

University of North Texas, College of Visual Arts and Design
FALL 2018
Env 190 / Thursday 5PM-7:50PM

AEAH 4814: Theories of Contemporary Art
Dr. Monica Salazar

OFFICE NUMBER: TBD

OFFICE HOURS: TBD & by appointment

E-mail: Monica.Salazar@unt.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Selected theoretical and critical issues in recent art.

Prerequisite(s): ART 1200, ART 2350 and ART 2360, and AEAH 4813; or consent of instructor.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

Kocur, Zoya and Simon Leung, eds. *Theory In Contemporary Art Since 1985*. 2nd ed. Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.
Additional assigned texts will be posted on Canvas.

RECOMMENDED READING:

Robertson, Jean and Craig McDaniel. *Themes of Contemporary Art: Visual Art after 1980*.

Harrison, Charles and Paul Wood, eds. *Art in Theory: 1900-2000*.

Foster et al. *Art since 1900:1945 to the present*. Vol 2. 2nd edition.

Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz. *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*.

Harrington, Austin. *Art and Social Theory*

COURSE CONTENT:

This class explores different currents of thought within contemporary art. Together, we will investigate the different theoretical frameworks and critical issues that revolve around contemporary art. We will also study the sociopolitical, historical, and economic circumstances in which important contemporary theories emerge. In this class, students will draw connections between contemporary art theory and local works of art. With topics spanning from the dematerialization of art to New Media, this class will discuss salient global developments in the arts, architecture, and philosophy of the contemporary art world.

COURSE OBJECTIVES LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Identify different contemporary art theories, as well as their contexts, and works of art that reflect them.
2. Interpret and apply concepts and terms that are crucial to theory in contemporary art.
3. Analyze the ways in which theory informs the art of today.
4. Conduct research on works of art in the Dallas area, and communicate the outcomes of such research to the group.
5. Analyze texts closely.
6. Engage with the art community of the Dallas area through a museum visit.

COURSE STRUCTURE: This class meets once a week during the semester.

All readings are to be done prior to class, on the day assigned. Students are expected to actively participate in all class discussions and group exercises.

Note: some students may find the information and images disturbing due to their explicit violent, sexual and political subject. By signing the agreement at the end of this syllabus, you are acknowledging your awareness of these themes and committing to fully participate in class.

STUDENT EVALUATION (OR GRADING): The following assignments and percentages will constitute your final grade for the semester:

Participation-----	10%
Insightful Question - Presentations-----	20%
Assignment 1-----	20%
Final Group Presentation-----	25%
Final Group Paper-----	25%

Total: 100%

1. **Participation (10%):** Student participation in class discussion is not only required, but also essential to your success in this course.

2. **Insightful Questions - Presentation (20%):** Once throughout the semester, each student will be responsible for presenting to the class one insightful question about the readings for specific classes (10% each). The first day of class, the date in which each student will present his/her questions will be assigned. Dates are not exchangeable. If a student misses his/her presentation, there will be NO make up opportunities for this assignment. Each question should aim to help the class have a deeper understanding of the texts and the topics being discussed, and therefore, they should lead the class into a deep and engaging discussion.
Extra points will be awarded to those students who present without reading their material.

3. **Assignment 1. (20%).** Students are required to complete one assignment for this class. This assignment consists of a short paper (2-3 pages) that is due on October 25. This paper must be typed, using Times New Roman font, size 12, and should be double-spaced with 1 to 1.25 inch margins. Students should use the Chicago Manual of Style format, including appropriate citations in the form of footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography when applicable. An electronic copy of this assignment must be uploaded through the Turnitin link in Canvas on the assigned date.

Late papers will not be accepted.

Assignment 1 is a Review of the Dallas Museum of Art's exhibit *Concentrations 61: Runo Lagomarsino, Entremundos* (September 30, 2018 – February 17, 2019). A good review must offer a brief description of the exhibition, and take a stand about it. In other words, you should take a position and support it. For example, your review should answer questions like the following: Is it successful? What elements make it successful? How do those element relate to your position? What is the meaning of the exhibition? How does it relate to the artist's *oeuvre*? Is it political? How does it relate to the broader history of art? How does it relate to a certain contemporary theoretical or critical issue? Can you relate a quote from the texts you have read to this exhibition? Your review should show you understand the concepts discussed in class, and therefore, you are able to relate them to this exhibition.

4. **Final Group Presentation (25%):** The class will be divided into groups. Each group will elaborate a virtual or imaginary museum exhibition that surveys the most significant Theories of Contemporary Art. Each group will choose the name of the exhibition, as well as an array of (15-20) works of art in which they will identify aspects/theories/concepts discussed in class, in order to explain how such works of art reflect certain theories of contemporary art. As part of the project, each group will submit a sketch showing the order and physical arrangement of the exhibit, subtitles or subdivisions within the exhibition (if any), as well as the texts that will

accompany the artworks. All group members are required to participate in the research, writing, and presentation of this project. Each group member is also responsible for submitting a separate paragraph clearly stating his/her contribution to the project. This paragraph is confidential and will only be seen by the instructor.

****Extra points will be awarded to those students who present without reading their material.****

5. Final Group Paper (25%): Each group is required to turn in one final paper from which the Final Group Presentation is based. This paper should follow the style guidelines of Assignment 1 written above, and it should be 5 to 7 pages long. This final paper must be a cohesive text, rather than a compilation of the separate writings of each individual group member. Only one paper per group must be uploaded through the Turnitin link in Canvas.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Attendance will be taken at the start of each class. Those students who arrive late must make sure they have been counted for the attendance of that particular class. One unexcused absence (it is a three hour class) will be allowed. Thereafter, each unexcused absence will result in the lowering your grade by five points.

ADA Accommodation Statement: In accordance with university policies and state and federal regulations, the university is committed to full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. To this end, all academic units are willing to make reasonable and appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methodologies in order to facilitate equality of educational access for persons with disabilities. See [UNT Policy 04.015](#).

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. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://disability.unt.edu>. You may also contact them by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Financial Aid Satisfactory

Academic Progress:

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per term. Students cannot exceed maximum timeframes established based on the published length of the graduate program. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose their financial aid eligibility.

If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so may affect your current and future financial aid eligibility. Please visit <http://financialaid.unt.edu/satisfactory-academic-progress-requirements> for more information about financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress. It may be wise for you to schedule a meeting with an academic advisor in your college or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

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. Cases of academic dishonesty will be referred to University authorities. See [UNT Policy 06.003](#).

Acceptable Student Behavior:

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <http://deanofstudents.unt.edu>.

Disclaimer: The professor reserves the right to change the syllabus if and when necessary with or without notice.

Course Outline:

WEEK 1. August 30

INTRODUCTION & SYLLABUS

Insightful Question Presentations will be assigned.

THE FIELD OF CONTEMPORARY ART

WEEK 2. September 6

WHAT IS CONTEMPORARY ART?

Kocur and Leung, "Introduction"

Kocur and Leung, "Introduction to Part I"

Kocur and Leung, 5: "Periodising Contemporary Art"

Kocur and Leung, 6: "Contemporary Art and the Politics of Aesthetics"

WEEK 3. September 13

SITE SPECIFICITY

Kocur and Leung, 3: "One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity"

Kocur and Leung, 4: "Biennials without Borders?"

PRACTICES AND MODELS/RETHINKING FORM AND MEDIUM

WEEK 4. September 20

FORM

Kocur and Leung, "Introduction to Part II"

Kocur and Leung, 8: "Notes on Surface: Toward a Genealogy of Flatness"

Kocur and Leung, 9: "Informe without Conclusion"

WEEK 5. September 27

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH DAY – NO CLASS

WEEK 6. October 4

DEMATERIALIZATION

Lucy Lippard and John Chandler, "The Dematerialization of Art" (Canvas)

Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Re-Materialization" (Canvas)

WEEK 7. October 11

RELATIONAL AESTHETICS

Nicolas Borriaud, "From Relational Aesthetics" (Canvas)

Kocur and Leung, 13: "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics"

WEEK 8. October 18

MEDIA

Kocur and Leung, 10: "Video Projection: The Space Between Screens"

Kocur and Leung, 11: "How to Provide an Artistic Service: An Introduction"

In-class film: Critiques of art and media as commodity and spectacle

CULTURE/IDENTITIES/POLITICAL AGENCY

WEEK 9. October 25

CULTURE

Kocur and Leung, "Introduction to Part III"

Kocur and Leung, 14: "The War on Culture"

Kocur and Leung, 15: "AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism"

ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE

WEEK 10. November 1

GENDER

Kocur and Leung, 17: "Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation"

Nochlin, "Why have there been no great women artists?" (Canvas)

WEEK 11. November 8

DIFFERENCE

Kocur and Leung, 18: "Looking for Trouble"

Kocur and Leung, 19: "The Mythology of Difference: Vulgar Identity Politics at the Whitney Biennial"

ART SUBJECTS/HISTORICAL SUBJECTS

WEEK 12. November 15

FROM THE PERIPHERY

Kocur and Leung, 23: "The Marco Polo Syndrome: Some Problems around Art and Eurocentrism"

Kocur and Leung, 28: "Ruins, Fragmentation, and the Chinese Modern/Postmodern"

Richard, "Postmodernism and Periphery" (Canvas)

WEEK 13. November 22

THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS

WEEK 14. November 29

NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGY

Kocur and Leung, "Introduction to Part V"

Kocur and Leung, 29: "Re-Politicizing Art, Theory, Representation, and New Media Technology"

Marshall McLuhan, "The Medium is the Message" (Canvas)

WEEK 15. December 6

THE EXPANSION OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Kocur and Leung, 32: "The Database"

Kocur and Leung, 33: "For the Love of Abstraction"

Kocur and Leung, 34: "The Politics of Sustainability: Art and Ecology"

WEEK 16. December 13

FINAL PROJECT- GROUP PRESENTATIONS

FINAL PAPER DUE

DUE SEPTEMBER 6 – SIGNED HARD COPY

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.

Course number and section

Risk Rating

Student phone #, e-mail address (print)

Signature

Date

Faculty Name

Signature

Date

12/09/12 rev.