: a) “What is the Purpose of Art Criticism Today?” Elena Martinique, Widewalls, 2017 b) “Against Interpretation,” Susan Sontag, 1964, due: 3/5</p> <p>Optional: “The 10 Essays That Changed Art Criticism Forever,” Will Fenstermaker, ArtSpace, 2017</p>
7	March 5	<p>Discuss: Purpose of art criticism today, hermeneutics vs. an erotics of art</p> <p>Reading/Writing Assignment #6: <i>Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power</i>, Anna C. Chave, 1990, due: 3/12</p> <p>Optional: “What Happens When We Run Out of Styles?” John Yau, 2013</p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments
8	March 12	Discussion: Rhetoric of Power, feminist art criticism, utopian moments Reading/Writing Assignment #7: a) “Why Art Criticism Sucks Right Now (Spoiler Alert:It’s Racist): Some Context and Suggestions,” Torey Akers, 2019 b) “From Negro Art to Post Black Art, Black Art Criticism is Essential,” Shantay Robinson, Black Art in America, 2018, due: 3/19
9	March 19	Discussion: Does art criticism suck right now? Introduce Writing Project #2: Art criticism essay, due: 4/9
10	March 26	FIELD TRIP to San Jose Museum of Modern Art specifics to be discussed in class
11	April 2	NO CLASS: SPRING RECESS
Unit 3: Art/History		
12	April 9	Discussion: Museum experience, critical essays Introduce Writing Project #3: Research Paper Reading/Writing Assignment #8: a) “An Illustrated Guide to Arthur Danto’s ‘The End of Art,’” Tiernan Morgan & Lauren Purje, Hyperallergic, 2015 b) “The End of Art: A Philosophical Defense,” Arthur C. Danto, 1998, c) Video: Sara Fanelli’s timeline, due: 4/16
13	April 16	Discussion: The end of art, timelines, historical and cultural contexts Reading/Writing Assignment #9: “A Theoretical Basis for Non-western Art History Education,” Jacqueline Chanda 1993, due: 4/23 Optional or required supplemental material: to be announced in class (TBA)
14	April 23	Discussion: Non-western art history, art history education
15	April 30	In-class work on Research Paper/Peer Review

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments
16	May 7 Last day of instruction	Writing workshop and individual sessions
17	May 21 2:45-5:00	Final Paper/Presentations