

**Art History 101.003 > Fall 2006 > The University of New Mexico**

**Introduction to Art + Visual Culture**

CFA 1020 | TR 5:30-6:45

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**course description**

Traditionally, art history is interested in the visual art made by highly trained artists for [predominantly] rich patrons. This section of Art History 101, on the contrary, will compel students to investigate the variety of 'art histories' that we see on a daily basis. The aim of this introductory course is to engage students with the art-making practices of society and how these practices affect us as both consumers and producers. As such, students will begin to think and write not only about 'art,' but also various other examples of 'visual culture': graphic design, advertising, comics, cartoons, television, sports, wrestling, fashion, and a multiplicity of other visual cultural forms.

This course is intended as an inquiry into the practices of looking. Through this course we will begin to apply 'theory' to the things we see everyday. AH101 will help us [myself included] be more critical participants when seeing and looking at all things visual. Art History should not simply teach us about the so-called European Masters, but rather help us to decipher the visual elements of everyday life. By investigating an array of cultural practices and perspectives, students will begin to apply theory to both 'art' and everyday life.

**texts**

- required | >> John Berger. *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972).  
>> Henry M. Sayre. *A World of Art*, revised 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2004).  
>> Course Reader [available at College of Education Copy Center].
- suggested | >> Sylvan Barnett. *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: Longman, 2005).

## **readings**

Unlike other classes, this course is structured in a manner that the in-class lectures and exercises will never replicate the at-home readings. Readings will be assigned weekly, according to the schedule of classes, from Sayre, Berger, and/or the Course Reader. Therefore, it is your responsibility to complete the assigned readings *prior* to the date in which they are listed on the syllabus. Because many of the readings engage complicated theoretical arguments, we may spend the first fifteen minutes of each class period discussing the texts. If questions or difficulties arise while outside of class, come to the following class session with questions.

## **class requirements**

participation	30%
midterm examination	25%
final examination	25%
project proposal	5%
final project	15%
extra credit assignment	up to 5%

## **participation | 30%**

One day per week, I will administer an assignment and/or pass around a sign-in sheet. The intention of these exercises is to ensure that students actively participate in this course. If students are present for the in-class exercises, they will receive the participation points for that week; if students are absent, however, they will not receive that week's points. These exercises may occur any day during the week and are unannounced. Since there will be sixteen weeks of classes, missing two or three participation points is no big deal. As such, you do not need to email me when you are absent from class.

## **final project | 15%**

Students must choose one of the following three options for a final project. These are due the last week of class. In addition to the final project, a one-page proposal will be due Week 8: October 10-12.

### **option one | paper [5+ pages]**

For this option, students must write a short research paper dealing with the history of one aspect of visual culture. For instance, students can choose to write about a specific artist or movement or investigate something more obscure (the history of hip-hop album covers or punk fashions, for instance). This topic is wide open, but you will need to consult and cite a variety of published sources. Therefore, do not choose an obscure topic that lacks published sources to cite.

#### option two | review [5+ pages]

Option two allows students to write a critical review of an 'artwork' or other form of visual culture [book, comic, art exhibition, television show, sporting event, etc.]. Students must choose a theoretical position, as learned during the semester, and write about an object from that specific position. This project allows students to 'review' their favorite CD cover, magazine, or television show [etc.] from a critical perspective. Note: this is not the same type of review found in the Alibi or other newspaper!!!

#### option three | project

The third option is the most fun, as well as time consuming, of the three options. This final project allows students to create a comic book, zine or other form of printed matter that critically engages with contemporary issues. This option is perfect for those interested in combining a classroom exercise with exterior interests. If interested in this option, speak with me about the parameters.

#### extra credit | up to 5%

If interested, students may have the opportunity to complete a 3-5 page review [of a book, comic, art exhibition, television show, sporting event, etc.] for extra credit. Only those students that have grades for ten in-class exercises are eligible to complete the extra credit. In other words, only students who regularly attend class will be able to complete an extra credit assignment. If interested, speak with me about the exact specifications.

## **schedule**

week 1 | august 22 + 24

### **introduction | what is art?**

T none.

R Reader: "Just Doing," 1-3.

Sayre: "Chapter 1: A World of Art," 9-22.

week 2 | august 29 + 31

### **beginning to think about the visual: what is art?, color, composition, etc.**

T Sayre: "Chapter 2: Developing Visual Literacy," 23-41.

R Sayre: "Chapter 3: Themes of Art," 42-62.

week 3 | september 5 + 7

### **the history of art [in a week]**

T Reader: "What is Art History?," 4-18.

Sayre: "Chapter 5: Line," 81-99.

R Sayre: "Chapter 22: The Twentieth Century," 497-522.

Sayre: "Chapter 6: Space," 100-118.

week 4 | september 12 + 14

### **learning in look: using theory to see**

T Reader: "Losses and Gains," 19-33.

Sayre: "Chapter 4: Seeing the Value in Art," 63-80.

R Berger: "Chapter 1," 7-34.

Sayre: "Chapter 7: Light and Color," 119-150.

week 5 | september 19 + 21

### **high art and replication: painting and printmaking**

T Berger: "Chapter 3," 45-64.

Sayre: "Chapter 12: Painting," 244-270.

R Reader: "Propaganda and Protest Graphics: A Brief Historical Outline," 34-47.

Sayre: "Chapter 11: Printmaking," 220-243.

week 6 | september 26 + 28

### **high, low, popular, and mass culture: what is what?**

T Reader: "Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular,'" 48-52.

Sayre: "Chapter 8: Other Formal Elements," 151-165.

- R Reader: "The Portable Printing Press," 53-58.  
Sayre: "Chapter 9: The Principles of Design," 166-193.

week 7 | october 3 + 5

**design matters: books, magazines and printed matter**

- T Reader: "Advertising as Social Production," 59-73.  
Reader: "Surrogate Multiplicities: In Search of the Visual Voice-Over," 74-80.  
Sayre: "Chapter 17: Design," 388-417.
- R Reader: "Introduction," 81-86  
Reader: "Publishing," 87-112.

week 8 | october 10 + 12

**comics, cartoons and the kids**

- T **final project proposal due**  
Reader: "Walt Disney and the Double Victimization of Pocahontas", 113-118.  
Reader: "Between a Bedrock and a Nuclear Power Plant," 119-125.
- R **fall break**

week 9 | october 17 + 19

**review week**

- T none.
- R **midterm.**

week 10 | october 24 + 26

**SportsCenter: sports, wrestling, and the visual**

- T Reader: "Taking Care of T.C.B.: Sports, Sexism, and Gay Bashing," 126-142.
- R Reader: "A Brief and Unnecessary Defense of Professional Wrestling," 143-153.

week 11 | october 31 + november 2

**art of the quotidian: everyday life as social praxis**

- T Reader: "Introduction," 154-162.  
Reader: "On the Way to Un-Art," 162-163.
- R Reader: "Having an Experience," 164-175.

week 12 | november 7 + 9

**art, culture, and consumption**

T Berger: Chapter 5, 83-112.

R Reader.: "The Old Age of Art and Money," 176-178.

Berger: Chapter 7, 129-154.

**last day to withdraw | november 11**

week 13 | november 14 + 16

**performing ourselves: fashion, dress and clothing**

T Reader: "Belief in the Part One is Playing," 179-181.

R Reader: "Can It Be That It Was All So Simple Then?:

The Evolution of the New York Sneaker Connoisseur," 182-186.

week 14 | november 21

**what the f\*\*\* is that?: learning to like contemporary art**

T Reader: "Postmodernism: Theory and Practice in the 1980s," 187-205.

R **thanksgiving > no class**

week 15 | november 28 + 30

**arts of resistance & control**

T Reader: "The Political and Social Contexts of Chicano Art," 206-218.

R Reader: "Anarchy in Art: Strategies of Dissidence," 219-227.

Reader: "Wobbly: Eighty Years of Rebel Art," 228-239.

week 16 | December 5 + 7

**review**

T none | **final project due.**

R none.

**final examination |**