

Craft and conflict

Spring 2026, Wednesdays 12:30-3:20 pm, ART 280

Professor: Jennifer Way, PhD, Professor of Art History

Email: Jennifer.way@unt.edu

- Office Hours - please email Jennifer.Way@unt.edu to schedule
- Mondays 3:00-4:30pm Zoom
- Wednesdays 3:30-5:00pm F2f or Zoom

Course description

This course examines relationships between **craft and conflict**, with a primary emphasis on American craft. “American” is understood expansively, encompassing the United States, its shifting borders, global entanglements, and lived realities that have shaped what has counted—and continues to count—as the U.S. Working largely chronologically from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, the course explores how craft practices, materials, objects, makers and users engage with social, political, economic, and cultural conflicts as well as wars.

Conflict is defined broadly to include war, declared “wars on” social conditions or populations, and other forms of social and political struggle. Challenging the assumption that craft is separate from public life, the course foregrounds craft’s roles in violence and witnessing, and in calling attention to if not also intervening in conflicts concerning migration, racism, sexism, classism, marginalization and resistance, and in matters of rehabilitation and healing, activism, and memorialization.

Using a material culture approach, students will analyze objects, practices, institutions, histories and makers to explore how craft matters in contexts of conflict and war.

Course structure

Most classes will begin with a lecture and discussion that offer a broad view of a historical period, relevant social developments, and developments in craft, with a focus on one or more conflicts.

During most class sessions, we will devote time to group work to study and analyze course materials. Group-focused tasks are meant to help groups make meaningful progress on group assignments. Groups will often informally report out as the last part of class, as a way to nudge you to

come to a consensus and conclusion about your group assignments. For all group assignments you are asked to participate and contribute. Work submitted as completed group assignments should include your initials to identify any element you worked on. For more about expectations about group work, see the **Group Work Policy**, below.

You will also have individual assignments that together constitute sixty percent or the majority of your course grade. This includes you submitting an informal report at the end of the semester that reminds me about your semester's worth of participation in class and group work.

Readings and assignments are organized on a weekly schedule. You are expected to complete assigned work and to read, view, and listen to required materials *before* class. Class discussions and activities depend on everyone having a baseline familiarity with the material; uneven preparation slows our collective work. Completing readings and assignments incrementally, week by week, is also the most effective—and least stressful—way to prepare for larger projects.

Unless otherwise noted, materials listed under “Class” are those we will engage with together during the session and do not need to be completed in advance.

This class meets once a week for nearly three hours, so please plan your energy accordingly. Take advantage of scheduled breaks. Bring something to drink and a light snack, dress comfortably, and feel free—if it helps and you are able—to stand, stretch, or move as needed during class.

You will get the most out of this course by planning ahead, completing preparatory work, participating actively, asking questions, and taking care of yourself so you can remain engaged throughout the full class period. The course benefits from your curiosity, critical thinking, and willingness to make connections, analyze evidence, and consider what matters, who matters, and why.

Your professor is an important resource for any questions and problems concerning course content and as a guide for your assignments, and so is the Art Reference Librarian, Rebecca Barham (Rebecca.Barham@unt.edu), whom you are encouraged to contact for help with finding and using library and research materials.

List of class topics and **assignments due**

Introduction

- January 14 – introduction: craft, conflict and war, and how we will study their connections

Module 1 American nation and world building

- January 21 – class topic - indigenous peoples, representations of war, colonization, and museums
- **January 21 Wednesday individual confirmation that you read and understand the syllabus, due on Canvas**

- January 28 – class topic - from Civil War and Reconstruction to the Gilded Age, questions of race and class conflict
- February 2 Monday individual research project - topic and work plan due on Canvas
- February 4 – class topic - American imperialism, immigration, race, class, and gender
- February 10 Tuesday group assignment for module 1 due on Canvas

Module 2 patriotism and national heritage

- February 11 – class topic - First World War and craft
- February 18 – class topic - suffrage, New Deal craft, craft in American folk and rural arts, and craft education
- February 25 - class topic - Second World War, Double V, Incarceration, Red Cross, Holocaust

Module 3 creative and national agency and critique

- March 3 Tuesday group assignment for module 2 due on Canvas
- March 4 – class topic - postwar, designer-craftsman, craft as Cold War diplomacy, and questions of belonging in craft history
- March 6 Friday individual research project- report on work due on Canvas
- March 11 – class topic - consciousness to civil rights - feminism, sexism, racism
- March 18 - spring break
- March 24 Tuesday group assignment for module 3 due on Canvas

Module 4 living critique

- March 25 - class topic - counterculture and alternative lifestyles
- April 1 - class topic - from ecology to sustainability
- April 10 Friday group assignment for module 4 due on Canvas

Module 5 visibility of critique

- April 8 - class topic - craftivism, belonging, care - aids, service, migrancy, and covid
- April 15 - social justice activism
- April 22 - make up class in case we get behind - otherwise work on assignments

Conclusion

- April 29 and May 6 Wednesdays - individual research presentations in class
- May 6 Wednesday - individual research assignment due on Canvas
- May 6 Wednesday - individual informal report on class attendance and participation due on Canvas

Course learning objectives and outcomes

- Master and present key information about works of craft
- Understand conflict in its historical specificity and complex components
- Demonstrate how works of craft relate to war and conflict across the 19th through 21st centuries
- Ideate a research agenda for examining examples of craft as you relate them to conflict or war
- Complete an original research project about craft and war
- Present an original research project about craft and war
- Contribute to course discussion constructively

Group Work Policy

Group assignments are a core component of this course and are designed to provide mutual support in learning, opportunity to try on different roles in projects, develop collaborative research, critical thinking, and professional communication skills. Successful group work depends on individual responsibility, mutual respect, and sustained engagement.

The following expectations apply to all group assignments.

Preparation Before Meetings

Students are expected to prepare independently before group meetings by completing assigned readings, viewing materials, or carrying out research tasks. Preparation should include notes, questions, or draft ideas—not only general impressions. Students should be able to explain how their preparation contributes to the group’s goals.

Equitable Contribution

All students must contribute meaningfully and consistently across the project timeline. Each student is responsible for at least one clearly defined task or role. Contributions may vary (for example, research, writing, visual analysis, editing, organization, or coordination), but they must be substantive. Equity does not mean everyone does the same work; it means everyone does something essential.

Active Participation

Active participation includes speaking during discussions, responding to others’ ideas, asking clarifying or critical questions, and offering feedback on drafts, images, or arguments. Respectful disagreement is part of productive collaboration. Passive presence—being physically present but silent or disengaged—does not count as participation.

Responsibility and Follow-Through

Students are expected to meet agreed-upon deadlines, communicate early if problems arise, and complete their work at a quality appropriate to the course level. Informing the group about difficulties in advance is responsible behavior; disengaging or disappearing is not.

Professional Communication

Group members should communicate in a timely and respectful manner in emails, shared documents, and discussions. Shared materials should be organized, clearly labeled, and accessible to all group members. These expectations reflect professional standards in academic, museum, nonprofit, and workplace settings.

Shared Ownership of the Final Product

Even when tasks are divided, all group members share responsibility for the final submission. Everyone should understand the project as a whole and be able to explain its central argument, structure, and key findings. Final work should read as a cohesive collective effort rather than a set of disconnected parts.

Reflection and Accountability

Students may be asked to reflect briefly on their own contributions, acknowledge the work of others, and identify what worked and what did not in the collaboration. These reflections are intended to support learning about collaboration, not simply to evaluate performance.

Failure to meet these expectations may affect an individual student's grade on group assignments.

Additional Course Policies

There is no extra credit work and no makeup work. If you are experiencing difficulty with the course, including attendance and completing and submitting assignments, please reach out to Dr Way as soon as you feel there is a problem, jennifer.way@unt.edu.

Academic integrity expectations and consequences (UNT Policy 06.003) <http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003.pdf> (Links to an external site.)

[Links to an external site.](#)

ADA accommodation statement (UNT Policy 16.001)

“UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.”

American Disabilities Act

The College of Visual Arts and Design is committed to full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. In keeping with this commitment and in order to facilitate equality of educational access, faculty members in the College will make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with a disability, such as appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methods when doing so does not fundamentally alter the course. If you have a disability, it is your responsibility to obtain verifying information from the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) and to inform me of your need for an accommodation. Requests for accommodation must be given to me no later than the first week of classes for students registered with the ODA as of the beginning of the current semester. If you register with the ODA after the first week of classes, your accommodation requests will be considered after this deadline. Grades assigned before an accommodation is provided will not be changed.

Information about how to obtain academic accommodations can be found in UNT Policy 18.1.14, at www.unt.edu/oda, and by visiting the ODA in Room 321 of the University Union. You also may call the ODA at 940.565.4323. **Please email documentation to Apply.ODA@unt.edu or upload documentation via [AIM Student Portal](#)**

[Links to an external site.](#)

Assignment policies, including uses of AI tools

For all assignments, instructions are distributed prior to the due date. It is up to you to understand the assignment fully and seek assistance when needed. Please speak to the professor if you are unclear about an assignment, or if you miss a deadline. No late work is accepted. Make up work is not available.

Academic honest -- "UNT promotes the integrity of learning processed and embraces the core values of trust and honesty. Academic integrity is based on educational principles and procedures that protect the rights of all participants in the educational process and validate the legitimacy of degrees awarded by the university. In the investigation and resolution of allegations of student academic dishonesty, the university's actions are intended to be corrective, educationally sound, fundamentally fair, and based on reliable evidence. See UNT Student Academic Integrity Policy, https://facultysenate.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003_student_academic_integrity_1_23_2018.pdf

[Links to an external site.](#)

The professor expects that all work students submit for this course will be their own. In instances when collaborative work is assigned, it is expected that the assignment will list all team members who participated. The course specifically forbids the use of ChatGPT or any other generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools at all stages of the work process, including preliminary ones. Violations of this policy will be considered academic misconduct and treated as such, with the potential of losing all credit for an assignment and receiving a letter grade of F for failing the course. Different classes at UNT could implement different AI policies, and it is the student's responsibility to conform to expectations for each course.

Attendance

For each class you miss, you miss an incredible amount of content . Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and abide by the attendance policy established for the course, and two absences are permitted. If you regularly come to class late or leave early, or more miss more than two classes, your final grade will be reduced. On the other hand, please do inform the professor if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community. While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community.

Campus Health and Safety

Emergency: Dial 911

UNT Police: 940-565-3000

Denton Police: 940-349-8181 (non-emergency)

Denton County Sheriff's Office: 940-349-1600 (non-emergency)

Student Health and Wellness Center: 940-565-2333

Counseling and Testing Services: 940-565-2741

Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities

The following statement reminds students of their rights and responsibilities within the academic community – *“Each University of North Texas student is entitled to certain rights associated with higher education institutions. See www.unt.edu/csrr for further information.”*

Class materials for remote instruction

This course is taught in person. For any classes held on Zoom, students will need access to a webcam and microphone to participate in the class, and students are expected to be present, on camera, during the duration of the class.

Class recordings

Class recordings are the intellectual property of the university and professor, and they are reserved for use only by students in this class and only for educational purposes. Students may not post or otherwise share the recordings outside the class, or outside the Canvas Learning Management System, in any

form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and will lead to disciplinary action. Students may not record class without the permission of the instructor.

Contesting a grade

If you are not happy with your grade, or if you feel there has been an error or oversight, write up a clear, full explanation of what you feel is wrong. Also, provide clear, full evidence supporting your suggestion for a change of grade. This material is due no later than three days after you received the grade. It needs to be emailed directly to the professor as an attachment in Word. **Before proceeding along this pathway, please share your concerns or questions with the professor.**

Course Risk Factor

According to University Policy, this course is classified as a category one course. Students enrolled in this course will not be exposed to any significant hazards and are not likely to suffer any bodily injury. Students will be informed of any potential health hazards or potential bodily injury connected with the use of any materials and/or processes and will be instructed how to proceed without danger to themselves or others.

Evaluation for Assignments:

100 Point Scale Grade	Letter Grade
97-100	A+
93-96	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
53-59	F

Evaluation range for course grade

100-91	A
90-81	B

80-70	C
69-60	D
59-0	F Fail

Letters of recommendation

To request a letter of recommendation, please contact me with a description of the opportunity and a current version of your resume including a list of art history courses with the grades you earned, along with your UNT GPA and your art history program GPA. Plan to schedule an appointment with me to discuss the opportunity. I require at least 30 days before a recommendation is due, to write a letter.

Late policy

Assignments are due when the syllabus says they are due, and when Canvas says they are due. No makeup assignments are offered. In general, late work is not permitted. **That said, if you are having difficulties submitting your work due to illness, or injury, please reach out to the professor.**

NOTE: Professor Way retains the right to change the syllabus with or without notice.