Contemporary Art Since 1960
Department of Art and Art History, FAH 055/0155-01

Fall 2014, Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:30-5:45PM, Jackson Hall #5

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Office hours: 11 Talbot Ave, Room 108, Tuesday 10:00-12:00, or by appointment after class on Mondays.

Course Description:
This course presents a historically rooted introduction to contemporary art from a global perspective. It begins in the late-1950s and continues through the present day. Rather than a strictly chronological survey, this course examines specific moments, shifting political trends, popular culture, and theoretical frameworks that continue to inform contemporary practice and criticism. During the period under consideration, many artists moved away from the canvas and the studio, and toward the contexts of reception and conditions of public experience. Faced with a range of historical conditions—the cold war, the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, increasing globalization and communication—artists conceived of strategies through which to intervene in a world increasingly mediated by images and undertook a sweeping redefinition of the concepts of authorship, autonomy, and originality.

Textbook (Optional):
Fineberg, Jonathan. Art Since 1940: Strategies of Being (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000). - N6512.5 .M63 F56 2000 (This is good for any background reading if you are unclear on a topic. However, there is technically no textbook for this course.)

Course Requirements:

- **Weekly Reading/Writing Assignments:** 10%. Before each class you will read essays by artists, theorists, art historians, and/or critics. Write a synopsis of each reading (1 paragraph) and a RESPONSE to it (your informed opinion). This should be no more than 1 page each (1 paragraph will suffice). Make sure to label your responses with Author, Title of Essay, and Date of Publication. These essays will be collected after each class. NO E-MAILED RESPONSES, PLEASE! These weekly responses will be handed back to you on the day of the Midterm and before the Final Exam. **You can (and should) use them on the exams.**

- **1) Paper 1: Paper Topic and Formal Analysis:** 10%. A 2-page formal analysis of the work you will research over the course of the semester and some initial topics you might discuss. The work must be dated 1955 or later. Visit the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), the modern/contemporary wing at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), or the current temporary exhibitions at the Tufts University Art Gallery (or other locations throughout the area…NYC, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington DC, etc.). Your student ID garneres you free admission at the MFA, and the ICA is free to the public on Thursday nights, 5-9pm. Choose any post-1955 work currently on display. Study the work closely in-person.
• 2) Paper 2: Historiography and Bibliography: 10%. A 3-page paper that critically examines the literature and methodology that historians/critics/etc. have used to discuss your chosen work (and more broadly, the artist(s)). It should develop in chronological order, tracing the established scholarship on your topic. This will be accompanied by a properly formatted bibliography (the bibliography does not factor into the paper’s page count). For citation format: Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, available in the library, LB2369 T8 2007, HHSL Reference, or on amazon.com for $11.00.

• 3) Paper 3: Abstract: 10%. A 300-word abstract that establishes the parameters and argument of your paper. Writing an abstract is one of the most important skills you can acquire as a student. An abstract establishes the wider field, the gap in literature, your thesis (and how it fills the gap), your specific data and argument, and a well-formulated concluding sentence. The abstracts will be ‘presented’ (not read, but rather, verbally summarized in 1 minute) in an informal, roundtable discussion with the class. This is intended to inform your fellow classmates of your topic and encourage collaboration outside of class.

• 4) Paper 4: Final Paper: 20%. The final paper is an 8-page composition that integrates your work over the course of the semester. 1) Clearly state your thesis and a summary of your approach at the beginning of the paper, 2) introduce the artwork under consideration, 3) summarize the established literature on your topic, 4) construct your argument step-by-step and paragraph-by-paragraph, 5) offer a concise conclusion that summarizes your argument (and if you wish, offer suggestions for future expansion and exploration of avenues that remain undiscussed). Make use of office hours to discuss your paper topics and progress. Students registered for 0155: Final paper should be 12-15-pages.

• Midterm and Final Exam: (Midterm – 20%; Final – 20%). The Midterm will include slide identifications, short answer/essay responses, and a long essay question on which you will be able to use your weekly reading responses. The Final Exam is cumulative and will consist of a take home essay/comparison in which you will incorporate what you have learned throughout the semester, relevant readings, and your own, critical approach. Questions asked on the exams presume familiarity with the course lectures, discussions, and readings.

• Extra Credit: 5%. If you wish, you may write a 3-page exhibition review of a current exhibition in Boston. This would entail a thoughtful examination of the works on view, an analysis of the perspective from which the exhibition is organized, and your informed opinion on what is at stake in presenting the works from that particular perspective.
Week 1
Wednesday 9/3 Introduction
Go over Syllabus and Discuss Paper Assignment
Practice reading assignment:
   Roland Barthes, “Death of the Author” (1968)

Week 2
Monday 9/8 Post-War American Art, Abstract Expressionism.
   Harold Rosenberg, “American Action Painters” (1951)
   Clement Greenberg, “American Type Painting” (1955)
   Jackson Pollock, “Interview with William Wright” (1950)

Wednesday 9/10 Post-War European Art, Art Informel, Art Brut, etc.
   Jean Dubuffet, “Crude Art Preferred to Cultural Art” (1948)
   Jean-Paul Sartre, “The Search for the Absolute” (1948)

Week 3
Monday 9/15 New Realism and Neo-Dada
   Robert Rauschenberg, “Untitled Statement” (1959), and “Interview with Barbaralee Diamonstein” (1977)
   Jasper Johns, “Interview with David Sylvester” (1965)

Wednesday 9/17 Happenings and Fluxus
PAPER 1 DUE: Paper Topic and Formal Analysis
   Allan Kaprow, “Untitled Guidelines for Happenings” (1965)
   George Maciunas, “Letter to Tomas Schmit” (1964)

Week 4
Monday 9/22 European Vanguard

Wednesday 9/24 Pop Art
   Richard Hamilton, “For the Finest Art, Try Pop” (1961)
   Andy Warhol, “Interview with Gene Swenson” (1963)

Week 5
Monday 9/29 Minimalism
   Donald Judd, “Specific Objects” (1965)
   Michael Fried, “Art and Objecthood” (1967)
   Anna Chave, “Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power” Arts 64, no.5 (January 1990): 44-63.
Wednesday 10/1 Land Art/Site Specificity


Robert Smithson, “A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects” (1968) – Note to students: Just keep in mind that Smithson prioritizes entropy and flux as key elements of life and art.

Robert Smithson, “The Spiral Jetty” (1972)


Week 6

Monday 10/6 Library Day with Chao Chen, Group 1

The Mark Lab, 1st Floor of Tisch Library (enter library, make left turn and go down one flight of stairs)

Wednesday 10/8 Library Day with Chao Chen, Group 2

The Mark Lab, 1st Floor of Tisch Library (enter library, make left turn and go down one flight of stairs)

Week 7

Monday 10/13—Columbus Day, no class.

Wednesday 10/15 Midterm Exam

Week 8

Monday 10/20 Conceptual Art

Joseph Kosuth, “Untitled Statement” (1968), and “Art After Philosophy” (1969)

Sol LeWitt, “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art” (1967)

Wednesday 10/22 Process Art & Performance Art

PAPER 2 DUE: Historiography and Bibliography

Kristine Stiles, Process (this is just a 2 paragraph excerpt discussing process art)

Robert Morris, “Anti-Form” (1968)

Chris Burden “Untitled Statement” (1975)

Week 9

Monday 10/27 Museum as Site of Inquiry: Institutional Critique


Wednesday 10/29 Feminisms


Week 10
Monday 11/03 Appropriation
Barbara Kruger, “‘Taking’ Pictures” (1982)

Wednesday 11/05 Painting’s “Return”
Frederick Jameson, excerpts from Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (1991)

Week 11
Monday 11/10 Politicized, Activist Art and AIDS (will continue into Wednesday)
PAPER 3 DUE: Abstract—And be prepared to tell the class about your paper (mainly, your thesis).

Wednesday 11/12 Politicized, Activist Art and Race
Adrian Piper, “Ideology, Confrontation and Political Self-Awareness” (1981)
Faith Ringgold, “Interview with Eleanor Munro” (1977)

Week 12
Monday 11/17 Transgressing the Body
Mona Hatoum, “Interview with John Tusa” (2006)

Wednesday 11/19 Commercialism
Jeff Koons, “From Full Fathom Five” (1988)
Maurizio Cattelan, “Interview with Michele Robecchi” (2009)

Week 13
Monday 11/24 Postcolony, Hybridity, and Third Space
Yinka Shonibare, “Interview with Anthony Downey” (2005)
Wednesday 11/26—Thanksgiving recess, no class

**Week 14**
**Monday 12/1** Mining the Museum: The Artist as Historian

**PAPER 4 DUE: Final Paper**

**Wednesday 12/3** Relational Aesthetics
Nicolas Bourriaud, Excerpts from *Relational Aesthetics* (1998)
Claire Bishop, “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics,” *October* 110 (Fall 2004): 51-79
Rirkrit Tiravanija, “Interview with Mary Jane Jacob” (2004)

**Week 15**
**Monday 12/8** Parafiction
Review Final Exam Format

**Finals Week**
Take-home final essay exam.