THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
COLLEGE OF VISUAL ARTS AND DESIGN
Fall 2016

AEAH 4814-001
THEORIES OF CONTEMPORARY ART
TU 5:00-7:50 P.M.
ROOM #: ART 226

INSTRUCTOR: LAUREN CROSS
OFFICE: ART 224E
OFFICE HOURS: TU 2-3 P.M. & TH 3-5 P.M. and by appointment.
EMAIL: EMAIL THROUGH BLACKBOARD

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Selected theoretical and critical issues in recent art. Prerequisite(s): ART 1200 or 1301, 2350, and 2360; or consent of instructor.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

REQUIRED MATERIALS:
5” x7” Sketchbook

RECOMMENDED READING:
*Believing Is Seeing: Creating the Culture of Art* by Mary Anne Staniszewski
*Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists’ Writings* by Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz

COURSE CONTENT:
*ART 4814 Theories In Contemporary Art* will explore the role of theoretical perspectives on contemporary art. The course will examine theories that frame “contemporaneity” (Smith, ch.4), art practice, culture/identity/political agency, critical theory, and art/historical subjects. To supplement our readings, the course will be organized around student visits to area museums and art galleries in North Texas, and regional guest lecturers who will expand on the ideas covered in class. Most importantly, the course aims to help students understand the historical relationship between theory and art practice beginning in the 16th and 17th centuries in comparison to contemporary culture.

Over the course of the semester, students will engage in fieldwork opportunities using the photo-voice research method, which will equip students to better reflect on examples from our text within contemporary art in comparison with the local art scene. The fieldwork requirement for the course aligns with the supposition that in order to truly analyze art and understand theory one has to fully engage with it in all its various forms, from museums to performance art. Students should come to class prepared to engage the interpretive process assertively and reflect on their field experiences through connections to course readings.
COURSE OBJECTIVES LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will:
1. Analyze and communicate key concepts relating to theory in contemporary art.
2. Select and identify vocabulary and how it applies to the development of theoretical concepts in art.
3. Describe experiences with contemporary art from a theoretical perspective.
4. Document and reflect on art viewing experiences while engaging with the local arts community in Denton, Dallas, and Fort Worth.
5. Collaborate on ideas and present new ways of viewing and understanding art through theoretical ideas.
6. Engage the local arts community by identifying and exploring opportunities to share in the work of art institutions, organizations, and artists in meaningful ways.

COURSE STRUCTURE:

In-Class Reflection & Discussion: Reflexive & discussion-based learning is one of the primary modes of teaching in this class, which will be prompted by brief lectures and reflection assignments. For this reason, you can expect that this course will prioritize discussion and reflection over extensive lecturing, though lectures will be provided during the beginning or at the end of class in order to review course concepts and to ensure that students feel comfortable with their understanding of course material. Students should come to class prepared for discussion, having read all assigned readings before our class session. I will occasionally call on students to initiate class topics. When provided reflection assignments, students will complete them and turned them in by the end of class.

Active Learning/Collaborative Learning Activities: As an extension of our class discussions, students will also engage in active and collaborative learning activities in class in order to engage course topics in innovative ways. Pre-class assignments will be required in order to help students to evaluate key terms and concepts.

Experiential Learning (Fieldwork Requirement):

Throughout the course of the semester, students will be assigned experiential learning activities, which allow students to engage in field research and document their experiences within the local arts community in Denton, Dallas, and Fort Worth. Qualitative Researchers often use fieldwork as a way to gain experiential knowledge on their research topics. Student fieldwork will be located at various museums, art galleries, and cultural centers throughout the DFW area. Instructor-led trips will be organized for students that are available and appreciate more guidance. Students will be required to keep an electronic Photo-voice journal to document and reflect on their field experiences, which will be hosted on Blackboard (Bb). Students will be assigned a selection of reflection questions to complete for each fieldwork trip in their Photo-Voice Journal. See the STUDENT EVALUATION section of the syllabus for more information about the Photo-voice Journal assignment.

Works Cited
STUDENT EVALUATION (OR GRADING):
The grading system for the course is the following:
Participation (In-Class Activities) (20 per class session x 13)…130
Profound Impact Points (10 points each x 3)…………………30
Photo-voice Journal & Presentation…………………………170
Visual Research Journal………………………………………50
Analysis Paper & Presentation……………………………200
Art Theorizing Project………………………………………200
Total Possible Points 780

Extra Credit (up to 20 points)

READINGS AND ONLINE MATERIALS:
This course will use Blackboard to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to turn in course assignments and quizzes, and to post grades. You can access Blackboard at http://learn.unt.edu using your university login and password. You can find support using Blackboard at the UNT Helpdesk on the web (http://helpdesk.unt.edu) by email (helpdesk@unt.edu) or by phone (940) 565-2324.

PARTICIPATION (IN-CLASS AND PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES) (up to 20 points per class session; Total of up to 130 points): An important component of the class will be active and collaborative learning exercises and discussion. Your attendance and participation in class exercises and discussions is required. Exercises allow opportunities for previously assigned and impromptu reflections on readings and engagement with classmates. Participation points are earned not only through attendance but completing and participating in in-class assignments. Missing in-class activities cannot be made up if you are absent, even for excused absences, or turned in electronically via email. Students missing in-class assignments must take advantage of the many extra credit opportunities offered in the course to make up missing points.

PROFOUND IMPACT POINTS (30 points): During Weeks 5, 9, and 14, students will present and turn in typed, profound impact points reflecting over past assigned readings they found impactful in understanding key terms and concepts. Profound Impact Points allow students to trace their learning and review over ideas that might be useful to them in future assignments and papers. For example, Profound Impact Points completed in Week 4 will cover readings from Weeks 1-4. Profound Impact Points should be brief and in bullet point format, and include:
1. Five quotes: At least five quotes from five different assigned readings that the student found insightful to understanding postmodernism, key terms, and concepts.
2. Explanation: Each quote should include 1-2 sentences explaining your reflections on each quote at the end of each bullet point
3. MLA formatting (i.e. in-text parenthetical citations and Works Cited)
Profound Impact Points are worth up to 10 points (up to 2 points per point)

PHOTO-VOICE JOURNAL ENTRIES & PRESENTATIONS (170 points): As a part of the fieldwork requirement for the course, students are required to document class visits to art museums and art galleries in the Denton/Dallas/Fort Worth area. In addition to engaging in art viewing experiences, fieldwork should be a time of reflection and analysis of theories covered in class. Photo-voice Journal entries of your field visits and reflections serve to document your progress and understanding of the complex theories explored in class.

Photo-voice is a critical method of research that allows the researcher or research participant to “show and tell” their experiences. Over the course of the semester students will be documenting their art view experiences in their own Photo-Voice Journal. These Photo-voice Journals will not be audio-based (despite the name), they will “show voice”
to student art experiences and will be hosted in electronic journals located in Blackboard (Bb). Each entry is worth up to 40 points.

I. Journal Entries (40 points each; Total 120 points): Students will post entries for assigned trips to museums/galleries and assigned narratives based on theories explored in our readings. Students are assigned to visit The Public Trust (Solliloquy: Ryan McGinness, September 10-October 22, 2016), Tally Dunn Gallery (David Bates: Paintings and Sculptures, August 27-October 29,2016), and Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (KAWS Where The End Starts, Oct 20-Jan 2017 & FOCUS: Lorna Simpson, Nov 19-Jan 15, 2017). Students should keep exhibition dates in mind. Students can post two (2) additional independently initiated art experiences for extra credit (a total of 80 extra credit points). Extra credit opportunities can include art lectures, talks, art-making workshops, and art activities. Photo-voice journal entries can only be seen by the instructor and are an opportunity for students to practice their art analysis and interpretation skills in a secure environment. Journal entries for your visits to art galleries/museums must include:

1. 3 photographs documenting your art experience (8 points)
2. Summary of your art experience (or theoretical framework) (8 points)
3. Interpretation and/or evaluation of the art that you viewed (or photographs you are using to describe theory) (8 points)
4. At least two direct quotes from our assigned readings that inform your interpretation (8 points).
5. Use correct MLA format (i.e., in-text parenthetical citations and Works Cited to support your claims) (8 points).

Total of up to 40 points per entry

II. Photo-Voice Theory Presentation (50 points): Each student will select a theory from an article explored in Theory In Contemporary Art Since 1985. Use Bazerman’s The Informed Writer: Using Sources in the Disciplines to dissect the theory represented in your selected article. Then, students will create a Photo-voice narrative reflecting on their interpretations of their selected theory and its iteration within contemporary art. Like photo-voice journal entries, students will take at least three photographs and write a brief narrative approximately 3-5 sentences where students reflect on their interpretations. In addition to posting your photo-voice reflection in your Photo-Voice Journal, students will present their findings in class using the following criteria:

1. Choose a direct quote from your selected article (10 points)
2. At least three (3) photographs reflecting on theoretical framework illustrated in article (10 points).
3. Brief narrative (3-5 sentences) (10 points).
4. Use correct MLA format (i.e., in-text parenthetical citations and Works Cited to support your claims) (10 points).
5. Share your photo-voice reflections in 2 minute presentation in class (10 points).

VISUAL RESEARCH JOURNAL (50 points): Students will keep a visual research journal that traces their reflections on theories explored in class, using collage, sketching, short notes, and images/photography. Journals will be picked up during Week 3, 9, and 14 (with the Art Theorizing Proposal) for grading. Journals should demonstrate exploration of least 2-3 theories during Week 3 and 9 grading pick up (Each Journal Pick up for Week 3 and 9 is worth up to 25 points). Week 14 pick up will be graded with Art Theorizing Proposal below.

ART THEORIZING PROPOSAL (200 points): Students will write a proposal for an art project that is influenced by a theory covered in class (i.e., article or discussion). Students can propose the following projects but are not limited to: art events, exhibitions, art works, etc. Students will be provided a template to submit proposal. Then,
students will document their development in their Visual Research Journal, which should include images/photographs, concept sketches or diagrams, floorplans, etc. to demonstrate preliminary ideas (Up to 150 points for proposal, Up to 50 points for Visual Research Journal Entry).

**ART ANALYSIS PROJECT (200 points):** Students will write a 3–5 page analysis paper on an specific theory and its relationship to contemporary art. The paper should be in MLA format. Analysis papers can either be an examination of a series of works by one artist, a few works by two to three artists, or for one’s own art (if a studio artist). Analysis papers must 1) incorporate at least one theory covered in our course readings or a theory that they have significant research and examples as evidence, and 2) at least 5 credible resources outside of our course readings (i.e., articles, books, audio recordings, interviews, video, etc.) to support your claims. Use Bazerman’s *The Informed Writer: Using Sources in the Disciplines*, as a guide in constructing your analysis. Then, during the last two sessions of the semester students will give a brief presentation summarizing their analysis project. Worth up to 100 points for Analysis Paper and 100 points for Analysis Presentation. Rubrics will be provided by the instructor for the assignment.

**EXTRA CREDIT (up to 20 points):**
As mentioned above, attending and documenting additional art experiences in your Photo-voice Journal beyond the required class visits can be counted as extra credit up to 80 points. Submit your extra credit entries by Wednesday, December 4th by 11:59 p.m. to earn extra credit points. Additional extra credit opportunities will be posted via the Announcements on Blackboard (Bb).

**ARTIST RESOURCES:**
As you become more immersed in the local arts & culture community please be aware of the following resources as you are researching activities and artists for your assignments:

**Local Art Museums**
The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (www.themodern.org)
Amon Carter Museum of American Art (www.cartermuseum.org)
Kimbell Art Museum (www.kimbellart.org)
Dallas Museum of Art (www.dma.org)
Dallas Contemporary (www.dallascontemporary.org)
Ther Nasher Sculpture Center (www.nashersculpturecenter.org)
The Crowe Collection of Asian Art (crowcollection.org)

**Galleries & Art Dealer Associations**
Fort Worth Art Dealers Association (www.fwada.com)
Contemporary Art Dealers of Dallas (www.caddallas.net)
Dallas Art Dealers Association (www.dallasartdealers.org)

**Alternative & Non-profit Exhibition Spaces/Organizations**
Fort Worth Community Arts Center (www.fwcac.com)
The MAC (the-mac.org)
WoCA Projects (www.wocaprojects.com)
Fort Worth Public Art (www.fwpublicart.org)
Visual Arts Society of Texas in Denton (vastarts.org)
City of Denton Public Art (www.cityofdenton.com/departments-services/public-art)
Artist Organizations
Texas Artists Coalition (www.texasartistscoalition.org)
Greater Denton Arts Council (www.dentonarts.com)

National Resources
College Art Association (www.collegeart.org)
Artsy (www.artsy.com)
Art21 (www.pbs.org/art21/artists)

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Attendance is a requirement for the course. A class attendance sheet will be passed around before the end of every class session. In-class assignments cannot be made up when a student is absent. Please take advantage of extra credit opportunities to make up for missing assignments. Students who have six or more unexcused absences will be automatically dropped from the course. Excused absences, such as a result of medical emergencies must be documented and submitted in writing to the instructor no more than 48 hours after the absence.

AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT: The University of North Texas 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 you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You 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. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

DISABILITIES ACCOMMODATION: Please notify the instructor if you have a disability that requires accommodation. It is also required that you register with the UNT Office of Disability Accommodation, Student Union, Room 318. The College of Visual Arts and Design policy on accommodation is available upon request in the CVAD Dean’s offices, Room 107. Further questions and problems on accommodation may be addressed to Associate Dean Eric Ligon, School Accommodation Liaison, Art Building, Student Advising, Room 111.

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.

Students who are pregnant or will become pregnant during the course of the semester are advised to check with their doctor immediately to determine if any additional risks are reason to postpone this course until a later semester. Upon request, your professor will provide a list of chemicals and safety issues for your doctor to review. Material Safety Data Sheets are available on all chemicals. It will be up to you and your doctor to determine what course of action to take.

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.

Weekly Class Schedule

Week 1 (August 30): Identifying Theory
Assigned Readings: Stanzewski, “What is Art?” (Bb); Bazerman, “Analyzing the Author’s Purpose and Technique” (Bb)
Introductions
Due: In-Class Assignments

Part I: The Field of Contemporary Art

Week 2 (September 6): Understanding the Field
Assigned Readings: TICA: Kocur and Leung, “Introduction” (1-5); “Introduction to Part I” (9-12); “The Intellectual Field” (13-20); “When form Has Become Attitude” (21-33); Bazerman: “Reacting to Reading: Annotations and Journals” (Bb).
Due: In-Class Assignments

Week 3 (September 13): Sites for Inquiry
Assigned Readings: TICA: One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity” (34-55); “Biennials Without Borders” (56-63); “Periodising Contemporary Art” (64-71)
Due: In-Class Assignments
Due: Visual Research Journal

Week 4 (September 20): The Politics of Aesthetics
Assigned Readings: TICA: “Contemporary Art and the Politics” of Aesthetics (72-86)
Due: In-Class Assignments

Part II: Practices and Models/Rethinking Form and Medium

Week 5 (September 27): Theory & Forms of Art Practice
Assigned Readings: TICA: “Intro to Part II” (89-93); “Notes on Surface: Toward a Genealogy of Flatness” (102-116); “Informe Without Conclusion” (118-130)
Due: In-Class Assignments
Due: Profound Impact Points #1
Week 6 (October 4): Justifying Different Forms and Mediums for Art Practice

Assigned Readings: TICA: “Video Projection” (131-145); “How to Provide an Artistic Service” (146-152); “Conversation Pieces”(153-167)

Due: In-Class Assignments

Week 7 (October 11): Relational Aesthetics

Assigned Readings: TICA: “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics”(166-193)

Due: In-Class Assignments

Due: Photo-voice Presentations

Part III: Culture/Identities/Political Agency

Week 8 (October 18): Implications of Culture

Assigned Readings: TICA: “Introduction to Part III” (197-202); “War on Culture” (203-210); “AIDS” (211-219); “Architecture of the Evicted”(220-234)

Due: In-Class Assignments

Due: Photo-voice Journal Entry for The Public Trust by Sunday, October 23, 2016 by 11:59 p.m.

Week 9 (October 25): Gender-based Theory

Assigned Readings: TICA: “Gender is Burning”(235-251); Farris, “Introduction”(Bb); Nochlin, ”Why Are There No Women Artists” (Bb); Piper, “Ideology, Confrontation and Political Self-Awareness”(Bb); William Pope. I, “One Thing After Another”(Bb)

Due: In-Class Assignments

Due: Profound Impact Points # 2

Due: Visual Research Journal

Week 10 (November 1): New Art Histories, Language, and Concepts

Assigned Readings: Roth, “Afterword: Parts of a Puzzle”(Bb); TDCA: “Language and Concepts”(Bb); “Weems, Interview with Susan Channing” (Bb); Weiwei, “Making Choices”(Bb)

Week 11 (November 8): Cultural Sites & Workers

Assigned Readings: TICA: “The Architecture of Porn” (289-298); “Cultural Workers as Organic Intellectuals”299-307)

Due: In-Class Assignments

Week 12 (November 15): Difference


Due: In-Class Assignments

Due: Photo-voice Journal Entry of Talley Dunn Gallery Visit David Bates by Sunday, November 20, 2016 at 11:59 p.m.

Part IV: Postcolonial Critiques

Week 13 (November 22): Cross-Cultural Practices & Multiculturalism
**Assigned Readings:** TICA: “Intro to Part IV” (311-313); “The Marco Polo Syndrome” (314-321); “The Syncretic Turn: Cross-Cultural Practices in the Age of Multiculturalism” (329-337)

**Due:** In-Class Assignments

---

**Part V: Art Subjects/Historical Subjects**

**Week 14 (November 29): Representation in New Media Technology**

**Assigned Readings:** TICA: “Introduction to Part V” (383-387); “Re-politicizing Art, Theory, Representation and New Media Technology” (388-394)

**Due:** In-Class Assignments

**Due:** Art Theorizing Proposal

**Due:** Profound Impact Points # 3

---

**Week 15 (December 6): Expanded Methods and Practices**

**Assigned Readings:** TICA: “The Database” (435-454); “Fore the Love of Abstraction” (455-465); “The Politics of Sustainability” (466-485)

**Due:** Analysis Presentations

**Due:** Photo-voice Journal Entry for Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth Visit, Lorna Simpson & KAWS

---

**Week 16 (December 13): Finals Week**

**Due:** Analysis Presentations

**Due:** Final Analysis Paper

---

**Note:** Please note that the above schedule is tentative; I retain the right to change the syllabus with or without notice.
STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

I (print) acknowledge that I have read the course syllabus. I understand the course structure, grading and attendance policies as well as the risk factor rating. I hereby agree to the syllabus and its provisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course number and section</th>
<th>Risk Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student phone #, e-mail address (print)</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12/09/12 rev.