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Fall 9-1-2017

ARTH 250L.01: Introduction to Art Criticism

Valerie L. Hedquist

University of Montana - Missoula, valerie.hedquist@umontana.edu

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School of Art
ARTH 250L, Introduction to Art Criticism, 3 credits
Literary and Artistic Studies and Lower-Division Writing Course
MW 11:10-12:30, Fall Semester 2017, Fine Arts 302

Professor Valerie Hedquist, 305A Fine Arts Building

E-mail: valerie.hedquist@umontana.edu

Office hours: Wednesday 9:30-11:00 a.m. or by appointment

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 brief responses to weekly questions, and writing and revising two argumentative or persuasive essays and three 5-page papers

Recommended text: Terry Barrett, *Criticizing Art, Understanding the Contemporary*, 3rd edition, McGraw-Hill, 2012.

Pre-requisites for Course: ARTH 200H and ARTH 201H with C- or better grade. Students majoring in Art are required to have earned a grade of C.

Requirements for Course: You are expected to attend lectures. 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.

Late Work: Late work should not exist; turn in work on the due date indicated at Moodle and/or on the assignment document. Sometimes, however, life gets in the way and then you need a LATE PASS. Every student gets one (1) LATE PASS. The LATE PASS is a piece of paper on which you have artistically requested a one-week extension for your work. You may submit the LATE PASS to me in person or by email anytime prior to the assignment due date. You need not supply a reason; every student gets one LATE PASS, no questions asked.

I would recommend that you save your LATE PASS for an assignment with a lot of points. It doesn't make sense to use your LATE PASS for the 10-point Weekly Writing Assignments. In addition, the LATE PASS is not valid for Sidecar activities and assignments.

After you have used your LATE PASS, any late work will be penalized five (5) points/day. For example, if you use your LATE PASS to provide more time for the Library Assignment, and then submit a Weekly Writing Assignment one day late, you will have only five (5) possible points to earn.

Finally, if after using your LATE PASS, you become ill or a victim of an emergency, you should contact me as soon as possible to discuss your options.

Classroom Etiquette: Please arrive on time to class. Prepare to sit down for the duration of class. Silence your phone and/or other digital devices and pay attention to what is happening in the classroom. If you are using a laptop computer, focus on classroom activities, especially if other students can see your screen. Remember to engage with others in a respectful manner. Check out the College Classroom Etiquette document at Moodle and this link: <http://dianegottsman.com/2012/01/college-classroom-etiquette-university-etiquette-for-2012/>

Hints for How to Study: For each hour of class time, you will benefit from at least two (2) hours of outside study time when you will review handouts and class-time notes, check Moodle updates and websites, and read your textbook. Check out the following helpful advice in order to prepare for success.

<http://www.howtostudy.com>

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/09/08/study-tips-for-college- n 709096.html>

Assignments and Points Distribution:

Attendance: 5 points daily, 20 class meetings, (100 points total)

Ten Weekly Writing: 10 points weekly, (100 points total)

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

Library assignment: 100 points total

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

600-540 A; 539-480 B; 479-420 C; 419-360 D; 359 and lower F

Students with disabilities or special needs should contact the instructor.

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 http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php.

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the representing of 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 that follows in this section of the catalog.)

Students must always 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. (<http://www.umt.edu/catalog/academics/academic-policy-procedure.php>)

Local Art Scene, A Short List:

Events in the School of Art are listed at <http://umartdepartment.wordpress.com> Check it out!

University Center Gallery, <http://www.umt.edu/uc/uc-gallery/>, (M-F 10-4:00)

MMAC, Paxson/Meloy, <http://www.umt.edu/montanamuseum/exeventsschedule/>, (TWSat 12-3:00; THF12-6:00)

GVA, Gallery of Visual Art, <http://www.umt.edu/art/galleries/>, (T-F 11-5:00)

MAM, <http://www.missoulaartmuseum.org>, (Tuesday - Saturday 10-5)

Review gallery/museum etiquette guide: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drBd1bCiW0>

Lecture and Discussion Topics and Assignments

Week One, 6 September

What is Art? What can Art Do?

Moodle Introduction

Definitions and changing ideas of art

Discuss cases from *Puzzles about Art, An Aesthetics Casebook*

Review art criticism selections regarding Theaster Gates for discussion

Introduction to Art Resource Center (Hours: To be determined) and on-campus art venues

Week Two, 11 and 13 September

What is Art?

Puzzles about Art and Theaster Gates Discussion

12 September Elizabeth Dove, Missoula Art Museum, 7 p.m.

13 September Patrick Dougherty, UC Theatre, 6-8 p.m

Week Three, 18 and 20 September

Analyzing art, what do I see?

Read: Barrett, Chapters 3 and 6

Formal elements and principles of design

UC Art Gallery, Anne Yoncha

GVA, Chris Bauder

21 September Rafael Chacón, MMAC, 6 p.m.

Paper #1, Visual Analysis,

First due date: 25 September

Revision due: 2 October

Week Four, 25 and 27 September

What is Art Criticism?

Past and Present Critics, Writing about Art

Read: Barrett, Preface, Chapter 1

Review art criticism selections regarding Mark Bradford for discussion

Week Five, 2 and 4 October

The Task of the Critic: Description, Interpretation, and Evaluation

What do critics do?

Mark Bradford Discussion

5 October Chris Bauder, SS 356, 5-6 p.m. followed by reception in GVA

Week Six, 9 and 11 October

No classroom meetings

Meet with Casey Schachner UC Art Gallery on 9 or 11 October

5 October Casey Schachner UC Art Gallery, 4-6 p.m.

Week Seven, 16 and 18 October

Finding Art Criticism

Library Resources and Assignment, Venice Biennale

Meet with Librarian, Student Computer Lab, Mansfield Library

Library Assignment due date: 30 October

17 October Patrick Zentz, Missoula Art Museum, Tuesday, 7 p.m.

Weeks Eight, Nine, and Ten 23, 25, and 30 October and 1, 6, and 8 November

Interpreting art, what does it mean?

No classroom meetings/on-line lecture unit

Changing approaches to meaning, past and present, traditional, modern, and postmodern

Read: Barrett, Chapters 2 and 4

Contemporary artists and what the art means

24 October John Hitchcock, Missoula Art Museum, Tuesday, 7 p.m.

2 November April Werel and Nick Gilbert UC Art Gallery, 4-6 p.m.

9 November Rafael Chacón, Lecture, Social Science 356, 5-6 p.m.

Paper #2, Interpretation Paper – What does it Mean?

First due date: 8 November

Revision due: 15 November

Weeks Eleven and Twelve 13, 15, and 20 November

Evaluating art, what is successful art?

Criteria for evaluating art, past and present

Read: Barrett, Chapter 5

Thanksgiving Break, 22-26 November

Paper #3, Evaluation Paper – Is it successful? Faculty Exhibition, GVA

First due date: 4 December

Revision due: 11 December

Week Thirteen 27 and 29 November

Museums/Galleries and Power

Meet with Jesse Blumenthal UC Art Gallery on 27 or 29 November

30 November Jesse Blumenthal UC Art Gallery 4-6:00 p.m.

Weeks Fourteen and Fifteen, 4, 6, and 11 December**Art Criticism of Contemporary Art Exhibitions**

Consideration of leading arbiters of contemporary art

Who's hot and who's not?

Ten contemporary artists to share

Group Exchange