MFA Praxis
Rotating Topics 5001-506
Spring 2022

Instructor: Pedram Baldari
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Course calendar last page of this document
Mon-Wed 11:00 AM - 01:45 PM
Where: Sculpture Experimental Space and Welsh
Modality: in person.
Office Hours: M-W 10AM-11Am ArtBuilding Room 345S
Pedram Baldari's Personal Meeting Room https://unt.zoom.us/j/9736707936

Course description (From UNT catalog):
Readings, discussion, and/or studio exploration of various art issues. Praxis graduate seminars are intensive topical or single discipline-based courses which encourage innovation, the development of a new method, idea and results. Seminars vary in structure offering a blend of reading/writing/presentation/discussion and studio practice/group critique. Prerequisite(s): Must be a current Studio Art MFA student.

Course Content:
This course is focused on each student’s individual academic and artistic needs. While we will have general topics, tasks and discussions, the main theme remains on providing critique and feedback to the MFA students and allow them to have studio time during this course.

Course Goals
The emphasis of this course is providing critical feedback for students to achieve a strong body of work, being exposed to outside of academia artistic practices and enjoy having focused time to evaluate their work during critique sessions. Each student will develop a strong understanding of processes to seek out professional opportunities such as outside shows, art residencies and grants.

Required and Recommended Materials and Tools:
There are no required materials and tools for this course.

**Tools and materials that may possibly be used based on specific needs but not required:**
Each project students choose to do may or may not need certain tools or materials.

**Texts and reads for this class:**

**Class Discussion Book: Vibrant Matter** a political ecology of Things by Jane Bennett

https://myunt-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/pedram_baldari_unt_edu/EaaAKLbobP5NpLHKe36oRiEBd8XLMRPJsT_mmApT3XJOEQ?e=je4yiq

- The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction
- Relational Aesthetics
- Art + Object by Graham Harman
- Themes of Contemporary Art Books

There will be additional reads based on need and flow of the course.

**A list of course topics**

There are no determined topics in this course besides professional development for each student in their focused area.

**Anticipated use of class time**

(e.g., lectures, discussion, performance)

Students study the aesthetic and formal properties of their practice. They will consider the key elements of conducting a successful studio practice.

Important Mandatory dates: Feb 28th and March 1st Boris Oicherman Workshop is mandatory

**Expectations:**

The students are expected to produce work in a continuous manner, adhere to deadlines, provide meaningful feedback to their peers, be on time, and more importantly create a community to maximize the impact of the class for their professional growth.

**First Year Students:**

2-3 critiques (finished, gallery-ready work)

Artwork documentation and artist statement

Studio visits with 2 faculty outside of sculpture (not teaching your elective classes)

3 Annotated Bibliographies (self-initiated research)

First year review (with random faculty, at least one from sculpture)
Second Year Students

2-3 critiques (finished, gallery-ready work)
Artwork documentation and artist statement
Studio visits with 2 faculty outside of sculpture (not teaching your elective classes)
3 Annotated Bibliographies (self-initiated research)
Invite 2 more faculty to serve on your MFA committee (by mid-semester)
Second year review (with your MFA committee members - propose your MFA Project)

Third Year Students

2-3 critiques (finished, gallery-ready work)
Artwork documentation and artist statement
Studio visits with 2 arts professionals (curators, gallerists, professional artists)
3 Annotated Bibliographies (self-initiated research)
MFA Exhibition Course (taken with committee chair)
Mount MFA Exhibition
Oral Defense
Turn in Project Report

YOU ARE EXPECTED TO SPEND TIME ON YOUR PROJECTS OUTSIDE OF CLASS SESSIONS.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Participation:
You are expected to participate in class demos, critiques and group conversations. participation and attendance are important parts of successfully finish this course. Being fully present in classes grants you a portion of each projects grade and your grade for the entire semester. This portion is between 10-15%.

2. PROJECTS:
Projects in this course are fluid and each project that will be introduced to the class will have a due date. Projects will ultimately be presented to the class during critique sessions.

3. Critiques
Each Student will get an Hour of Critique Time and Each Critique Day will be 2 students with 15-20 minutes break in between the sessions. Every third Critique session there will be 3 students due to having odd number. This is a conversational session and presenting students will be taking notes. The professor of this class acts as moderator and will reserve the right to stop any conversation, redirect conversation or change the topic of it.

4. Readings

**Vibrant Matter** a political ecology of Things by Jane Bennett, This book will be divided in sections and will be discussed gradually.

**ASSESSMENT:**

Discussions about Readings have 50 points each and is based on participation bases.

Critiques each have 100 points

10 participation

15 personal research, notes, statements, journals

15 Documentation

20 The visual and technical elements of the work

20 The conceptual aspects of the work

20 Presentation, installation and the totality of the work itself

Final Project has 150 points

10 Participation

20 personal research, notes, statements, journals

30 Documentation

30 The visual and technical elements of the work

30 conceptual aspects of the work

30 Presentation, installation and the totality of the work itself

**GRADING**

A = Excellent (100-90%)

B = Above Average (89-80%)

C = Average (79-70%)
D = Inferior (69-60%) [passing but not necessarily satisfying degree requirements]

F = Failure (59% or below)

YOUR NOTES, STATEMENTS AND JOURNALS

While I will provide examples done by artists and also previous students the below are general ideas you should pay attention to while writing them.

What was the departure point for you conceptually, technically and/or theoretically?

Who are the artists you looked at as reference for your project?

What are the outside of the arts elements existing in your work socio-politics, sciences, technology?

How much do you think you have met your own expectations?

Do you think your work conveys the general ideas you focused on for the audience?

Most IMPORTANTLY what were your feelings, inner thoughts, struggles, concerns, joys and subconscious urges while doing this project. Be honest what comes from one's heart finds its way into another heart.

MOST IMPORTANTLY WE ARE HERE TO PRACTICE SOLIDARITY, BEING HUMANS, BEING VULNERABLE AND SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER. THERE IS NO COMPETITION. YOU ARE ONLY COMPARED TO YOUR OWN PREVIOUS SECOND AND NOTHING ELSE.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You are expected to arrive at the class (virtually/physically) in time fully prepared. You are not allowed to use your phones or other than the means required for you to do your projects.

If you are experiencing anything in your life that may interfere with your regular attendance or ability to be otherwise present in class, please let your instructor know as soon as possible so that we can work with you to determine your options before your grade is affected.

Absence policy. Students are allowed THREE free unexcused absences but it cannot fall on a day where we will be holding critiques, presentations, or demonstrations***

*** Absence during demos and critiques are considered 1.5 and students are required to make up for these absences.
Beyond 3 absences it means there is a problem and we have to address the problem right away. You will be notified and your professor will take appropriate actions to minimize the impact of these absences on your education.

Project Critiques are a vital part of the learning process in which we learn about how the objects we create relate to the world. Attendance at all critiques is mandatory and cannot be made up. Your project will fall one full letter grade if you are absent and one partial letter grade if you show up to critique late.

Policy for making up missed exams and grading late work:

Late work will result in the drop of 1 full letter grade for each day the work is turned in past the due date unless in the case of an approved Legitimate Absence.

Attendance at Project Critiques is mandatory. If a student misses a Project Critique, the grade for the project will drop by 1 letter grade unless due to an approved Legitimate Absence.

Students must notify instructor of absence as far in advance as possible. Accommodations will be made to set a new due date.

- Regular and punctual attendance is mandatory.
- Three absences will be tolerated.
- More than three absences will require a note from a doctor or a note from the art office excusing the absence for a reason covered under UNT policy 06.039 (Student Attendance and Authorized Absences) in order to be counted as excused.
- More than three absences will lower your final grade by one letter grade per additional absence (4 or more)
- Most lectures, demonstrations, and assignments will occur at the beginning of class periods and will not be repeated for those who come in late. If you are late to class, you will need to notify me at the end of the class period to replace an absence with a tardy. Three tardies will constitute an absence.
- A tardy is considered to be arrival 5 minutes after the beginning of class.
- Assignments that are turned in late will receive one letter grade lower per day for each day they are late.
- Examinations, quizzes, and in-class assignments missed may only be made up with an official doctor’s excuse or note from the art office excusing the absence for a reason covered under UNT policy 06.039 (Student Attendance and Authorized Absences).
- Critiques missed may not be made up and grades will reflect the student’s failure to participate in the critique discussions.
- COVID-19 impact on attendance:
  - 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, especially given concerns about COVID-19. Please contact me if you are unable to attend class because you are ill, or unable to attend class due to a related issue regarding COVID-19. It is important that you communicate with me prior to being absent as to what may be preventing you from coming to class so I may make a decision about accommodating your request to be excused from class.
If you are experiencing cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, or any of the other possible symptoms of COVID-19 (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

According to UNT Policy 18.1.16, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable 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 reasonable 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 reasonable 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, refer to the Office of Disability Access website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Because of the varied kinds of work we will be doing in this course, it is extremely important that you obtain your accommodation letter from the ODA as soon as possible. Even if you think a disability will not interfere with your work in this particular class, remember that art is unpredictable! Your work will take you in unexpected directions and you’ll probably be doing things later in the semester that you are cannot predict at the present moment. Thus, it is imperative that you have all accommodations in place to make sure you are fully supported when you decide you decide to make a 9-foot tall ostrich sculpture out of grape Jell-O.

HEALTH & SAFETY PROGRAM
Students are required to follow the Department of Studio Art Health and Safety guidelines and are required to complete training for each studio course. The goal of the Studio Art Health and Safety Program is to protect the health and welfare of all faculty, staff, and students and to cooperate with the University of North Texas' Office of Risk Management. Please visit the website for details and the departmental handbook: https://art.unt.edu/healthandsafety.

In an emergency, call 911.

**BEST PRACTICES FOR HEALTH & SAFETY IN THE STUDIO**

Over the semester, you will be learning to use many new tools. Any tool can be dangerous if you do not use proper safety precautions, so it is important that everyone learns the best practices for staying safe in the studio. On certain days, you will be asked to come to class wearing appropriate “work clothes” (closed-toed shoes, no loose-hanging clothing or jewelry, long hair pulled back). If you fail to do this, your instructor will ask you to go home and change before you come back to class. You may also be asked to use safety goggles, earplugs, dust masks, or other safety equipment when using certain tools. If you fail to follow these rules, you’ll be asked to leave class and it will count as an absence. Finally, please refrain from using any toxic materials in the Foundations classroom. If a need arises to use materials such as spray paint or epoxy, please alert your instructor so that they can help you find a safe way to do so. They may be able to help you find comparable non-toxic alternatives and/or find a safe way to use proper facilities and precautions. If you are not sure whether or not a material is toxic, please ask! Full health and safety information for the Design Foundations classrooms is available here:


https://forms.cvad.unt.edu/sites/default/files/studioforms_sculpture.pdf

**BUILDING HOURS**

This section is subject to change based on COVID19 guidelines and safety measures. You can update this by going https://art.unt.edu/

**EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION & PROCEDURES**

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to the course management system for contingency plans for covering course materials.

UNT Emergency Guide: https://emergency.unt.edu/about-us
**ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

In addition to the expectations outlined above, you are expected to conduct yourself in accordance with the UNT Code of Student Conduct. If you engage in behavior that interferes with your instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn, your instructor will ask you to leave the classroom. Instructors also have the right to refer disruptive students 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 deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct.

**ADMINISTRATION OF STUDENT EVALUATIONS**

Your feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13 and 14 of the semester to provide you with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. You will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IA System Notification" with the survey link. You should look for the email in your UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once you complete the survey you will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at www.spot.unt.edu or email spot@unt.edu.

**INCOMPLETE GRADES**

An Incomplete Grade ("I") is a non-punitive grade given only during the last one-fourth of a term/semester and only if a student (1) is passing the course and (2) has a justifiable and documented reason, beyond the control of the student (such as serious illness or military service), for not completing the work on schedule. In consultation with the instructor, complete a request for an Incomplete Grade. This form can be found on the department website and must be turned into the department chair prior to the last day of classes (not the exam date). Note: A grade of Incomplete is not automatically assigned to students.
SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION, HARRASSMENT & ASSAULT

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

UNT’s Dean of Students’ website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs: http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0.

UNT’s Student Advocate she can be reached through e-mail at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students’ office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.

PERMISSION TO USE STUDENT ARTWORK We would like to use your work to spread the news about the amazing art made at CVAD!

Please help us put your talent on display by allowing us to photograph and exhibit your art on CVAD’s social media, websites and paper advertising. There will be a link provided to you via Canvas for you to complete permissions. Thank you!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>M Jan 17</td>
<td>MLK Day Closed</td>
<td>W Jan 19</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M Jan 24</td>
<td>Presentation 20 minutes</td>
<td>W Jan 26</td>
<td>Presentation 20 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>M Jan 31</td>
<td>Work Day</td>
<td>W Feb 2</td>
<td>Work Day</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>M Feb 7</td>
<td>First Reading Discussion</td>
<td>W Feb 9</td>
<td>Work Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>M Feb 14</td>
<td>Crit #1 2 students</td>
<td>W Feb 16</td>
<td>Crit #1 2 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>M Feb 21</td>
<td>Crit #1 3 students</td>
<td>W Feb 23</td>
<td>Work Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>M Feb 28</td>
<td>Visiting Artist Workshop</td>
<td>W Mar 2</td>
<td>Application Deadline for Outside opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>M Mar 7</td>
<td>Second Reading Discussion</td>
<td>W Mar 9</td>
<td>Work Day</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>M Mar 14</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>W Mar 16</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>M Mar 21</td>
<td>Work Day</td>
<td>W Mar 23</td>
<td>Work Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>M Mar 28</td>
<td>Critique#2 2 students</td>
<td>W Mar 30</td>
<td>Critique #2 2 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>M Apr 4</td>
<td>Critique#2 3 students</td>
<td>W Apr 6</td>
<td>Work Day</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>M Apr 11</td>
<td>Work Day</td>
<td>W Apr 13</td>
<td>Third Reading Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>M Apr 18</td>
<td>Work Day</td>
<td>W Apr 20</td>
<td>Work Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>M Apr 25</td>
<td>Work Day</td>
<td>W Apr 27</td>
<td>Final Critique 3 students</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>M May 2</td>
<td>Final Critique 2 students</td>
<td>W May 4</td>
<td>Final Critique 2 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***During the week of finals all materials, such as unnoted bibliography, artist statements, and documentation of your final critique is due and should be uploaded on the canvas***
PERMISSION TO USE STUDENT ARTWORK

We would like to use your work to spread the news about the amazing art made at CVAD! Please help us put your talent on display by allowing us to photograph and exhibit your art on CVAD’s social media, websites and paper advertising. Thank you!

I hereby grant permission to UNT and CVAD to use, copy, reproduce, publish, distribute or display any and all works created in my classes while at UNT. Additionally, I consent to the use of my name to coincide with images of my artwork.

1. Scope of Permission. This permission extends to the use of the described work and images of such work: (1) for academic purposes in order to demonstrate examples of student work to current and future UNT students; (2) for public display in the galleries or on the campus of the UNT or on the UNT website; (3) for promotional materials created by UNT in all forms of media now known or later developed, including but not limited to exhibition catalogues, direct mail, websites, advertising, social media, and classroom presentations. My permission is on-going, but can be revoked by giving the professor of record for this course written notice of my wish to revoke permission and use of any images of my artwork. UNT will have three months from the date of my notice to stop all use agreed with this permission.

2. Certificate of Ownership. I am the owner of all work submitted and the work is not subject to any restriction that would prevent its use consistent with this permission. All aspects of the work are original to me and have not been copied. I understand that as owner of the work I have the right to control all reproduction, copying and use of the work in accordance with U.S. copyright laws.

3. Privacy Release. I hereby authorize and consent to the release, maintenance and display of my name if necessary and any other personally identifiable information that I have provided in connection with the work and its use described in this Agreement.

4. Signature. By signing below I hereby grant the permissions indicated above. I understand that this grant of permission relates only to the use of the described work. This is not an exclusive right and I may sell, give or otherwise transfer the rights to such work to others on a non-exclusive or exclusive basis. However, in the event that I do sell, give or otherwise transfer ownership or the exclusive right to use my work to another party, I will notify UNT immediately in writing through the professor of record for this course. UNT will have three months from the date of my notice to stop all use in accordance with this permission.

Printed name: __________________________________________________________
Signature: ______________________________________________________________
Date: _________________________________________________________________
Name of Course: ________________________________________________________
I hereby announce that I have read and understood the health and safety information regarding Studio Art building Sculpture Facilities, CVAD Facilities and Covid-19 guidelines. I will also follow the health and safety guidelines provided in the syllabus of this course and reflected on CVAD https://healthalerts.unt.edu/ (Links to an external site.).

Print Name:
Date: