

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

University of Montana Course Syllabi

Open Educational Resources (OER)

---

1-2014

### ARTH 250L.00: Introduction to Art Criticism

Valerie L. Hedquist

*University of Montana - Missoula*, [valerie.hedquist@umontana.edu](mailto:valerie.hedquist@umontana.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

#### Recommended Citation

Hedquist, Valerie L., "ARTH 250L.00: Introduction to Art Criticism" (2014). *University of Montana Course Syllabi*. 1128.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/1128>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Educational Resources (OER) at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Montana Course Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

**School of Art**  
**Arth 250L, Introduction to Art Criticism, 3 credits**  
**Literary and Artistic Studies and Writing course**  
**TTH 3:40-5:00, Spring Semester 2014, Liberal Arts 305**

Associate Professor Valerie Hedquist, 305A Fine Arts Building

E-mail: [valerie.hedquist@umontana.edu](mailto:valerie.hedquist@umontana.edu);

Office hours: Tuesday 8:00-9:00 a.m. and Wednesday 9:00-10:00 a.m.

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 aesthetic evaluative criteria and apply them 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 three 3-5 page papers

Required text: Terry Barrett, *Criticizing Art, Understanding the Contemporary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, McGraw-Hill, 2012.

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.umn.edu> for course syllabus, lectures, assignments, other course materials, announcements, and grades.

Classroom Etiquette: Please arrive on time to class. Prepare to sit down for the duration of class. Silence your phone 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://dianegottzman.com/2012/01/college-classroom-etiquette-university-etiquette-for-2012/>

Assignments and Points Distribution:

Library assignment: 100 points total

Three papers; visual analysis, interpretation, and judgment: 100 points each; (300 points total)

Peer-review reports: 10 points each, (30 points total)

Weekly Writing: 10 points weekly, (140 points total)

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

570-526, A; 525-513, A-  
512-502, B+; 501-468, B; 467-456, B-  
455-445, C+; 444-411, C; 410-399, C-  
398-388, D+; 387-354, D; 353-342, D-  
341 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://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student\\_conduct.php](http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php).

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

#### Local Art Scene, A Short List:

UC Art Gallery: <http://life.umt.edu/uc/Arts-Entertainment/uc-gallery/exhibit-schedule.php>  
Montana Museum of Art & Culture, MMAC, <http://www.umt.edu/montanamuseum/default.aspx>  
School of Art Gallery of Art, GVA, <http://www.umt.edu/art/galleries/gva>  
Missoula Art Museum, MAM, <http://www.missoulaartmuseum.org/>

### **Lecture and Discussion Topics and Assignments**

#### **Week One, 28 and 30 January**

##### **Lecture: Introduction and What is Art?**

Moodle Introduction

Definitions and changing ideas of art

Receive and begin discussion of cases from *Puzzles about Art, An Aesthetics Casebook*

Introduction to Art Resource Center (Hours: To be determined) and on-campus art venues, including Main Hall, University Center Art Gallery (M-F10-4:00), MMAC, Paxson/Meloy (TWSat 12:00-3:00; THF12-6:00), GVA, Gallery of Visual Art (TWF 11-5:00; TH 11-6:00), MAM, (Tuesday - Saturday 10-5, Sunday noon-5)  
See, too, <http://www.umt.edu/montanamuseum/documents/UM%20Public%20Art%20Map%202012.pdf>

#### **Week Two, 4 and 6 February**

##### **What is Art?**

*Puzzles about Art, An Aesthetics Casebook* discussion ongoing

Receive art criticism selections regarding Christian Marclay for discussion

6 February Sarah Rockett, SS356, lecture, 5:10-6:00, GVA, opening 6-7:00

6 February Lea Christiansen, UC Art Gallery, opening 4-6:00

#### **Week Three, 11 and 13 February**

##### **What is Art Criticism?**

Past and Present Critics, Writing about Art

Read: Barrett, Preface, Chapter 1

#### **Week Four, 18 and 20 February**

##### **Finding Art Criticism**

Library Resources and Assignment, Prix Pictet Prize 2014

<http://www.prixpictet.com>

Receive art criticism selections regarding Laurie Simmons and Hong Hao for discussion

Visit from Writing Center Director, Kelly Webster,

Information about writing and reading for college success

#### **Library Assignment due date: 4 March**

#### **Week Five, 25 and 27 February**

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

What do critics do?

Receive art criticism selections regarding Carrie Mae Weems for discussion

25 February Adam Brooks and Matthew Wilson, SS356, lecture 5:30-6:30

**Week Six, 4 and 6 March****Describing art, what do I see?**

Read: Barrett, Chapters 3 and 6

Formal elements and principles of design

6 March Heather Swartz & Kari Goin, UC Art Gallery, opening 4-6:00,

7 March Patricia Thornton, Artist Reception 5-9:00 and Gallery Talk 7:00

**Paper #1, Description Paper - Visual Analysis**

**Peer review due date: 11 March**

**First due date: 13 March**

**Revision due: 20 March**

**Weeks Seven and Eight, 11, 13, 18 and 20 March****Interpreting art, what does it mean?**

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

Read: Barrett, Chapters 2 and 4

Contemporary artists and what the art means

Receive art criticism selections regarding Christopher Wool and James Turrell for discussion

13 March MFA Opening Reception GVA 5-7:00

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

**Peer review due date: 20 March**

**First due date: 27 March**

**Revision due: 15 April**

**Weeks Nine, 25 and 27 March**

M.F.A. Student Presentations in Gallery of Visual Arts

Sarah Tancred and James Louks

**Spring Break 29 March – 6 April****Weeks Ten and Eleven, 8, 10, 15, and 17 April****Evaluating art, what is good art?**

Criteria for evaluating art, past and present

Read: Barrett, Chapter 5

Receive art criticism selections regarding Matthew Ritchie and El Anatsui for discussion

8 April R.L. Tillman, SS356, lecture, 5:30-6:30

10 April MFA Opening Reception GVA 5-7:00

10 April Victor Daniel, UC Art Gallery, opening 4-6:00

M.F.A. Student Presentations in Gallery of Visual Arts

Claire Melli, Scott Miller, Ellen Walden

**Week Twelve, 22 and 24 April****Museums/Galleries and Power**

Who determines what you see?

M.F.A. Student Presentations in Gallery of Visual Arts

Claire Melli, Scott Miller, Ellen Walden

**Week Thirteen, 29 and 1 May**

B.F.A. Interviews and Evaluation

1 May BFA Senior Thesis Exhibitions, GVA and UC Art Gallery, 4-6:00

**Week Fourteen, 6 and 8 May**

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

**Paper #3, Evaluation Paper – Is it any good?**

**Peer review due date:** 6 May

**First due date:** 8 May

**Revision due:** 15 May