

**San José 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 (note: office hour meetings via Zoom this semester)  
**Email:** [leonie.guyer@sjsu.edu](mailto:leonie.guyer@sjsu.edu)  
**Office Hours:** Tues. 4-6 pm or by appointment  
**Class Days/Time:** Tues. / Thurs. 9–10:15 am  
**Classroom:** online

**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 formats 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)

**Acknowledgement**

We respectfully recognize that this University exists on the unceded, traditional lands of the Muwekma Ohlone, who have stewarded this land for generations.

**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 artist as philosopher, contemplative, archivist, activist,

cultural anthropologist, healer, trickster.

This interdisciplinary seminar will challenge students to consider a complex and inclusive view of contemporary art practice through image-based lectures, directed research, dialogue, studio projects and critique.

**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; pursue assigned and independent research; 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 on time;
4. Complete all written assignments and submit on time.

**Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)**

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>.

Students are required to attend all classes and submit completed assignments on time. If a class is missed, it is the student's responsibility to find out how to make up the work (see further info under **Classroom Protocol**). Participation in class discussions and all critiques is required.

**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 – refer to assignment descriptions (in pdf form) on Canvas, ask a fellow student and/or post your questions in the Q/A Forum. 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 may 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 | Online Class Protocol**

All classes will meet via Zoom during the regular class hours. Students are asked to arrive punctually for the Zoom classes. It is optional to have video on. I encourage you to do so to help make Zoom class correspond to in-person learning. Students are asked to remain on mute until called on to speak. Students wishing to speak should use the “hand raise” icon in the participant list. Students are expected to give their full attention to the class and not divert their attention to other websites, devices, etc. Cell phones should be turned off or silenced, and ideally put away.

The first 5 minutes of class time will include important announcements. Being late to these announcements negatively affects your participation grade. Lectures and discussion are dynamic and benefit from everyone’s participation. Failure to prepare and participate in them will affect your grade.

Zoom allows participants to communicate with group messages to all of the meeting participants and/or to send private messages to individual participants. Although it seems reasonable that private messages stay between two people, please be aware that all of the group messages and all private messages will be included in the meeting transcript.

Zoom Meeting Attendance Report: Zoom provides a roster of people who attended the meeting along with the times they joined and left the meeting.

All sessions will be recorded. The recordings will only be shared with students enrolled in the class, by email request. Recordings may be used for personal, study purposes only and may not be distributed outside of the class.

**IMPORTANT:** Students are expected to attend all class meetings and are responsible for keeping up with the material covered. 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., post questions and consult course Q/A Forum on Canvas; exchange contact information with a classmate and ask to look at their class notes; speak with me in class and/or during my office hours, etc.).

## **Communication**

To contact me, **use the message function located within Canvas** ([Guide on how to compose and send message in CanvasLinks to an external site.](#)). You can also use my SJSU e-mail: [leonie.guyer@sjsu.edu](mailto:leonie.guyer@sjsu.edu). Either of these options will assure private communications. I will respond to emails within 48 hours during the week and 72 hours on weekends — unless I let you know that I will be away from Internet access.

Please note that most questions can be answered by checking the Syllabus and Assignment descriptions for information. If you need further information, post your questions in the Q/A Forum. If you can't find the answer through these sources, then feel free to contact me.

Throughout the semester I will post announcements with tips, important information, etc. that will help you be successful in the class. If I need a response from you, I will indicate "Please reply." Make sure to check Canvas Announcements each week and read all announcements!

## **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% Studio Project 1: Found Matter (details on Assignment pdf)
- 20% Studio Project 2: Respond to Yoko Ono's Instructions | Draw a map to get lost
- 20% Studio Project 3: Imaginary Memorial / Monument / Anti-Monument
- 20% Critical Writing: Exhibition Response
- 10% Critiques

**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 reading / viewing for this course will be drawn from a variety of sources, including (but not limited to) critical essays, exhibition reviews, interviews, and artists' writings published in books, art publications, newspapers and reliable internet sources (e.g., museum and gallery websites, et al.).

Assigned in conjunction with Course Topics, these materials will be on the Canvas course website in Modules. In addition to required reading / viewing, optional materials will also be available on Canvas. Students will develop their understanding of Course Topics through reading / viewing of required and optional materials and ongoing independent research (research methodology is part of Art 2 curriculum).

## 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

## University Policies

### General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU's policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises. See University Policy S90-5 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf>. More detailed information on a variety of related topics is available in the SJSU catalog, at <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html>. In general, it is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not serve to address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as a next step.

### 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 section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the Academic Calendars webpage at [http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic\\_calendars/](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/). The Late Drop Policy is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of 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/>.

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

[University Policy S12-7](#) 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."

"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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### **Academic Integrity**

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf> 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. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](#) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

### **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](#) at [http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD\\_1997-03.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center](#) (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

## 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, Fall 2021

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

All assignments to be submitted online by due date; late submissions may be graded down.

### Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/19	<p><b>Introduction</b> to course: student &amp; professor introductions; syllabus &amp; course materials; discuss methodology for art research, studio projects, student “responders”, etc.</p> <p><b>Assignments:</b> review course materials; required reading / viewing (see Modules WEEK 1); notes on reading / viewing &amp; preparing for class discussions</p>
2	8/24 8/26	<p><b>Presentation / Discussion:</b> art &amp; process; sources of inspiration; <i>The Artist Project</i>   <i>The Metropolitan Museum of Art</i>; John Cage, 4'33”</p> <p><b>Assignments:</b> view / research: <i>The Artist Project</i> (see assignment pdf)</p>
3	8/31 9/02	<p><b>Topic I: Materia Prima   Abstract</b> Artist as philosopher, contemplative</p> <p><b>Lecture / Discussion:</b> Indigenous Australian painting, Tantra paintings, Zen <i>ensō</i>, Hilma af Klint, Mondrian, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Ad Reinhardt, Agnes Martin, Myron Stout, Forrest Bess, Lygia Clark, Leo Valledor, Stanley Whitney, Gee’s Bend Quiltmakers, Rosie Lee Tompkins, Robert Ryman, Fred Sandback, Senga Nengudi, Gego, Ruth Asawa, Zarina, Byron Kim, Zilia Sánchez, et al.</p> <p><b>Assignments:</b> required reading / viewing: writings by Franck André Jamme and Lawrence Rinder (see Modules WEEK 3); prepare to discuss in class</p>
4	9/07 9/09	<p><b>Topic II: Materia Prima   Object</b> Artist as alchemist, archivist, cultural anthropologist</p> <p><b>Lecture / Discussion:</b> Elsa Von Freytag-Loringhoven, Duchamp, Schwitters, Hannah Höch, Meret Oppenheim, Piero Manzoni, Yves Klein, Anne Ryan, Joseph Cornell, James Castle, Bruce Conner, Doris Salcedo, Jimmie Durham, El Anatsui, Bessie Harvey, Lonnie Holley, Joe Minter, Kim Sooja, et al.</p> <p><b>Assignments:</b> STUDIO PROJECT 1: Found Matter, <b>DUE: 9/28</b>; required reading / viewing (see Modules WEEK 4)</p>



5	9/14 9/16	<p><b>Topic III: Materia Prima   Action / Site</b> Artist as environmentalist, activist: Land Art, ecofeminism, social practice <b>Lecture / Discussion:</b> Arte Povera, Dansaekhwa, Jo Hanson, Agnes Denes, Robert Smithson, Nancy Holt, Walter De Maria, Gordon Matta-Clark, Michelle Stuart, Mierle Ukeles, Richard Long, Beverly Buchanan, Charles Simonds, et al. <b>Assignments:</b> STUDIO PROJECT 1: Found Matter, <b>DUE: 9/28;</b> required reading: “Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings” by Eileen Myles (see Modules WEEK 5); CRITICAL WRITING: Exhibition Response (see assignment description), <b>DUE: 10/12</b></p>
6	9/21 9/23	Class discussion: Topics I-III   Required Reading / Viewing (further details to be announced)
7	9/28 9/30	<p><b>CRITIQUE:</b> STUDIO PROJECT 1: Found Matter <b>Assignments:</b> CRITICAL WRITING: Exhibition Response, <b>DUE: 10/12;</b> required reading / viewing (see Modules WEEK 6)</p>
8	10/05 10/07	<p><b>Topic IV: 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, Ulay, Marina Abramovic, Eleanor Antin, Lorraine O’Grady, James Luna, David Hammons, Guillermo Gomez-Pena and Coco Fusco, Nick Cave, et al. <b>Assignments:</b> reading / viewing (see Modules WEEK 7); CRITICAL WRITING: Exhibition Response, <b>DUE: 10/12</b></p>
9	10/12 10/14	<p><b>Topic V, Part 1: Mark Making and Text</b> Artist as scribe, scholar, poet <b>Lecture / Discussion:</b> James Castle, Cy Twombly, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Hanne Darboven, Mark Lombardi, Mira Schor, Howardena Pindell, Tracey Emin, et al. <b>Assignment:</b> required reading / viewing (see Modules WEEK 8)</p>
10	10/19 10/21	<p><b>Topic V, Part 2: 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, General Idea, Guerilla Girls, Jenny Holzer, Glenn Ligon, et al. <b>Assignments:</b> STUDIO PROJECT 2: Yoko Ono’s Instruction   Draw a map to get lost, <b>DUE: 11/09;</b> required reading / viewing (see Modules WEEK 9)</p>
11	10/26 10/28	<p><b>Topic VI: Public Art, Memorials, Monuments, Anti-Monuments</b> <b>Lecture / Discussion:</b> throughout history, public monuments have embodied the perspective of those in power — how can contemporary artists, thinkers and activists critique, subvert and transform this paradigm? Black Lives Matter, Félix González-Torres, Maya Lin, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, David</p>

		Hammons, Gunter Demnig   <i>Stumbling Stones</i> , Michael Rakowitz, Miranda July, et al. <b>Assignments:</b> STUDIO PROJECT 2: Draw a map to get lost, <b>DUE: 11/09</b> ; STUDIO PROJECT 3: Imaginary Memorial / Monument / Anti-Monument, <b>DUE: 11/30</b> ; required reading / viewing (see Modules WEEK 13)
12	11/02 11/04	<b>Topic VII: 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, Ming Smith, Philip Guston, Gerhard Richter, Luc Tuymans, Marlene Dumas, Laylah Ali, Chris Ofili, Kerry James Marshall, Louise Bourgeois, Tracey Moffatt, Emily Jacir, Simone Leigh, et al. <b>Assignments:</b> STUDIO PROJECT 2: Draw a map to get lost, <b>DUE: 11/09</b> ; STUDIO PROJECT 3: Imaginary Memorial / Monument / Anti-Monument, <b>DUE: 11/30</b> ; required reading on Philip Guston (see Modules WEEK 11); prepare for critique
13	11/09 11/11*	<b>CRITIQUE:</b> STUDIO PROJECT 2: Draw a map to get lost <b>*November 11: NO CLASS – Veteran’s Day</b>
14	11/16 11/18	<b>VISITING ARTIST:</b> to be announced <b>CLASS DISCUSSION:</b> Philip Guston and the contemporary moment
15	11/23 11/25*	<b>CLASS DISCUSSION:</b> to be announced <b>*November 25: NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Holiday</b>
16	11/30 12/02	<b>FINAL CRITIQUE,</b> STUDIO PROJECT 3: Imaginary Memorial / Monument / Anti-Monument. <b>IMPORTANT: Everyone is required to attend</b>
17	12/10*	<b>FINAL CLASS MEETING:</b> FRIDAY, DEC. 10, 7:15–9:30 am *as per SJSU Final Exam Schedule <b>IMPORTANT: Everyone is required to attend</b>