

Syllabus

ART 1900.401: Systems and Transformations

Fall Semester 2025

August 18th - December 12th

University of North Texas (UNT)

College of Visual Arts and Design

Foundations Program

Class Location(s): Art Building, ART 384

Instructor Contact

Lead Instructor: Terry K. Spyker, MFA (he/him)

Lab Instructor: (see “Lab Section Information” heading on pg. 3)

Email: terry.spyker@unt.edu

Office Location: Art Building, ART 220 A

Office Hours: Wednesdays/Fridays, 9:00 - 10:00 am, ART 220 A, by email appointment

Course Description (From the UNT Catalog)

ART 1900 critically analyzes multiple (choice- and research-based) perspectives of object- and image-making and challenges students to develop a personal framework in the processes of visual art and design.

Course Structure

Course concepts and project structures will be delivered online via Canvas. Projects, sketchbook requirements, and writing assignments will also be posted to Canvas for assessment.

This class requires a 2-hour and 20-minute lab, which meets twice a week. Friday labs meet once a week for 4 hours and 50 minutes. During lab meetings, you will be given time to work on project requirements and receive critical in-progress feedback.

Although lab time will be given to work on projects, students should expect to work outside of class.

Course Prerequisites

Prerequisite(s): Two of the following: ART 1600, ART 1700, ART 1800

Corequisite(s): One of the following: ART 1600, ART 1700, ART 1800

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Apply materials and processes in a variety of contexts (space, surface, and time).
- Explore, interpret, and create a variety of conceptual frameworks using historical and contemporary approaches.
- Facilitate a fluid workflow between digital and analog tools, materials, and processes.
- Research and analyze a variety of aesthetic concerns.
- Document and present research according to professional standards, work ethic, resilience, and learning from necessary failure.
- Write and speak to draw connections between ideas, explain decisions, and produce new scholarship.
- Recall and explain art terminology to connect aesthetic concerns in an intercultural context.

Expectations

In this class, you will develop your creative voice and critical thinking skills through visual art, as well as discover the way your work is relevant to the world outside the studio and classroom. This course is designed to be rigorous, and you should expect your instructors to challenge and support you throughout the semester. You should also expect the class to be an inclusive community where you will give and receive thoughtful criticism and feedback.

In turn, it is expected that you will be an engaged and active member of the classroom community. This means that you will devote equal attention to online coursework, class activities, and studio projects. Be prepared to spend time outside of lab sessions each week reading, making artwork, and completing other related assignments such as preparatory sketches, writing project reflections, etc.

See “Lab Section Information” chart on the next page.

Lab Section Information

| Section | Location | Days | Lab Time | Instructor Name | Instructor Email |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 401 | Online | Online | Online | Terry K. Spyker | Terry.Spyker@unt.edu |
| 101 | ART 384 | M/W | 10:30 am -12:50 pm | Sam Cussack | Sam.Cusack@unt.edu |
| 102 | ART 384 | M/W | 1:00 pm - 3:20 pm | Francisco Alvarado Araujo | Francisco.Alvarado@unt.edu |
| 103 | ART 384 | M/W | 3:30 pm - 5:50 pm | Francisco Alvarado Araujo | Francisco.Alvarado@unt.edu |
| 105 | ART 384 | T/TR | 8:00 am -10:20 am | Rachana Nagashayana | Rachana.Nagashayana@unt.edu |
| 106 | ART 384 | T/TR | 10:30 am - 12:50 pm | Rachana Nagashayana | Rachana.Nagashayana@unt.edu |
| 107 | ART 384 | T/TR | 1:00 pm - 3:20 pm | Terry K. Spyker | Terry.Spyker@unt.edu |
| 108 | ART 384 | T/TR | 3:30 pm - 5:50 pm | Francisco Alvarado Araujo | Francisco.Alvarado@unt.edu |
| 109 | ART 384 | T/TR | 6:00 pm - 8:20 pm | Francisco Alvarado Araujo | Francisco.Alvarado@unt.edu |

Your lab instructor will share their office hours with you on the first day your lab meets, and they will post on Canvas the first week of classes.

Course Content Statement

Content in the arts can sometimes include works, situations, actions, and language that can be personally challenging or offensive to some students on the grounds, for example, of sexual explicitness, violence, or blasphemy. As the College of Visual Arts and Design is devoted to the principle of freedom of expression, artistic and otherwise, it is not the college's practice to censor these works or ideas on any of these grounds. Students who might feel unduly distressed or made uncomfortable by such expressions should withdraw at the start of the term and seek another course.

Notes on Critique

A critique is a group discussion of everyone's work among your professor or lab instructor and your classmates. Unless the critique is designated as an "in progress critique," the finished, physical work should be brought to class for this discussion. Still-frame digital work should be printed at the CVAD Student Computer Lab, FedEx, etc. before your lab meets to display during critique. Physical work, animations/gifs, installations, and documentation of performances should be thoughtfully displayed during critique based on a plan that you and your lab instructor agree upon.

Course Materials and Textbooks

You are not required to buy a textbook for this course; all readings will be provided in an accessible digital format on Canvas.

You are required to buy materials for each project. You'll be able to purchase some of the general materials at the start of the semester. However, many of your materials will be determined by the individual nature of each of your projects as you decide them. Please be prepared to buy some materials as needed throughout the semester.

Suggested Supply List:

- For Participation Homework: 5 x 8 inch blank notecards (buy a few packs)
- For Participation Homework (Optional): Acetate Sheets, 9 x 12 inches
- For Participation Homework (Optional): Folder(s) to carry the above
- Sketchbook, 9 x 12 inches or larger
- Sharpies: black, red, and blue, Fine and Ultrafine (or equivalent)
- Drawing pencils, an assortment: 6B, 4B, 2B, HB, 2H, etc.
- Metal ruler
- White synthetic eraser
- X-Acto knife with replacement blades
- Masking tape
- A variety of adhesives: glue stick, PVA glue, and hot glue (as needed)
- Optional: color media of your choice

Where To Purchase Supplies

In addition to the materials above, you will be using various substrates, tools, and materials of your choosing to complete your project. You may choose to purchase traditional art supplies, but students are also encouraged to be resourceful when seeking out materials. Found materials and substrates are acceptable. If you are seeking supplies to purchase, below are a few local and online resources.

- **Voertman's Art Supply** (Denton)
[Foundations Kit is available for purchase online](#)
1314 W Hickory St. | Denton, TX 76201
Note: there are *basic* supplies in the "Foundations Kit." Students are responsible for any project-specific supplies.
- **Thistle Creative Reuse** (Denton)
<https://thistlecreativeuse.com/>
- **Habitat for Humanity Restore** (Denton)
<http://www.habitatdentonrestore.org/>
1805 Cornell Lane | Denton, TX 76201
- **Michaels** (Denton)

<https://www.michaels.com/>

1800 S Loop 288 Ste 340 | Denton, TX 76205

- **Dick Blick** (online)

<https://www.dickblick.com/>

- **Jerry's Artarama** (online)

<https://www.jerrysartarama.com/>

Technology Requirements

The minimum technology requirements are as follows:

- Computer with internal or external mic, webcam, and reliable internet access
 - [For best performance](#), Canvas should be accessed on the current or first previous major release of Chrome, Firefox, Edge, or Safari. The Canvas interface was optimized for desktop displays, so using small form factors such as phones may not be a pleasant experience in using Canvas. For the best user experience, please download the Canvas mobile application.
- Text document software (Word, Pages, or other)
- Microphone and webcam if using Zoom for meetings with instructors
- Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator (accessible via the CVAD Student Computer Lab (SCL) and Willis Library).
 - **Note:** CVAD is finalizing the software agreement with Adobe for the upcoming academic year. On the first day of class, you may purchase an optional subscription for the Adobe Creative Suite for your personal computer at a reduced student rate using this link: [Adobe Creative Cloud](#)
- Word processor (recommended: Microsoft Word or Google Docs)
- Slide/presentation software such as PowerPoint or Prezi
- **Optional:** your own DSLR (or mirrorless) camera OR borrow one from CVAD IT
 - **Note:** Please complete the CVAD IT checkout agreement (Links to an external site.) and familiarize yourself with the available equipment and policies.
- **Optional:** other digital programs and tools of your choice for projects (Tablets, Illustrator, Corel Draw, GIF makers, Photoshop for your phone, Autodesk, Procreate, etc.)

Adobe Software Access Information

You have several options for accessing Adobe software. Please note that a subscription is not required for this course, as all CVAD computers are equipped with Adobe software. If you wish to have this software on your personal devices, you can find more information about purchasing a subscription at UNT's discounted rate here: [Adobe Creative Cloud](#)

CVAD IT Services Information

[CVAD IT Services](#) has many resources available to students that are paid for by your student fees. You are encouraged to utilize these resources, including the large-format scanner (media up to 12.2" x

17.2"), large-format printers, cameras and accessories, artwork documentation services (also called "photo documentation"), and more. For additional information, click the "Student Resources Documentation" link on the CVAD IT Service webpage. You may be asked to log in via the Microsoft Teams app, so have your UNT credentials handy.

Grading

Grading Scale

A: 90-100% (Outstanding, excellent work. The student performs well above the minimum criteria.)

B: 80-89% (Good, impressive work. The student performs above the minimum criteria.)

C: 70-79% (Average, college-level work. The student meets the criteria of the assignment.)

D: 60-69% (Below-average work. The student fails to meet the minimum criteria.)

F: 59-0% (Sub-par work. The student fails to complete the assignment.)

In this course, any grade of D or below is considered a failing grade. If you meet all the course requirements, you will earn a C, which represents a satisfactory performance ("pass"). If you meet the requirements and demonstrate a higher level of work and comprehension, you will earn a grade in the B range, indicating very good performance ("high pass"). If you exceed the course requirements both in quality and quantity, demonstrating exceptional intellectual effort and achievement, you will earn a grade in the A range, signifying "distinction."

Grading Rubrics

Look at the rubrics associated with each project before starting. You may find all rubrics associated with the course by clicking the "Rubrics" link in the Canvas Course Navigation Menu.

You will also receive verbal feedback in labs from your peers and instructor as well as written feedback from your lab instructor on Canvas. *This feedback is arguably the most important guidance you can receive on your work - rather than a letter or number grade.*

Assessment

You are not expected to be an expert in this class, but you are expected to grow your technical and conceptual abilities over the course of the semester. For each assignment, a portion of your grade will depend on your choice of appropriately challenging subject matter. The remainder of your grade will depend on how well you meet the technical and conceptual challenges you have set out for yourself.

The following table shows how your final grade will be weighted:

| Assignment Category | Points Distribution |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Participation | 25% of Total |
| Unit 1: Systems | 20% of Total |
| Unit 2: Archives | 25% of Total |
| Unit 3: Transformations | 30% of Total |
| Total: | 100% |

The following are descriptions of each major unit...

Unit 1: Systems

Major Project: Artist Diagram

In Unit I's project, "Artist Diagram," students will create a system map based on their Artist Research and Annotated Bibliography. They may choose a diagrammatic approach (mapping relationships and processes, e.g., Mark Lombardi) or a pastiche-driven approach (adapting their artist's style, materials, or concepts to reveal the creative system), or combine both. The project begins with three sketches, from which one is selected and developed into a refined 2D or 3D composition that meets size requirements. The final work should be visually compelling, conceptually clear, and grounded in research. Students will submit digital documentation and bring the physical piece for critique.

Unit 2: Archives

Major Project: Wunderkammer

In Unit II's project, "Wunderkammer," students will curate and present a collection of diverse images, objects, or ideas, inspired by the historical Cabinet of Curiosities. The project involves selecting a theme, gathering related items, and arranging them in a thoughtful order, considering the relationships between the objects. Students will then design a 2D, 3D, or digital "frame" that enhances the viewer's understanding of the collection. The final work must be visually or experientially significant and can be

submitted as a single high-resolution image or a PDF of multiple images. Students are encouraged to document their work professionally and will present their collections for critique.

Unit 3: Transformations

Major Project: Convergence

In Unit III's final project, "Convergence," students will integrate their making skills, systems thinking, and intercultural knowledge to create significant new work. Building on their research focus, they will develop a project that explores a related question or challenge, starting with a clear problem statement. The work must be thoughtfully displayed and consider the viewer's experience, reflecting the cumulative lessons of the course. Students may use any media and are encouraged to choose materials that best align with their ideas, potentially exploring forms relevant to their future major. The final submission should include a written description, the project's title, medium, dimensions, and high-quality images or media files, presented during an in-class critique.

Extra Credit

There is no guaranteed extra credit in this class.

ART 1900 Policies

Attendance Policy

Attendance, each time your lab is scheduled to meet, is expected. For labs that meet twice per week, you are allotted 3 excused absences (documentation required) and 3 unexcused absences over the course of the semester. For labs that meet once per week, you are allotted 2 excused absences (documentation required) and 1 unexcused absence. Every absence after that will drop your final average by one letter grade. Excessive tardiness/early departures are not acceptable. If you must arrive at the lab late or leave early, communicate this with your lab instructor as quickly as possible. If this becomes a pattern, your lab instructor may count your late arrivals/early departures as absences.

If you are having trouble attending lab sessions, students are encouraged to reach out to their lab instructor as soon as possible to discuss your options or refer you to resources available at UNT. For extenuating circumstances, the [UNT Dean of Students Office](#) has many resources for guiding and helping students, ranging from issues of food/housing insecurity, the CARE Team, the S.O.S. Program, Survivor advocacy, and more. I also encourage you to utilize the [UNT Counseling and Testing Services](#) as needed. See [counseling FAQ for more info.](#)

In summary, students should always remain in contact with their lab instructor regarding absences, foreseen or unforeseen.

Late Work Policy

- Students should approach the lab instructor for all missed critiques and assignments.
- Critiques cannot be made up.
- Projects or other assignments submitted late with no prior agreement will have points reduced by 5 points every day that it is late.*

*In circumstances that warrant it, lab instructors may make an alternate deadline schedule with you if you reach out beforehand with a circumstance beyond your control that is causing you significant academic hardship. Instructors reserve the right to reduce final grades due to excessive absences.

Resubmission of Work

At any time, until **Sunday, December 7th @ 11:59 pm**, you are welcome to rework or redo any of the 3 major studio assignments and resubmit to your lab instructor for re-grading (this does not include weekly Participation points). Make sure to take note of the information in the critique and your lab instructor's guidance to make the most meaningful changes to your work.

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 a warning to expulsion from the university.

Artificial Intelligence Tools

Students enrolled in Art 1900 are permitted to employ AI tools like DALL-E and ChatGPT for the brainstorming and ideation phases of their assignments, provided they have the lab instructor's approval. Students must document how they used AI in their assignment with supporting images and a written statement. No assignment (this includes creative work and writing) can be completed through the use of AI alone. Any student found turning in unaltered/undocumented AI-generated work will receive a failing grade for that assignment. The use of AI will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

ODA Policy

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Students needing a reasonable academic accommodations must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the student will request their letter of accommodation. ODA will provide faculty with a reasonable accommodation letter via email to begin a private discussion regarding a student's specific needs in a course. Students 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 meet with faculty regarding their accommodations during 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](#).

Use of Student Work

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g., software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) they create within a class, and the University is not entitled to use any student's work without the student's permission unless all the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.
- The work is not used in its entirety.
- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
- The student is not identified.
- The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student's written permission.

Health & Safety

Students are required to follow the CVAD Health and Safety guidelines and must 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.

When working at home or in CVAD's studios, please follow our best practices:

- Always get the required training to use the FabLab or other CVAD facilities.
- To avoid injury, use care when using X-Acto knives, including using away from the body, using cutting mats, and cutting at waist level.
- Use designated spray booths for aerosol materials (fixative and paints). Note: your lab instructor needs to give you a demonstration of how to use this facility beforehand.
- Read all ingredients and research.
- Use personal protective equipment when applicable and use tools and materials (such as resin and plaster) in appropriate facilities.
- Keep food and drink away from materials.
- Think about not only yourself but others around you.
- This is not an exhaustive list as the materials you may be using could be vast- and thus, always put safety first. When in doubt, ask.

Student Support Services

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](#)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](#)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](#)
- [Individual Therapy](#)

Chosen Names

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT:

- [UNT Records](#)
- [UNT ID Card](#)
- [Legal Name](#)

Pronouns

The concept of pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) is a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction. Just as we ask and don't assume someone's name, we should also ask and not assume someone's pronouns. Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage:

- [What are pronouns and why are they important?](#)
- [How do I use pronouns?](#)
- [How do I share my pronouns?](#)
- [How do I ask for another person's pronouns?](#)
- [How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?](#)

Additional Student Support Services

- [Registrar](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration) (https://registrar.unt.edu/registration)
- [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/) (https://financialaid.unt.edu/)
- [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services)
- [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center)
- [UNT Food Pantry](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry) (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry)

Academic Student Support Services

[Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (<https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources>)

[Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (<https://success.unt.edu/asc>)

[UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (<https://library.unt.edu/>)

[Writing Lab](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)

****Your instructor of record reserves the right to change the syllabus/schedule as needed****