

George Mason University  
**ARTH 374.001 Art Now**  
**Spring 2015**  
**TR 3:00-4:15**  
**Location: Planetary Hall 120**  
**Instructor: Dr. Yookyong Choi**  
**Email: ychoi19@gmu.edu**  
**Office Hours 4:15-4:45 TR and by appointment (Robinson B 373A)**

---

**Course Description and Objective:**

This course surveys major stylistic developments that have characterized the visual arts from 1945 up to the present time. The class will examine works of individual artists within their social, political, and cultural contexts, and the different theoretical models through which art works have been interpreted. While considering primarily art works produced in American and European culture, this course will also analyze a selection of contemporary art and artistic practices in other regions of the world. Each week we will deal with a set of specific art historical issues and questions while investigating varying strategies and perspectives contemporary artists proposed in their work. Among the critical issues that will be discussed are the concepts of “modernism” and “postmodernism,” the changing roles of the artists, the new materials of art, the roles of art institutions, identity politics, and globalization. By the end of this course, the student should be able to understand and critically analyze major artistic trends and innovations that have marked contemporary art. Course meetings will consist of lectures, discussions based on assigned readings, and student presentations. This course is reading intensive and students are expected to complete assigned readings before each class and to participate actively in discussion.

**Required Textbook:** Fineberg, Jonathan. *Art Since 1940: Strategies of Being*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Prentice Hall, 2011 (available for purchase in the Bookstore, Johnson Center)

Reserved in the Fenwick library: Barnet, Sylvan. *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*. 8<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2005.

**Course Requirements:**

Students are expected to read the textbooks and assigned articles or book excerpt before each class and to participate actively in discussion. One research paper, an oral presentation, and two exams are required. Further instructions on the papers will be distributed in class. The research paper must be handed in at the beginning of the class on the day on which it is due. Images will be posted on Blackboard.

**Grading:**

Participation (10%) and Attendance (5%): The participation grade will consider whether student demonstrates an excellent preparation of the materials by participating actively in class discussion. It will consider whether student raises critical questions about the material, answers questions raised by others and respond to others' comments in a constructive and thoughtful manner, and offers further discussion questions. Regular attendance is absolutely necessary to do

well in this course and there will be a sign-in sheet for each class meeting. You are expected to arrive on time, pay attention, take notes, and come prepared to discuss the assigned readings, as well as the material presented in class. In addition to the course content, there may also be important announcements and reminders issued in class for which every student will be held responsible whether they were in attendance or not. You are allowed three unexcused absences. 5 points will be taken off for every absence over three. Only legitimate absences with documentation (e.g. physician's note) will be excused.

#### Paper (20%)

You will write a 6-7-page research paper on a work of art within the geographic and chronological limits of the course. You will be expected to make a trip to a museum/gallery to write the paper. I will hand out specific instructions. Any later papers will be marked off 5 points for each day or partial day late. No paper will be accepted via email. You need to turn in your paper topic (no more than one paragraph) by February 24<sup>th</sup>.

#### Oral Presentation (10%)

Students will present the work of art they chose for the research paper. The presentation will be 10-15 minutes long.

#### Midterm exam (25%) and Final exam (30%)

For the exams, you will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the major artists, movements, and art historical issues related to the study of contemporary art. You will be tested on the material provided in lectures and the readings. Exams are not cumulative and will consist of a combination of the following: slide identification, term definition, and short essay. I will provide study guides for the exams.

Make-up exams will be given only in the case of a verifiable, documented illness or emergency. You must contact me via email as soon as possible after the originally scheduled exam. No extra credit will be given.

#### **Grading Standards:**

A: Outstanding work that demonstrates full command of the material covered in lectures and readings. Exhibits excellent understanding, keen insight, original thinking, and critical analysis. Goes beyond basic limits of assignment, persuasive and logical argumentation, and no grammatical errors. A+ 98-100 A 93-97 A- 90-92

B: Demonstrates competent understanding of the material. Adequate grasp of information, logical argument, possibly a few organizational problems or grammatical errors, but shows overall coherence in discussion. B+ 87-89 B 83-86 B- 80-82

C: Demonstrates basic comprehension of the material. Meets basic requirements of the assignment but reveals some problems with factual information and logical argument, and may have grammatical errors. C+ 77-79 C 73-76 C- 70-72

D: Demonstrates minimal comprehension of the material. Shows significant problems with following directions, using resources, organizing logical argument, and using proper grammar. 60-69

F: Exhibits consistent problems with comprehension, organization, and critical thinking. Unacceptable as college-level work. 59 and below

#### **Class Policies:**

You may NOT use personal electronic devices during class time.  
Class-specific information will be communicated to students via GMU e-mail and Blackboard.  
GMU requires you to activate your GMU e-mail account to receive official campus communications. If you prefer to use another address, you must activate the e-mail forwarder. I will use GMU addresses exclusively.

### **Academic Integrity:**

GMU operates with an **Honor Code**. It is clearly defined in the catalogue (<http://www.gmu.edu/mlfacstaff/findex.html>) **Plagiarism** (presenting someone else's ideas or words as your own without proper acknowledgement) violates the Honor Code.  
By registering this course, you accept the rules of the Academic Honor Code, and you acknowledge your rights and responsibilities are defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Honor Code are taken seriously, and disciplinary actions will result should such violations occur.

**Disabilities Statement:** The Office of Disability Services (ODS)-703-993-2474 <http://ods.gmu.edu>, offers technical and practical support and assistance with accommodations for students with physical, medical, or psychological disabilities. If you have a documented disability and require special accommodations, you must register with the ODS. It is the student's responsibility to present the form to the professor as proof of eligibility for accommodations and discuss with me in advance of each exam concerning specific accommodations.

### **Important Dates:**

February 24	Paper topic due
March 5	Mid-term exam
April 2-21	Oral Presentation
April 23	Research paper due
May 7	Final exam

### **Lecture Schedule:**

#### **WEEK 1**

**Jan. 20 (T)**                      **Introduction**

**Jan. 22 (R)**                      **Abstract Expressionism**  
Fineberg: 21-44; 57-123  
Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters"; Greenberg "Modernist Painting";

#### **WEEK 2**

**Jan. 27 (T)**                      **Abstract Expressionism**

Rosenblum, "The Abstract Sublime"  
\*\* Last day to drop classes without financial penalty

**Jan. 29 (R)**

**Abstract Expressionism**  
Gibson, "Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics"

**WEEK 3**

**Feb. 3 (T)**

**Neo-Dada/Nouveau Réalisme**  
Fineberg: 146-153; 167-227  
Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock"  
Steinberg, "Other Criteria (pp. 82-91)"

**Feb. 5 (R)**

**Neo-Dada/Nouveau Réalisme, Postwar European Art**

**WEEK 4**

**Feb. 10 (T)**

**Pop Art**  
Fineberg: 229-255  
Oldenburg, "I am for an Art"; Whiting, "Shopping for Pop (pp.22-30)"

**Feb.12 (R)**

**Pop Art**  
Crow, "Saturday Disasters"

**WEEK 5**

**Feb. 17 (T)**

**Minimalism**  
Fineberg: 281-292  
Judd, "Specific Objects"; Morris, "Notes on Sculpture I & II";  
Fried, "Art and Objecthood";

**Feb. 19 (R)**

**Minimalism**  
Chave, "Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power"

**WEEK 6**

**Feb. 24 (T)**

**Postminimalism, Anti-Form**  
Fineberg: 296-308; 309-316  
Morris, "Anti-Form"; Taylor, "Vessels and Vacancies"  
**Paper topic due in class**

**Feb. 26 (R)**

**Earthworks**  
Krauss, "The Double Negative: A New Syntax for Sculpture"; Smithson,  
"The Spiral Jetty"

**WEEK 7**

**Mar. 3 (T)**                      **Earthworks**  
Film “Spiral Jetty”

**Midterm Review**

**Mar. 5 (R)**                      **MIDTERM EXAM**

**WEEK 8**

**Mar. 10 (T) & Mar. 12 (R)**                      **Spring Break**

**WEEK 9**

**Mar. 17 (T)**                      **Site-specific Art**  
Fineberg: 380-385; 323-343  
Crow, “Site-Specific Art: The Strong and the Weak”; Karl, “A Space of Loss: the Vietnam Veterans Memorial”

**Mar. 19 (R)**                      **Conceptual Art**  
LeWitt, “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art,” “Sentences on Conceptual Art”;  
Buchloh, “Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions”

**WEEK 10**

**Mar. 24 (T)**                      **Institutional Critique**  
Hans Hacccke, “Museums, Managers Consciousness”; Stein, “Sins of Omission”

**Mar. 26 (R)**                      **Feminist Art**  
Fineberg: 369-373; 394-5; 461-2  
Jones, “The Sexual Politics of the Dinner Party”

**WEEK 11**

**Mar. 31 (T)**                      **Feminist Art**  
Williamson, “A Piece of the Action”; Molesworth, “House Work and Art Work”

**Apr. 2 (R)**                      **Performance and Video Art**  
Fineberg: 335-8; 372  
**Oral Presentation I**

**WEEK 12**

**Apr. 7 (T)**                      **“The Return of Painting”**  
Fineberg 373-6, 430-4

Barthes, “Death of the Author”; Crimp, “The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism”; Jaskot, “Gerhard Richter and Adolf Eichmann”; Jones, “Lost in Translation: Jean- Michel in the (Re)Mix”

### **Oral Presentation II**

**Apr. 9 (R)**                      **Appropriation Art**  
Fineberg: 413-8, 430-4

### **Oral Presentation III**

#### **WEEK 13**

**Apr. 14 (T)**                      **Art and Identity Politics**  
Mercer, “Reading Racial Fetishism”; Berger, “Picturing Whiteness: Nikki S. Lee’s Yuppie Project”

### **Oral Presentation IV**

**Apr. 16 (R)**                      **Art and Identity Politics**  
**Oral Presentation V**

#### **WEEK 14**

**Apr. 21 (T)**                      **Oral Presentation VI**

**Apr. 23 (R)**                      **Art and Controversy**  
Becker, “The Brooklyn Controversy: A View from the Bridge”  
**Research Paper Due**

#### **WEEK 15**

**Apr. 28 (T)**                      **Art and Globalization**  
Harris, “Globalization and Contemporary Art: A Convergence of Peoples and Ideas”; Ohlin, “Andrea Gursky and the Contemporary Sublime”

**Apr. 30 (R)**                      **Final Exam Review**

#### **Week 16**

**May 7 (R)**                      **FINAL EXAM: 1:30-4:15 PM**

**Note:** The schedule and the requirements for this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

---

### **Bibliography**

Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." In *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977, 142-8.

Becker, Carol. "The Brooklyn Controversy: A View from the Bridge." In *Unsettling "Sensation": Art-Policy Lessons from the Brooklyn Museum of Art Controversy*, ed. Lawrence Rothfield. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 2001.

Berger, Maurice. "Picturing whiteness: Nikki S. Lee's Yuppie Project" *Art Journal* 60, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 55-7.

Buchloh, Benjamin H.D. "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions" *October* 55 (Winter 1990): 105-143.

Chave, Anna. "Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power" in *Art in Modern Culture: An Anthology of Critical Texts*, eds. Francis Frascina and Jonathan Harris. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1992. 264-281.

Crimp, Douglas. "The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism." In *Cindy Sherman*, ed. Jonathan Burton. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006. 25-37.

Crow, Thomas. "Saturday disasters: Trace and Reference in Early Warhol." In *Modern Art in Common culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996. 49-65.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Site-Specific Art: The Strong and the Weak." In *Modern Art in Common Culture*.

Fired, Michael. "Art and Objecthood." In *Minima Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. 116-147.

Greenberg, Clement. "Modernist Painting." *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, ed. John O'Brian. Vol. 4 Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. 85-93.

Harris, Jonathan. "Globalization and Contemporary Art: A Convergence of Peoples and Ideas." In *Globalization and Contemporary Art*, ed. Jonathan Harris. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 1-16.

Jaskot, Paul. "Gerhard Richter and Adolf Eichmann." *Oxford Art Journal* 28. 3 (2003): 459-78.

Jones, Amelia. "The Sexual Politics of the Dinner Party." In *Reclaiming Female Agency: Feminist Art History after Postmodernism*, eds. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. 409-428.

Jones, Kellie. "Lost in Translation: Jean-Michel in the (Re)Mix." In *Basquiat*, ed. Marc Mayer. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Brooklyn Museum, 2005. 162-79.

Judd, Donald. "Specific Objects." In *Art in Theory 1900-2000*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood. London: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.

Kaprow, Allan. "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock." In *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*. Berkeley: University of California press, 1993. 1-9.

Karl, Jeffrey. "A Space of Loss: the Vietnam Veterans Memorial," *Journal of Architectural Education* 50, no. 3 (February 1997): 158-171.

Krauss, Rosalind. "Double Negative: A New Syntax for Sculpture." In *Passages in Modern Sculpture*. Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1981. 243-287.

LeWitt, Sol. "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," "Sentences on Conceptual Art." In *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, ed. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. 822-27.

Molesworth, Helen. "House Work and Art Work" *October* 92(Spring 2000): 76-97.

Mercer, Kobena. "Reading Racial Fetishisms." In *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*, eds. Emily Apter and William Pietz. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993. 307-29.

Morris, Robert. "Anti-Form." In *Minimalism*, ed. James Meyer. London: Phaidon, 2000. 243-44.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Notes on Sculpture I & II." In *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. 222-235.

Ohlin, Alix. "Andrea Gurksy and the Contemporary Sublime." *Art Journal* 61 (Winter 2002): 22-35.

Oldenburg, Claes. "I am for an Art." *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, by Kristine Stiles and Peter Seltz. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. 335-337.

Rosenberg, Harold. "The American Action Painters." In *Reading Abstract Expressionism: Context and Critique*, ed. Ellen G. Landau. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005. 189-198.

Rosenblum, Robert. "The Abstract Sublime." *ARTnews* 59, no.10 (February 1961): 38-41, 56, 58.

Smithson, Robert. "The Spiral Jetty." In *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, by Kristine Stiles and Peter Seltz. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, 630-633.

Stein, Judith E. "Sins of Omission" *Art in America* (October 1993): 110-114.

Steinberg, Leo. "Other Criteria." In *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972. 55-91, 406-8.

Taylor, Sue. "Vessels and Vacancies" *Art in America* 90, no. 11 (November 2002): 130-139.

Whiting, Cécile. *A Taste for Pop: Pop Art, Gender, and Consumer Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.



Williamson, Judith. "A Piece of the Action: Image of 'Woman' in the Photography of Cindy Sherman." In *Cindy Sherman*, ed. Johanna Burton. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006. 39-52.