L.A. Art and the City: 1954-1975
Department of Art and Art History, FAH 0092-04

Spring 2015, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:05-9:20AM, Aidekman 9

Professor Monica Steinberg
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Office hours: 11 Talbot Ave, Room 108, Tuesday 9:30-11:30, or by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course, designed for advanced art history students, offers an historically rooted examination of artistic production in Los Angeles from the postwar era through 1975-ish (a bit beyond). While New York was steeped in a complicated and polemical art history, Los Angeles was, and is, often characterized as a city free from history—mixing erasure, fact, half-truth, and fiction. Through an examination of artworks produced in Los Angeles over a roughly twenty-year period, we will consider how varied experiments in the visual and performing arts engaged with the tensions, polemics, and new technologies that defined and altered the era’s cultural terrain.

REQUIRED TEXT:
- Kate Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2007). [or the most recent edition]

SUGGESTED OVERVIEW READINGS:

COURSE MATERIALS:
All course materials—readings, assignments, etc.—are posted on Trunk.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
- Weekly Reading/Writing Assignments: 10%. Before each class you will read essays by/interviews with artists, theorists, art historians, and/or critics. Write a synopsis and response to each reading (1 paragraph. No more than 300-words each). Make sure to label your responses with citation information: Author, Title, Date. These are not graded. They are simply a means of encouraging you to be active readers.
The essays will be collected after each class (except in cases when the class is divided into 2 parts, at which time reading responses will be collected after Part 2). **NO E-MAILED RESPONSES, PLEASE!**

- **1) Paper 1: Paper Topic (DUE: 02/03):** 5%. A 1-page, double spaced, preliminary discussion—brainstorming—of the topic/artist that you propose to research over the course of the semester and some initial ideas you are considering. The topic must be Los Angeles-centric.

- **2) Paper 2: Historiography and Bibliography (DUE: 03/05):** 15%. A 3-page paper that critically examines the literature and methodology that historians/critics/etc. have used to discuss your chosen topic. 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, or on amazon.com for $11.00.

- **3) Paper 3: Abstract (DUE: 03/24):** 15%. A 200-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: Presentation (ON: 04/14, 04/16, 04/21, 04/23):** 25%. A 20-minute formal presentation with a clear thesis and organized power-point (approx. 9 1/2 pages in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, double spaced, 1” margins)

- **5) Paper 5: Final Paper (DUE: 05/06, by 5pm EST):** 30%. The final paper is a 12-15-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 topic 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.

**Week 1**

**Thursday 01/15 Introduction**

Go over Syllabus and Discuss Paper Assignment


**Week 2**

**Tuesday 01/20 The Set-up: Los Angeles & In the Galleries? Or Outside?**


Thursday 01/22: The Beats and Assemblage, Part 1

Week 3
Tuesday 01/27: The Beats and Assemblage Part 2

Thursday 01/29 Los Angeles in Clay

Week 4
Tuesday 02/03 & Thursday 02/05 Environments and Happenings
DUE 02/03: Paper 1) Paper Topic
- Claes Oldenburg, “Autobodys, The Script,” (1963); reprinted in Michael Kirby, Happenings (New York, NY: Dutton, 1965), 262-271. [Note: Judy Gerowitz [later Judy Chicago] was one of the participants]
- William Wilson, “Sculpture Show at Century City,” Los Angeles Times (1 December 1967): 6. [just read the left column about ‘Judy Gerowitz’]

**Week 5**

**Tuesday 02/10 Tisch Library, Room 223**

• Library Day with the phenomenal Chao Chen! Tisch Library, Room 223 (second right turn upon entering Tisch; on your left when facing the Tisch café.) Go over research strategies and citation guidelines.

**Thursday 02/12 Screening of Film**

• *The Cool School: How LA Learned to Love Modern Art*, dir. Morgan Neville, 86 min., Arts Alliance America, 2007, DVD.

• **Students:** Write a 1-paragraph response to the film.

**Week 6**

**Tuesday 02/17 Pop the City, Part 1**


**Week 7**

**Tuesday 02/24 Pop and the City, Part 2**

Continue working your way through the readings from last class and...


**Thursday 02/26 The L.A. Look/The Cool School/L.A. Minimalism/Finish Fetish, Part 1**

• Ana Chave, “Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power” *Arts* 64, no. 5 (January 1990): 44-63.


**Week 8**

**Tuesday 03/03 The L.A. Look/The Cool School/L.A. Minimalism/Finish Fetish, Part 2**


**Thursday 03/05 Light + Space**

**DUE 03/05: Paper 2) Historiography and Bibliography**


**Week 9**

**Tuesday 03/10 & Thursday 03/12 Feminist Art and Lost/Changed Bodies**


**March 14-March 22 Spring Recess**

**Week 10**

**Tuesday 03/24 & Thursday 03/26 Conceptual Art and Video/Performance**

**DUE 03/24: Paper 3** Abstract


**Week 11**

**Tuesday 04/01 and Thursday 04/02: Screening of Film**

• *Los Angeles Plays Itself*, dir. Thom Andersen, 170 min., Cinema Guild, 2014, DVD.

• Students: Write a 1-paragraph response to the film.

**Week 12**

**Tuesday 04/07 Artist’s Books and Video/Performance**


• Note to students: This class may take place off campus and at a different time. Details forthcoming.

**Thursday 04/09 ASCO and Beyond**


**Week 13**
Tuesday 04/14  
Paper 4) Class Presentations

Thursday 04/16  
Paper 4) Class Presentations

**Week 14**
Tuesday 04/21  
Paper 4) Class Presentations

Thursday 04/23  
Paper 4) Class Presentations

**Finals Week**
DUE 05/06: Paper 5) Final Paper, by 5pm EST
Paper Due via email, in PDF format. [If the file is larger than 10MB, we can arrange for you to submit it via dropbox]