Instructor: Dr. Kurt Rahmlow  
Office: Art Building, Room 218  
Office phone: 940-369-7952  
E-mail: Please use the e-mail messaging system on Blackboard  
Office hours: T, Th 12:45-1:45, 5:00-5:30, and by appointment

**AEAH 4813-001:**  
*Postmodernism and the Visual Arts, 1945-present*  

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Explores the relationship of postmodernism in the visual arts, including the development, interpretation, and use of postmodern works, as well as historical, social and cultural conditions of "postmodernity" globally, ca. 1945 to the present.  
Prerequisite(s) : ART 1200, 2350, and 2360; or consent of the instructor.

This course surveys important developments in art and architecture from 1945 to the present day. More properly, the class will focus on late Modernism, Postmodernism, and current trends within avant-garde or experimental artistic production. We will begin by considering Abstract Expressionism, and we will end by examining projects recently on view at major international exhibitions and currently on display at galleries around the world. In the process, we will explore such movements, schools, and strains as Minimalism, Post-Painterly Abstraction, Pop Art, Conceptual Art, Performance Art, installation art, video art, digital art, and works influenced by significant political and theoretical positions, including feminism, identity politics, post-structuralism, and post-colonialism. This class is designed for students who have had some experience with art historical coursework—that is, it presupposes a basic familiarity with art historical terminologies and methodologies. I will be conducting this course primarily in a lecture format, but I will regularly require small-group work and I hope you will be comfortable asking questions and engaging other members of the classroom community in dialogue.

Please bear this in mind: Some of you may find this material disturbing. Graphic violence, alternative lifestyles, and explicit sexuality are themes pursued by a number of contemporary artists. By remaining in this course, you are committing yourself to viewing and discussing these works.

Please also bear this in mind: You may find this course quite challenging. The art of the post-war period tends to be, intellectually speaking, extremely sophisticated. We will be reading a series of critical and theoretical texts that will be very difficult to understand. It is by no means impossible to excel in this course, but if you are looking for that “easy A,” you may want to look elsewhere. This is not an “introductory” course.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES:**  
1. To learn about post-war art and artists, as well as the theoretical and philosophical principles that inform post-war artworks.  
2. To develop and hone research skills.  
3. To develop and hone skills of analysis and critical thinking.  
4. To develop advanced writing skills.
Textbooks


Using “Blackboard”

Students are required to check the course Website on Blackboard on a regular basis. I will be using the Blackboard e-mail style messaging system to communicate with the class rather than my UNT e-mail account, so please keep on top of your Blackboard Inbox. In addition, I will post a number of important documents to the website, including this syllabus, but also including informational sheets, handouts, and several reading assignments that are not contained in the required course textbooks, too. Finally, you will be able to track your grades on this site, and I will require you to submit your formal writing assignments electronically using its Turnitin function. You can access “Blackboard” by following these steps:

1. Go to the UNT homepage.
2. Click on the Blackboard link.
3. Log into the system.

To use the Turnitin function to submit your work, simply click on the appropriate assignment link on the “Course Content” portion of the course Website on Blackboard (it will be labeled clearly). The software will lead you through the submission process, but **be sure that your submission actually goes through!** If you do not receive a Blackboard e-mail message telling you that the submission was successful and giving you a submission ID number, your paper was NOT submitted properly.

When using the Turnitin function, please remember that it is your responsibility to (1) keep a copy of your submission, as well as proof of submission (your “digital receipt” **paper ID number**), (2) remember that your Turnitin submissions are final once the deadline has passed (you will be able to revise and resubmit your paper up until that point, but you will not be able to do so after), and (3) upload your paper in a timely fashion in **advance** of the deadline—it is not an excuse that the Turnitin link was slow or overloaded on the day the paper was due (you will have adequate time in which to complete these assignments and submit them). I will not accept a hard copy in lieu of an electronic submission; all submissions MUST go through the designated Turnitin link on Blackboard. If you are having difficulty uploading your paper, you must see me (or the T.A.) during office hours in advance of the deadline.

Course Requirements

*Attendance*—5% of final grade

*Participation*—5% of final grade

*Textual Analysis Paper #1*—10% of final grade
Textual Analysis Paper #2—10% of final grade
Exhibition Review—20% of final grade
Exam #1—25% of final grade
Exam #2—25% of final grade

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and timely arrival are mandatory. If you cannot commit to attending lectures, or if you believe you will regularly be late to class, please drop this course. I will take attendance five times during the course of the term, on random dates. If you should miss more than half a class meeting, you will be counted absent. If you arrive late or leave early and are not present when I call role, it is your responsibility to speak with me before we adjourn for the day; otherwise, you will not receive credit for attendance. If you are absent for a legitimate reason on one of these days and wish to receive credit for the class, (1) you will have to provide me with proper documentation of your excuse, and (2) you will have to make up the work for that day by writing a short response paper reviewing the material we covered in class. Please see me for details. If you cannot document a legitimate reason for missing class (illness, a death in the family, military duty, a religious holiday, for instance), you may not make up an absence. If you are going to be absent in order to observe a religious holiday, I ask that you notify me in advance, by e-mail, during the first two weeks of the term.

It is also mandatory that you arrive having carefully prepared the day’s assignments. I cannot emphasize this last point enough. This means that you must read the day’s assignments closely, making written notes about items of interest, points of critique, possible connections to other materials that we have covered, etc. While in class, I expect students to draw from their preparation and participate in the classroom community—that is, I expect all students to get involved in the conversation. If the conversation flags noticeably, I reserve the right to give unannounced quizzes or assign discussion questions or in-class writing assignments. These will count toward your participation grade, and they may only be made up in cases of documented excused absence. On occasion, I will collect informal assignments—discussion questions, for example, or work produced during small group discussion. These will count toward your participation grade. Finally, I may give short homework assignments designed to get you thinking about the course material before attending class. These, too, will count toward your participation grade. These will need to be submitted electronically using the “Assignment” function on Blackboard.

I do not allow the use of cellular phones, pagers, laptops, iPads, or recording devices in this classroom, except by special permission. If you have a disability that forces you to use a laptop or a recording device, please provide me with the proper documentation (see below), and I will gladly make an exception in your case. If you are in the midst of a personal emergency that requires you to keep your telephone active, please notify me at the beginning of class. Otherwise, all cell phones and laptops MUST be shut off and put away before the start of class. If you do not adhere to this requirement, I will ask you to leave the classroom.

Finally, please be aware that I hold this class to appropriate standards of collegiality and decorum. The free exchange of ideas requires that we respect each other and listen carefully to one another. Please feel free to disagree with an interpretation and debate ideas with other
students and with me. I do ask, however, that you refrain from insulting or abusing other
students, and I ask that you do not conduct conversations, sleep, read the newspaper, send text
messages, or wander in and out of class while I or one of your classmates is speaking. If you
cannot observe this requirement, I will ask you to leave the classroom.

**Textual Analysis Papers**

As the term progresses, you will write two 400- to 600-word essays treating readings not
contained in the survey text. The purposes of this exercise are: First, to encourage you to
consider those readings more closely and thoughtfully, since we will not always have time to
discuss them in lecture; second, to give you practice integrating other people’s scholarship into
your own work in an effective and responsible manner. Assignment sheets for these papers will
be posted to Blackboard. These assignments will receive numerical grades ranging from 0 to
100. Corresponding letter grades will conform to the grading scale below. These assignments
must be submitted electronically using the Turnitin function on Blackboard. Formatting
requirements will be specified on the assignment sheets.

**Exhibition Review**

At some point during the term, you will be required to visit a major exhibition at an area museum
and review that show critically in an 850- to 1,000-word essay (I will specify eligible exhibitions
on an assignment sheet). The purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to think about how
and why a curator has put a show together in a particular way, and to think about the sorts of
statements that selection and arrangement can make. Assignment sheets for this paper will
be posted to Blackboard. The assignment will receive a numerical grade ranging from 0 to
100. Corresponding letter grades will conform to the grading scale below. This assignment must be
submitted electronically using the Turnitin function on Blackboard. Formatting requirements will
be specified on the assignment sheet.

**Examinations**

You will demonstrate your grasp of the material we have covered in class by sitting 2 in-class
examinations (see the course schedule for the respective dates and times). The format will
consist of some combination of multiple choice and short essay questions. Exams will receive a
number grade ranging from 0 to 100. Corresponding letter grades will conform to the grading
scale listed below.

**Late and Missed Assignments and Exams**

All major written assignments must be submitted in electronic form using the Turnitin function
on Blackboard—Turnitin is the plagiarism detection software used by UNT. These projects are
due on the dates and at the times noted on their respective assignment sheets. Any assignment
submitted later than the time specified on the assignment sheet, even by one minute, will be
counted late. Late submissions of major assignments will be accepted for several days after the
posted deadline. However, once I have closed the link and begun grading, late submissions will
no longer be accepted. All late major assignments will be penalized one full letter grade for
every calendar day they are late. Any assignments due in hard copy in class are due at the
beginning of class. These will generally be homework of some sort and will NOT be accepted
late without documentation of hardship. If you miss class on a day when an in-class participation
grade was assigned and collected, or if you fail to complete any participation assignment on
time, you may NOT make up that assignment without documentation of hardship. If you miss a deadline of any sort due to absence, and you have a legitimate excuse (due to unavoidable circumstances—for example, you were seriously ill, or your car exploded in the parking lot of McDonald’s while you were inside getting breakfast on the way to class), then you MUST notify me within 24 hours. If you are experiencing difficulties that you believe will interfere with your ability to complete an assignment on time, please notify me in advance of the due date so that we can discuss the situation. Regarding exams, I only grant make-ups in extreme cases, and I require formal documentation of hardship before I schedule them. The exception to this rule is the observance of religious holidays; however, if you are going to miss an exam for this reason, I require advance notification. Additionally, no matter what the cause of your absence, you MUST contact me no more than 24 hours after the exam concludes, either by phone or by e-mail, to schedule a make-up; if you fail to contact me within this period, you will forfeit your right to taking a make-up exam. Please note: I do not give exams early. If you are going to be leaving campus before the final exam is scheduled to be given, you will either need to rearrange your schedule or take a 0 on that exam.

**Resubmission of Work Originally Done for Other Courses**

All written work must be original to this course. That is, you may not submit a paper that you originally wrote to submit to another course. If you do so, you will receive a 0 for the assignment.

**Grading Scale**

Your final grade in this course will appear on your transcript as a straight letter grade, without a “+” or a “−.” However, individual assignments will be scored as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A−</td>
<td>90-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B−</td>
<td>80-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C−</td>
<td>70-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D−</td>
<td>60-63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**University and Departmental Policies**

**Plagiarism and Cheating**

I feel very strongly about this. Please do not do this in my course. It would embarrass us both, and it would make me feel stressed out, disappointed, and depressed. If I catch you cheating or plagiarizing, I will certainly fail you for the assignment, possibly for the course, and report you for disciplinary action. Please take pride in your abilities and your work and give this class your
best honest effort. If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please see me. In
general, if you use someone else’s **words or ideas**, you must acknowledge that you are
borrowing them, usually by citing your source—you may not pass them off as your own. In
addition, if you accept so much assistance on a project that the work is no longer substantially
your own, you have cheated. Regarding quizzes and exams, all of these will be “closed book.”
Accepting or seeking any assistance from, or seeking reference to, another person, piece of
writing, or electronic source, constitutes cheating. Put simply, just bear in mind that your
responsibility in this course is to earn your score by virtue of your own best effort—use your
own ideas, and put them in all your own words.

**Students with Disabilities**
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 methodologies 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 167 of
Sage Hall. You also may call the ODA at 940-565-4323.

**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.

**Building Emergency Procedures**
In case of emergency (alarm will sound), please follow the building evacuation plans posted on
each floor of your building and proceed to the nearest parking lot. In case of tornado (campus
sirens will sound) or other weather related threat, please go to the nearest hallway or room on
your floor without exterior windows and remain there until an all clear signal is sounded. Follow
the instructions of your teachers and act accordingly.

**Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities**
Each University of North Texas student is entitled to certain rights associated with higher
education institutions. See www.unt.edu/csrr for further information.
Course Schedule

01/20: Introduction/s; overview of course material.

01/22: Modernism before WWII; reading—Arnason and Mansfield, pp. xiii-xxxii.


02/05: Trends in American Sculpture and Photography; reading—Arnason, pp. 401-410; T.A. Paper #1 assigned.


02/12: Pop Art in England and Neo-Dada, followed by a primer on the proper use of source texts; reading—Arnason, pp. 456-466; Richard Hamilton, “For the Finest Art, Try Pop,” in *AIT*, pp. 742-743.

02/17: Happenings and Environments; reading—Arnason, pp. 466-471; Allan Kaprow, from *Assemblages, Environments and Happenings*, in *AIT*, pp. 717-722.

02/19: Pop Art in America, followed by a primer on using Turnitin; reading—Arnason, pp. 471-487; T.A. Paper #1 due.


02/26: Europe’s New Realism; reading—Arnason, pp. 444-455.

03/03: The Snapshot Aesthetic in American Photography, followed by Post-Painterly Color Field Abstraction and Hard Edge Painting; reading—Arnason, pp. 487-503.; reading—; exam review sheet distributed.
03/05: Op Art and trends in sculpture, including kinetic sculpture and light and space art; reading—Arnason, pp. 503-510.

03/10: International Style architecture and other developments in international architecture; reading—Arnason, pp. 527-557.

03/12: **Mid-Term Exam.**

03/17: Spring break; no class today!

03/19: Spring break; no class today!

03/24: Minimalism; reading—Arnason, pp. 510-526.


04/02: Performance Art and Body Art (cont.).


04/14: Process Art and Earthworks; reading—Arnason, pp. 587-605; Rosalind Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” on Blackboard; **Exhibition Review due.**


04/21: Figurative art in the 1970s, followed by Pattern and Decoration and the New Image; reading—Arnason, pp. 610-628; **T.A. Paper #2 due.**


05/05: Commodity Art, Installation Art, and trends of the 1990s; reading—Arnason, pp. 687-728; Donald Judd, “from ‘… not about master-pieces but why there are so few of them,’” in AIT, pp. 1139-1143


05/12 (Tuesday): Final Exam (1:30 pm-3:30 pm, ART 226).

*The instructor reserves the right to alter this syllabus at his discretion.
AEAH 4813-001:
Postmodernism and the Visual Arts, 1945-present

I have read this syllabus. I agree to comply with all of the provisions it describes. I understand the course structure, grading and attendance policies, as well as the risk factor rating. I understand that this class includes a substantial amount of reading and discussion. I understand the attendance and late policies, and I am aware that absences and late work will result in a lowered final grade. By taking this course, I agree not to commit acts of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, and failing to cite sources. I understand that, at a minimum, any act of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of “F” for the assignment. I further understand that Dr. Rahmlow will pursue disciplinary actions against me with the University of North Texas should I commit any act of academic dishonesty. These disciplinary actions may range all the way from an “F” for the assignment to an “F” for the course, even to suspension or expulsion from the University. I acknowledge that Dr. Rahmlow reserves the right to alter his syllabus at his discretion during the course of the semester.

__________________________________________  __________________
Signature

______________________________            __________________
Printed name                      Date

_____________________________________
Student ID Number

The return of this syllabus agreement is required for continued enrollment in the course.