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ARTH 250L.01: Introduction to Art Criticism

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School of Visual and Media Arts
Arth 250L, Introduction to Art Criticism, 3 credits
Literary and Artistic Studies and Writing Course
Fall 2022, FA 302, TTH 3:00-4:20

Jerod Peitsmeyer, Adjunct Professor of Art History and Criticism
303 Fine Arts Building
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The University of Montana acknowledges that we are in the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispel people. Today, we honor the path they have always shown us in caring for this place for the generations to come.

Face-to-Face and Zoom Office Hours: (Zoom meeting arranged with email request)

9:30 -10:30a Tues Face-to-Face in 303B Fine Arts Building and/or Join Zoom Meeting
<https://umontana.zoom.us/j/99956874620?pwd=WWs4bEdhWW9EbWs4TkZzWEY5Qkh6QT09>
Meeting ID: 999 5687 4620
Passcode: 169294

9:30 – 10:30a Thurs Face-to-Face in 303B Fine Arts Building and/or Join Zoom Meeting
<https://umontana.zoom.us/j/91289918996?pwd=TGcrWGHkSFR0SWNCWHliYmhTR0NRQT09>
Meeting ID: 912 8991 8996
Passcode: 412031

Also, by appointment, email request.

Course description: An overview of the description, interpretation, and evaluation of visual art as practiced in the discipline of art criticism. Both traditional and postmodern critical approaches to art will be considered with an emphasis on contemporary art criticism. Students will read a range of past and present art critics and write several examples of art criticism based on direct observation of contemporary art works.

Learning Objectives:

- Develop improved observation and analysis of art
- Comprehend and use various interpretive perspectives
- Develop and apply aesthetic evaluative criteria to contemporary art
- Become familiar with contemporary artists and art works through first-hand viewing and careful reading of art criticism
- Improve communication skills through writing responses to Critical Thinking Response prompts, and writing and revising three 5-page papers

Additional Language Required by University of Montana University-wide Program-level Writing Assessment:

This course requires an electronic submission (via Submittable) of an assignment stripped of your personal information to be used for educational research and assessment of the university's writing program. Your paper will be stored in a database. A random selection of

papers will be assessed by a group of faculty and staff using a rubric developed from the following Writing Learning Outcomes:

- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing
- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively
- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions (largely style conventions like APA or MLA)
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

This assessment in no way affects either your course grade or your progression at the university. Here's the rubric that will be used to score the papers.

Requirements for Course: You are expected to participate. Students will complete all assignments in order to earn credit for the class. Students are expected to keep copies of all assigned work. Students will utilize Moodle at <http://umonline.umt.edu/> for course syllabus, lectures, assignments, other course materials, announcements, and grades.

Assignments and Points Distribution:

Ten Critical Thinking Responses: 10 points (100 points total)

Three Papers; Visual Analysis, Interpretation, and Judgment : 100 points each (300 points total)

Art Assignment: 50 points

Grades are calculated as follows, based on all work completed:

450-405 = A; 404-360 = B; 359-315 = C; 314-270 = D; 269 and lower F
Students with disabilities or special needs should contact the instructor.

Late Work Policy: Check the due dates of assignments. Because life happens, every student gets one LATE WORK PASS that can be used anytime during the semester. Simply request more time and you can submit the assignment at any time prior to the close of the semester.

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 <https://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/default.php>.

What is plagiarism? Plagiarism is representing another's work as one's own. It is a particularly intolerable offense in the academic community and is strictly forbidden. Students who plagiarize may fail the course and may be remanded to Academic Court for possible suspension or expulsion. (See Student Conduct Code).

Students must be very careful to acknowledge any kind of borrowing that is included in their work. This means not only borrowed wording but also ideas. Acknowledgment of whatever is not one's own original work is the proper and honest use of sources. Failure to acknowledge whatever is not one's own original work is plagiarism.

Accommodations: Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting the DSS office. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction

through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). For more information, please consult <http://www.umt.edu/disability>.

The Writing and Public Speaking Center: provides one-on-one tutoring to students at all levels and at any time in the writing process. Visit now. Visit often. We're ready when you are. www.umt.edu/writingcenter.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy: The University of Montana is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, visit <https://www.umt.edu/diversity/resources/mental-health.php>

COVID-19 policy: The University of Montana requires masks for every course being held in a classroom, lab, or studio until otherwise informed.

Content Advisement: This course provides an open space for the civil exchange and critical examination of ideas. Some readings and visual material in this course will address topics that some students may find offensive and/or traumatizing. Please assist me in alerting others about potentially disturbing content as we collectively undertake the study of art history.

Inclusion Policies:

The University of Montana values leadership, engagement, diversity, and sustainability, because our institution is committed to respect, welcome, encourage, and celebrate the differences among us. As members of the University of Montana community, we aspire to:

- Respect the dignity and rights of all persons.
- Practice honesty, trustworthiness, and academic integrity.
- Promote justice, learning, individual success, and service.
- Act as good stewards of institutional resources.
- Respect the natural environment.

The College of the Arts and Media at the University of Montana, has chosen to actively pursue equity and access for all persons. In this charge we will be researching, planning, and implementing ways in which our culture can be more accessible, inclusive, equitable, sustainable. It is not enough to be anti-bias in principle without being equitable in action. We will implement these actions organized by a group of students, faculty, and staff across the entire College in an ongoing way.

Staying Connected: Please join SVMA social media to stay informed about events and happenings.

- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/umt_svma/
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UMTsvma>

Student Art Collective: The collective is a student –organized and student-led group that sponsors art related workshops, events, and the Annual Juried Student Art Show. Look for informational posters.

Museums and Galleries:

Montana Museum of Art & Culture (MMAC), <https://www.umt.edu/montanamuseum/>
Gallery of Visual Arts (GVA), <http://www.umt.edu/art/galleries/>
University Center Gallery, <http://www.umt.edu/uc/uc-gallery/>
Missoula Art Museum, <https://www.missoulaartmuseum.org>

Lecture and Discussion Topics and Assignments

Week One: 30 August and 1 September

What is Art? What can Art Do?

Definitions and changing ideas of art

Read *Puzzles about Art, An Aesthetics Casebook*, PDF at Moodle

Review Additional Resources

Complete **Critical Thinking Response #1** (10 points)

See Critical Thinking Response Rubric for Scoring Guidelines

Weeks Two and Three: 6, 8, 13 and 15 September

Analyzing art, what do I see?

Formal elements and principles of design

Read: Barrett, Description, PDF

Review Additional Resources

Complete **Critical Thinking Response #2** (10 points)

Paper #1, Visual Analysis, UMT Campus (TBD)

Viewing and note-taking 9 September 3:00-4:00 on location TBD(100 total points)

First due date: 17 September

Revision due: 24 September

(No in-person class on 22 September – Please use time complete paper revisions)

Week Four: 20 and 27 September

What is Art Criticism and the History of Art Criticism

Its distinctive features and people, artists, and movements

Read: Houston, Introduction

Review Additional Resources

Complete **Critical Thinking Response #3** (10 points)

Weeks Five, Six and Seven: 29 September and 4, 6, 11 and 13 October

Interpreting art, what does it mean?

Read: Barrett, Interpretation, PDF and Houston, Interpretation, PDF and Barrett,

Postmodernism and Pluralism

Review Additional Resources

Complete **Critical Thinking Response #4** (10 points)

Paper #2, Interpretation Paper TBD (100 total points)

First due date: 14 October

Revision due date: 21 October

Week Eight: 18 and 20 October

Finding Art Criticism and Critical Styles

Library and On-Line Resources, Different Voices
Review Additional Resources
Complete **Critical Thinking Response #5** (10 points)

Weeks Nine, Ten and Eleven: 25 and 27 October and 1, 3, and 8 November

Evaluating art, what is successful art?

Criteria for evaluating art, past and present

Read: Houston, Chapter 4, PDF

Review Additional Resources

Complete **Critical Thinking Response #6** (10 points)

Complete **Critical Thinking Response #7** (10 points)

Paper #3, Evaluation Paper/27th TBD (100 total points)

First due date: 18 November

Revision due: 25 November

Week Twelve: 15 and 17 November

Museums/Galleries and Power

MMAC, GVA, UC Art Gallery and the Missoula Art Museum

Review Additional Resources

Complete **Critical Thinking Response #8** (10 points)

Weeks Thirteen and Fourteen: 22 and 29 November and 1 December

24 November, Thanksgiving Break, No Class

Conversations with Artists

Review Additional Resources

Complete **Critical Thinking Response #9** (10 points)

Week Fifteen: 6 and 8 December

Art Criticism of Contemporary Art Exhibitions

Consideration of leading arbiters of contemporary art

Who's hot and who's not?

Review Additional Resources

Complete **Critical Thinking Response #10** (10 points)

Final Project Art Assignment

Complete **Art Assignment** (50 points)

Review Additional Resources