

THE BODY, PERCEPTION, & SPACE IN CONTEMPORARY ART

ARTH 460-001 Undergraduate / 599-003 Graduate Seminar
W 4:30 – 7:10 PM

Fall 2014
Research Hall, Room 202

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Office hours: Thursday 10:30-11:30 AM & by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVE

In "Notes on Sculpture" (1966-69), artist Robert Morris offered a re-examination of sculpture that would describe, in more relevant ways, the more complex and expanded works emerging in the 1960s. In this series of essays, Morris proposed a radical definition of sculpture as a dynamic relationship between the object, the viewer's perception, and such environmental conditions as light and space. Morris identifies these conditions as the terms of a new aesthetic emerging at the time. In the late postwar period, sculpture abandoned the autonomous object of art in favor of more expanded works that demanded new ways of seeing and located meaning in the dynamic relationship between the object, the space, and the viewer. This new kind of sculptural practice continues to inform much artistic practice today. The seminar will investigate artistic practice since the 1960s, focusing on how artists engage space, objects, and viewers, in an effort to activate different modes of perception and to offer a deepened awareness of the self, others, and the world. To gain a better understanding of contemporary art, students will examine this expanded practice of art, evaluating works that demand viewer participation, draw attention to perception, and activate viewer space. Artist statements, prevalent theories of art, and critical responses will provide the framework for both discussion and focused analysis of these significant developments in contemporary art.

SEMINAR COURSE EXPECTATIONS & PREREQUISITES FOR THIS COURSE

An advanced seminar is a writing- and reading-intensive course, which engages the topic at a deeper level than in a regular lecture course. To succeed in this class, the student must possess strong writing, research, and critical thinking skills, as well as a strong understanding of the subject. For this reason, ENGL 302/ENGL 302 and 300-level course work in modern or contemporary art, or permission of the instructor.

GRADING

Class Participation	15%
Reading Responses, Blog Entries & Critical Response Essay	15%
Preliminary Research Materials	10%
Research Paper (First Submission 15%, Revised Paper 30%)	45%
Research Presentation	15%

GRADUATE STUDENTS: Greater expectations are placed on graduate students enrolled in this course, requiring them to demonstrate a higher degree of scholarship and analysis. Graduate students may, therefore, receive different questions and assignment instructions that require a deeper level of intellectual engagement.

<u>GRADE SCALE</u>	A+ 99-100	A 93-98	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 59 & below		

** Regardless of numerical score, a grade of A+ will be given as a final course grade only if the student's overall performance in the course is exceptional and exceeds course expectations.*

BLACKBOARD

The Blackboard page for this course is an essential component of this class. In it you will find the readings, course documents, assignment guidelines, and important announcements. It is imperative that you familiarize yourself with the website immediately. **BE SURE TO CHECK IT OFTEN – ESPECIALLY BEFORE COMING TO CLASS. You are responsible for all information posted on Blackboard.**

MASON EMAIL

MasonLIVE is the required email address for all GMU correspondence. You are responsible for all email messages sent to your MasonLIVE email account. Be sure to **check it frequently** and **clear your inbox so that you are not over quota**. If you rely on another email account, you should consider forwarding your MasonLIVE emails to the account you check most often.

When emailing the instructor, be sure to include your name and class. I will make every effort to respond in a timely manner. You can expect a reply within 1-2 days. If you have not heard back after 48 hours, please resend (email does at times get lost in cyberspace).

ATTENDANCE & CLASS PARTICIPATION

To meet the demands of a seminar course, which relies heavily on class discussion, your attendance and participation are required at every session. The GMU catalogue states: ***“Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register... instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of non-participation.”***

Attendance at all class sessions is mandatory. You are allowed one free absence to assist with any emergency situation that may arise. After that absence, all subsequent absences will result in the lowering of your class participation grade by 10%. Please note that you will not pass the class if you miss more than 50% of the class sessions, even if you do well on assignments. *Special note: Attendance at all presentations is mandatory. For each presentation you miss, you will incur a 2% penalty out of the 30% allotted to the final paper. Or example, if you miss an entire session with 5 presentations, 10% will be deducted from your final paper grade.*

Only in the case of extenuating circumstances will an absence be excused. Acceptable reasons are: a death in the family, car accident a few hours before the class meeting, or serious illness. To excuse an absence, it must be explained in a signed and dated police report, letter from a physician, the dean, or other comparable authorizing agent. Only under these conditions will your grade not be affected. Travel plans and employment situations are not acceptable excuses for absences. Schedule your time accordingly and reserve your free absence for unforeseen or very special circumstances.

Because of the interactive, discussion-based learning model that is the foundation of this course, you have a responsibility to yourself and to your classmates to attend class and participate in class discussion. Please be considerate of your peers, exercising courtesy and respect at all times. This includes how we address one another in discussions, as well as arriving on time and being fully present. It also goes without saying that being prepared for class is critical.

The class participation grade will take into account the quality of the student's participation in class discussion, as well as the level of attentiveness and engagement a student demonstrates while others are speaking. It takes into consideration whether the student raises substantial questions about the material, answers questions in a critical manner, and initiates further discussion. To meet these standards, the student must be prepared and the grade will reflect this.

Grading Class Participation

- All students will start with a score of “90” (an A-), which indicates that the student has met the expectations for class participation as stated above. A higher score will be awarded to any student participating at an exceptional level.
- The class participation grade will drop if the expectations described above are not met and if any of the following situations should arise:
 - The student is unprepared for class
 - The student leaves early or is tardy to several class meetings
 - The student fails to submit assignments
 - The student engages in disruptive behavior of any kind (see section on classroom etiquette below)
- Since the learning in a seminar occurs through discussion and textual analysis, a student with perfect attendance who does not contribute to discussions or has not done the readings will receive a grade of C+ or lower.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

NO Electronic Devices in the Classroom

- **Computers, tablets, phones, and all other electronic devices** (mp3s, PDAs...) **must be OFF and stored out of sight.**

A visible or noisy device is disruptive and will be subject to the terms of disruptive classroom behavior as stated below.

Disruptive Behavior

We are all responsible for maintaining a respectful and courteous classroom atmosphere. There is no excuse for disruptive behavior of any kind. I do not take kindly to behavior that is discourteous and which inhibits others from learning.

Disruptive behavior includes:

- (1) Violations of the electronics regulation as stated above.
- (2) Distracting physical behavior.
For example: sleeping, talking while someone else is speaking (the professor or a student), wandering in and out of class, working on unrelated assignments, gesturing inappropriately, approaching the front of the classroom during lecture, etc.
- (3) Discourteous or offensive language and behavior.

Consequences for Disrupting the Learning Environment

All disruptions – with or without warning – will result in lowering the overall class participation grade

- If class discussion must be interrupted to address a student who is behaving inappropriately, his or her grade will drop significantly
- In the case of extreme or recurring disruptions, the student will not be allowed to remain in class and the final course grade will be negatively affected

** The consequences will reflect the severity and frequency of the disruption.*

RESPONSES TO THE READINGS (Weekly Responses, Blog Entries and Critical Response Paper)

Each week you will read the assigned texts critically, according to the reading critically guidelines posted to Blackboard. Using the notes you have taken while reading critically:

> Write a 1.5-2 page (*single-spaced, regular margins, 10-12pt font*) critical response to the readings for the class sessions indicated as “RR” on the reading list. A critical response is not merely a summary. It is a focused analysis of the author’s argument and main points, as described in the reading critically guidelines, as well as an opportunity for you to engage the material in an independent and critical manner. Following your critical response, include a list of key points from the readings (concepts, arguments, and quotes) as well as pressing questions, comments, reactions, and other critical observations you would like to present to the class for discussion. Responses must be submitted in class. Late responses will not be accepted.

> For the rest of the readings, you will be expected to post a blog entry on Blackboard also assessing the readings critically, while addressing specific questions. Students are encouraged to respond to comments made by classmates on the blog. We will use these entries as material for class discussion. These entries are due no later than noon on the day we will discuss the readings under review.

Check Blackboard for detailed guidelines on reading responses, blog entries and the final critical response essay.

Responses (as formal essays or blog entries) will be submitted for each weekly set of readings and all will be averaged, along with the final critical response essay, toward your “Reading Responses” grade, which counts toward 15% of your final course grade. Each student will be granted one opportunity to revise any non-blog response for a higher grade. Missed responses cannot be revised

RESEARCH PROJECT & PRESENTATION

Students will research an artist, a work of art, or a theme (depending upon the topic selected) and then prepare a 8-10 page research paper, which will provide the material for a 20-minute professional, in-class presentation at the end of the semester. Graduate students will develop their research further than the undergraduates, writing a 12-14 page paper on their selected topic. Guidance and feedback will be provided regularly throughout the semester as students submit different elements of the research and writing process in accordance with specific deadlines. These research-related submissions will include a topic proposal, preliminary bibliography and research statement, annotated bibliography, and an abstract. I will also be available to advise students on any other project-related work (outlines, for example). A final draft of the paper will be submitted for 15% of the final course grade, and the student will revise the revise paper following suggestions from the instructor and resubmit it as the final research paper.

** Detailed information about this assignment will be provided on a separate handout.*

****** I am always available to discuss any questions or concerns about your topic. As with any research project, I encourage everyone to approach this project with much anticipation.***

LATE SUBMISSIONS

All assignments must be submitted in class in the form of a hard copy (when applicable) on the day it is due.

- Unexcused absences are not acceptable excuses for the late submission of an assignment.
- E-mailed assignments will not be accepted, unless stated as part of the assignment.
- Points will be deducted for lateness – half a letter grade (5 points) per calendar day your assignment is late.
- No assignment will be accepted after being five days late.

If you require an extension, you must discuss your situation with me well BEFORE the due date in the event that you are not granted the extension.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student is responsible for observing academic integrity with regard to all work assigned in this course. It is the student's responsibility to familiarize herself/himself with GMU's Honor Code as outlined in the university's catalogue: (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=410&bc=1>). Neither plagiarism (presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own) nor cheating will be tolerated. Also refer to <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/>

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Assignments must be written in good standard English. If English is not your first language, please see me so we can discuss a strategy to help you succeed in this course. Email correspondence will not suffice; you must come speak with me. Also, do not wait until a few days (or the night before) the exam date or assignment deadline to address this; you will not have enough time to remedy the situation.

Please contact the following centers for assistance. But be sure to plan in advance; they are very busy, especially as the semester comes near its end.

The Writing Center Located in Robinson Hall A114 & Enterprise Hall 076
703.993.1200 or <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

The English Language Institute (ELI) 703.993.3660 or <http://eli.gmu.edu>

STUDENTS NEEDING ACCOMODATIONS

Accommodations will be made for students with documented disabilities, in accordance with law and university policies. Students requiring accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) -- (703) 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu> -- to self-identify their needs and attain necessary documentation. After meeting with the Coordinator, please arrange a meeting with me ***well in advance of the first exam or the class during which special accommodations will be required.*** It is your responsibility to remind me in advance of each exam that you are in need of specific accommodations.