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9-2014

### ARTH 250L.01: Introduction to Art Criticism

Valerie L. Hedquist

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**School of Art**  
**Arth 250L, Introduction to Art Criticism, 3 credits**  
**Literary and Artistic Studies and Writing course**  
**Fall Semester 2014, 11:10-12:30 Fine Arts 302**

Professor Valerie Hedquist, 305A Fine Arts Building

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

Office hours: Wednesday 11:00-12:00 a.m. and 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 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.umat.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/Presentation: 10 points weekly, (140 points total)

Attendance Policy: You are allowed three (3) free absences. You will lose 50 points for each additional absence. Please plan accordingly.

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://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student\\_conduct.php](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/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, 26 and 28 August**

#### **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*

Receive art criticism selections regarding Jeff Koons for discussion

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

### **Week Two, 2 and 4 September**

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

Past and Present Critics, Writing about Art

Read: Barrett, Preface, Chapter 1

School of Art Faculty Exhibition 2 September – 19 September GVA

4 September, Faculty Lecture, Valerie Hedquist 5:10 SS356 and Faculty Exhibition Opening 6:00-7:00

**MAM, September 05, 2014, September First Friday**

**Times:** 5-8 PM

Rafael Chacón Gallery Talk 7:00

### **Week Three, 9 and 11 September**

#### **Describing art, what do I see?**

Read: Barrett, Chapters 3 and 6

Formal elements and principles of design

Gallery of Visual Art Faculty Exhibition

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

**On-Line Peer Review due date:** 18 September

**First due date:** 23 September

**Revision due:** 30 September

### **Week Four, 16 and 18 September**

#### **Finding Art Criticism**

Library Resources and Assignment, Turner Prize 2014

Class meeting with Tammy Ravas, Fine Arts Librarian  
<http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/turner-prize-2014>  
 Receive art criticism selections regarding Laure Prouvost and Susan Philipsz for discussion  
 Visit from Writing Center Director, Kelly Webster, <http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter/>  
 Information about writing and reading for college success  
 16 September, Faculty Lecture, Rafael Chacón 5:10 SS356

### **Library Assignment due date: 25 September**

#### **Week Five, 23 and 25 September**

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

What do critics do?

Receive art criticism selections regarding Doris Salcedo for discussion

#### **Week Six, 30 September and 2 October**

Visits to University Center Art Gallery and Missoula Art Museum

2 October, UC Art Gallery Opening, Dave Tarullo & Michael Workman, 4-6:00

#### **Weeks Seven and Eight, 7, 9, 14 and 16 October**

##### **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

16 October, MMAC Visiting Artist Amanda Browder, 5:00

MMAC Exhibition, Vanessa German and Amanda Browder

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

**Peer review due date: 16 October**

**First due date: 21 October**

**Revision due: 28 October**

#### **Week Nine 21 and 23 October**

##### **Museums/Galleries and Power**

Who determines what you see?

22 October Steamroller Prints

23 October Visiting Artist M.K. Guth, SS356 5:10-6:00

#### **Weeks Ten, Eleven and Twelve 28 and 30 October and 6 and 13 November**

##### **Evaluating art, what is good art?**

Criteria for evaluating art, past and present

Read: Barrett, Chapter 5

Art criticism selections on Gillian Wearing and Christopher Williams for discussion

5 November Transforming Hate, UC Art Gallery, opening 4-6:00

6 November Vanessa German, 12:00 UC South Atrium and 2:00 UC Theatre

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

**Peer review due date: 20 November**

**First due date: 25 November**

**Revision due: 4 December**

#### **4 November Election Day No Classes-Vote!**

#### **11 November Veterans Day No Classes**

**Weeks Thirteen and Fourteen, 18, 20 and 25 November**

Gallery of Visual Arts Presentations

**Thanksgiving Holiday 27 and 28 November****Week Fifteen, 2 and 4 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