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### ARTZ 595.01: Special Topics - Critical Theories in Visual Arts

Valerie L. Hedquist

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**ARTZ595, Critical Theories in Visual Art II, 3 credits**  
**TTH 1:40-3:00, Spring Semester 2014, Fine Arts 304**

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: This course will consider theories, ideas, and trends in contemporary art practice and contexts. Students will consider the following themes: contemporary art practices, cultural, political and identity issues, global perspectives, aesthetic considerations, and postmodernism and responses to postmodernism. Students will also focus on the critical theories that inform the past influences and present practitioners of their own art practice. With these resources, students will investigate specific topics that relate to and expand their own creative studio practice.

Learning Objectives:

- Build an awareness of contemporary ideas and relationship between theoretical ideas and art-making.
- Develop research skills necessary to sustain conceptual development as practicing professional artists.
- Deepen and expand each student's understanding of his/her specific areas of interest.
- Develop written and verbal skill articulating complex theoretical ideas.

Required texts: *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, edited by Zoya Kocur and Simon Leung, Blackwell Publishing, 2005 and *Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation*, edited by Brian Wallis and Marcia Tucker, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984.

Requirements for Course:

- Read and discuss theoretical readings
- Refine and clarify the theoretical position of one's own art practice
- Identify past and present artists with analogous formal, material, and/or conceptual interests to examine possible approaches and strategies for art-making
- Research theory (for example semiotics, hybridity, relational aesthetics, etc.); themes or social phenomena (post-colonialism, technology, development of the West); or related studies in other disciplines (psychological pathology, fractal studies, etc.)

Assignments and Evaluation:

- Complete all reading before the beginning of each class
- Actively participate in class discussion
- Create weekly discussion questions and expanded sources and be prepared to answer issues raised by readings
- Annotated Bibliography with comprehensive abstract of content; to submit and share
- Write two five-page essays based on research on artists and critical theories with ties to one's own art
- Make two formal presentations on specific readings
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Expectations and grade calculation:

- 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.

**Annotated Bibliography:** 25 points/source; 10 sources-250 points total

**Essays:** 100 points each; 200 points total

**Presentations:** 100 points each; 200 points total

650-585=A; 584-520=B; 519-455=C; 454-390=D; below 389=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).

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

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

Getting to know you  
Influence Target and Art and Criticism Tree

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

Art and Criticism Tree  
Presentation #1

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

Faculty Recommended Readings, Distribution and Discussion

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

Image/Author/Critique, Part I, *Art after Modernism*

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

Contemporary Art Practices and Models, Part I, *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*

### **Week Six, 4 and 6 March**

Dismantling Modernism, Part II, *Art after Modernism*  
Submit Annotated Bibliography for Evaluation

### **Weeks Seven and Eight, 11, 13, 18 and 20 March**

Culture/Identities/Political Fields, Part II, *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*  
Cultural Politics, Part VI, *Art after Modernism*  
Gender/Difference/Power, Part VII, *Art after Modernism*

### **Weeks Nine, 25 and 27 March**

No Class, Write Essay #1

### **Spring Break 29 March – 6 April**

### **Week Ten, 8 and 10 April**

Global Perspectives/Postcolonial Critiques, Part III, *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*

### **Week Eleven, 15 and 17 April**

Aesthetic Considerations, Part IV, *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*  
Paroxysms of Painting, Part III, *Art after Modernism*  
The Fictions of Mass Media, Part V, *Art after Modernism*

### **Week Twelve, 22 and 24 April**

Theorizing Postmodernism, Part IV, *Art after Modernism*  
Postmodernism and responses to Postmodernism, Part V, *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*

### **Week Thirteen, 29 and 1 May**

No Class, Write Essay #2

**Week Fourteen, 6 and 8 May**  
Presentation #2