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ARTZ 501.01: Graduate Critique Seminar

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ARTZ 501.01 GRADUATE CRITIQUE

Professor: ELIZABETH DOVE

Tue 9:10-11am, Spring 2014

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Office Hours Thu. 9-11, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Description

This course will focus on developing criticism skills that will aid graduate students in evaluating their work. It is a rare that a group of artists devotes sustained time to considering one another's work, typically there just isn't the time. This class offers us this opportunity and we will devote most of the semester to critiques of each student's artwork. We can arrange to meet in the studio spaces according to the schedule to facilitate the process.

Coursework

The week prior to 'your' first scheduled critique, each student will select, photocopy and distribute a reading to all students to read in advance of the critique meeting. The student being critiqued has the responsibility of structuring the discussion of their studio work and will use this reading as an introduction to their conceptual direction. This reading is not your own writing, but something that has inspired you. It can be from any source that informs your work, and doesn't have to be restricted to art history or criticism. It might be fiction, an excerpt from a science book, it might be a published journal entry from an artist you respect, it might be spiritual, or it could be an essay by a post-modern theorist. (Its length isn't dictated or restricted, we trust you to be reasonable.) It should prepare the crit group for a more substantial conversation about your concepts and visual choices. So, in essence, your critique week is partly a mini-class where you will present an introduction to your work, a discussion of this reading in relation to your work, and facilitate a dialogue with your artist peers about both.

A subplot, or maybe prologue, to the emphasis on critique will be the theme of *introductions*. How do we as visual artists speak about our work to varied audiences? How do you describe your artwork to your dental hygienist (the 3-minute cocktail party introduction) without any images to rely on? What words do you choose for this introduction, language that is engaging and accurate, but not overly theoretical? What if your introduction were longer, you had more time, could use images and could speak more about your development and influences upon your practice? We will experiment with both structures before moving on to the longer critiques.

Through these projects and initiatives, I hope to provide opportunities for you to act out the role of an artist in their community (cocktail party intro), an artist in a gallery setting (slideshow intro) and an artist in a more academic role (extended critique with reading). These tasks are somewhat performative, and require suitable preparation for that theatrical aspect.

To provide another approach to evaluating your studio work, each student will also complete two projects specifically in response to the same prompt. The first one will explore how artists can be beholden to their favorite media or materials, and over-indulge in its characteristics to the point of fetishizing their means of production. So the first project is about your art as a fetish object! The second project will be somewhat collaborative with students paired up to explore an alternate approach, where each student making a piece using the conceptual agenda of their partner but any material, scale or approach they prefer.

Oh, and we are going to look at and critique each student's website. You do have a website, don't you?

Attendance

As the class meets just once a week, attendance at all classes is mandatory. After two unexcused absences your grade will drop by one letter grade per absence, up to five absences when a failing grade is issued automatically. As our meeting times are brief, it is expected that two to four hours of additional time outside of class each week will be necessary to complete the readings and other projects.

Evaluation and Grading

Our final classtime is **Tuesday May 6**. Two factors will be considered in the determination of grades.

- 1) The quality of the learning process, including the contributions a student offers to their peer classmates during critiques, demonstration of connections between readings and studio practice, inventiveness, enthusiasm, effort. 60%
- 2) Completing the assigned readings and projects, and on time. 40%

A = Excellence in all assignments, highly motivated, extremely innovative solutions to projects

B = Above average in all work, demonstrated technical growth and visual maturity

C = Completion of all projects, satisfactory class participation

D = Incompletes on some projects, inadequate class participation

F = Incompletes on many projects, poor class participation, several unexcused absences

Incompletes

It is the student's responsibility to complete the coursework within the semester the class is offered. Not finishing the required work within the allotted time frame *does not* entitle a student to an incomplete. Incompletes will only be given in cases of extreme emergency.

Access/Special Needs

Students with disabilities or special needs should see the instructor in the beginning of the semester. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation. For more information, please consult <http://www.umt.edu/disability>.

Academic Misconduct and the Student Conduct Code

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/Index.cfm/page/1321.