

**Spring 2017: AH 541/441 Contemporary Art in Context**  
**School of Art, California State University Long Beach**  
**Monday 7-9:45pm, FA-4 311**  
**Instructor: Amanda Cachia, Office-FO-5 234 [amanda.cachia@csulb.edu](mailto:amanda.cachia@csulb.edu)**  
**Office Hours: Monday 5:30 – 6:30pm**  
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**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**Course website: Beachboard**

This course offers a broad survey of developments in art from the 1980s to the present, examining the precedents, legacies, and shifts driving contemporary art. This course will consider critical/theoretical issues and factors influencing production and reception of current art (exhibition circuit, market and economic factors, institutions, academe, social and political factors).

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Identify trends and directions taking shape in international contemporary art and develop awareness of factors influencing production and reception of current art answering the question: which art is important, why will this art remain important?
2. Increase understanding of philosophies or critical/theoretical discussions relevant to contemporary art. What is of interest? Why look at this work of art in this particular way?
3. Develop understanding of precedents and traditions behind current art. Where do forms and ideas come from?
4. Develop vocabulary for conceptualizing, discussing and writing about works of contemporary art, learn how to develop opinions and back up those statements.
5. Understand primary examples of discourses (contexts) by which contemporary art is understood.

**Required Texts: PDF files on Beach-board. Please bring printouts to class!**

I will communicate with the class through the email function on Beach-board. It is your responsibility to make sure you have access to this information!

## **Course Requirements and Activities:**

### **In-class participation**

This course is based on the weekly reading assignments and their class discussion. For each week students will read AND ANNOTATE the listed materials.

**An annotation** begins with an overview of the article's central argument, outlining the author's main points and summarizing how the points had been proved and/or argued. Every week, beginning with the graduate students and continuing with the undergrads (in alphabetical order), students will be called upon to give an overview of an assigned reading for the entire class, before we proceed with class discussion. This structure is to assure that students are prepared for each class discussion. It will also guarantee that students read from week to week in preparation for the exam. Students are highly encouraged to ask questions and voice opinions about the readings and the artworks displayed.

**Readings:** Students must complete all of readings due for class before class meets. My lectures are conducted with the assumption that you have completed the readings. You are responsible for integrating these materials into your papers, exam answers, and your class participation.

**Mid-term and final exam:** there will be a mid-term and final exam based on the readings and the material we cover in class. These exams will require that students retain knowledge of the artists and art works covered. Of equal importance, students should be able to discuss the larger ideas the artists and artworks represent. The exams will consist of comparisons between two works and/or short essays on a single work--we will practice these techniques in class throughout the semester. This course emphasizes content and context; you must therefore demonstrate an understanding of the artwork's meaning and its implication within a context. The examinations will be graded on the facility with which students can discuss the works and ideas involved. I recommend that students keep short notes on the artists and works of art covered over the semester. If you do all the readings and participate in class you will be almost ready for the exam. You can then prepare for the exam by reviewing your class notes.

**Course Paper:** Each student will write a paper of 5 or more pages, and a bibliography. [Grads: Minimum 10 pages] Papers will lead up to a thorough discussion of one or two works of art by a single contemporary artist, chosen by the student. Students are expected to conduct further research and analysis of their artist and her/his oeuvre. A good paper will include:

- 1) a general introduction
- 2) a discussion of the artist's development within a social, political, historical context or artistic movement
- 3) an overview and then a detailed description of one or two artworks
- 4) an in-depth visual and contextual analysis of the artwork

The assignment stresses a combination of good visual observation with thorough library (not Internet!) research, which will be styled according to the Chicago Manual of Style (please consult library webpage). In addition to the visual observation, students may discuss the artist's development, how the work demonstrates the artist's contribution to art history, how does it relate to the culture it represents, how was it received, what was its social context or how does it communicate its meaning. All papers must have footnotes and a bibliography (at least 5 additional sources beyond class readings: library books, peer-reviewed articles, or articles indexed in library databases). The paper must be typed or word-processed (Times or Arial font, 11 points, double-spaced, 1" margins) and should be polished and well presented throughout.

<b>Grading and Evaluation:</b>	<b>Percent of Grade:</b>
Mid-term	25%
Final examination	25%
Final paper	25%
Class participation (punctuality, preparation, attendance, discussion and presentations including annotations)	15%
Museum Visit report	10%

90%-100%=A, 80%-90%=B, 70%-80%=C, 60%-70%=D, 60%-0=F

The oral and written projects will be graded on the completeness with which they review the selected reading and the quality with which they are prepared. They must follow the format I specify above! Students who wish to write using a different format must discuss it with me in advance. **Papers (hard copy) are due in class on the day it is due. Late papers will not be accepted! It is your responsibility to have the paper done and submitted on time.**

**The examinations** will be graded on the facility with which students can discuss the works and ideas involved. Generally, you will need to: identify the artist and the work; discuss its media, materials and forms; is it part of a movement, discuss the movement or context of the artist; what is the artist saying, representing, or responding to; what is the significance of this artist's contribution and (when relevant) how does it compare to the other artwork shown.

Plagiarism: DO NOT COPY ANOTHER PERSON'S WRITING!!! Your writing is ALWAYS better than any one else's and it will best reflect your own valuable ideas. This is why your paper MUST follow my above outline. Plagiarism is the appropriation of someone else's writing or ideas without proper acknowledgement. Be sure all your writing is your own or is quoted and cited.

A Note on Attendance: This course relies heavily on lectures, activities and further in-class activities. Participation is therefore essential. All students have one courtesy unexcused absence, after which every absence will mark you down half a letter grade. Arriving late to class, or leaving early, will count as half an absence.

**Graduate Students Additional Requirements**

Graduate students will fulfill all the requirements for undergrads, and two presentations, which count towards your 15% participation grade:

1. Paper presentation: reading art in a particular context. A 10-page research paper on a single artist following the given format with an elaboration of the chosen context. (Example: reading Cindy Sherman’s work in the context of feminist theory and the objectification of woman.)
2. Artist exposé: show and tell about the development of one artist’s oeuvre. (Schooling, geography, context, shows, catalogues, reviews, monographs, articles.)

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

<b>1. Jan 23</b>	Introduction. Read syllabus. <b>**Screen: Basquiat by Julian Schnabel</b>
<b>2. Jan 30</b>	Helen Molesworth. <i>This Will Have Been Art, Love &amp; Politics in the 1980s.</i>  <b>Grads: choose artist exposé presentation day</b>
<b>3. Feb 6</b>	Kobena Mercer, Democracy 132-239, in Helen Molesworth. <i>This Will Have Been Art, Love &amp; Politics in the 1980s.</i> Yale University Press, 2012.
<b>4. Feb 13</b>	Hal Foster, “Subversive Signs,” in <i>Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics</i> (Seattle: Bay Press, 1985): 99-120  <i>Howard Singerman, “Pictures and Positions in the 1980s” in Amelia Jones, A Companion to Contemporary Art Since 1945 (2006) pp. 83-106.</i>
<b>5. Feb 20</b>	Gregg Bordowitz, “Picture a Coalition,” <i>October</i> , Vol. 43, AIDS: Cultural Analysis/Cultural Activism (Winter, 1987), pp. 182- 196  Robert Storr, “Interview with Félix González-Torres: Etre Un Espion,” <i>ArtPress</i> January, 1995, p. 24-32.  Hal Foster Archival Impulse <i>OCTOBER 110</i> , Fall 2004, pp. 3–22.

<p><b>6. Feb 27</b></p>	<p>Jennifer A. González, "Renee Green, Genealogies of Contact," in <i>Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art</i>, MIT Press, 2008. 204-249, 273-277</p> <p>Partially Buried Author(s): Renée Green Source: October, Vol. 80 (Spring, 1997), pp. 38-56.</p> <p>Wallis, Brian, "Excavating the 1970s," <i>Art in America</i> v.85, September 1997, pp.96-97.</p> <p><b>**Screen: Renée Green <i>Partially Buried</i></b></p>
<p><b>7. March 6</b></p>	<p><b>Midterm Exam:</b>  <b>An in-class written exam based on slide comparisons, bring blue books.</b></p>
<p><b>8. March 13</b></p>	<p>Nizan Shaked, "Critical Identity Politics," <i>X-TRA Contemporary Art Quarterly</i> 11.1. 4-15.  <a href="http://x-traonline.org/issues/volume-11/number-1/critical-identity-politics/">http://x-traonline.org/issues/volume-11/number-1/critical-identity-politics/</a></p> <p>Jennifer Doyle, "Feeling Overdetermined: Identity, Emotion and History," in <i>Hold it Against Me: Difficulty and Emotion in Contemporary Art</i> (Duke University Press: 2013) 94-125</p>
<p><b>9. March 20</b></p>	<p>Nicolas Bourriaud, "Art of the 1990s," in <i>Relational Aesthetics</i>, Paris: Presses du réel, 2002 25-40:</p> <p>Claire Bishop, "Delegated Performance: Outsourcing Authenticity," in <i>Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship</i> (Verso, 2012): 219-240</p>
	<p><b>**SPRING BREAK: Monday March 27 – Sunday April 2, 2017</b></p>
<p><b>10. April 3</b></p>	<p>Andrea Fraser, "An Artist Statement," in <i>Museum Highlights, the Writing of Andrea Fraser</i> (MIT Press 2005): 3-16</p> <p>Andrea Fraser, "In and Out of Place," <i>Art in America</i> 73 no. 6 (June 1985) 122-129</p> <p>Julian Stallabrass <i>Art Incorporated</i> (Oxford: 2004)  "Consuming Culture:" 73-100</p> <p><b>**Screen Part: Andrea Fraser at the Power Plant</b>  <a href="http://vimeo.com/46298096">http://vimeo.com/46298096</a></p>

<p><b>11. April 10</b></p>	<p>Terry Smith, "Social Media; Affects of Time," in <i>Contemporary Art: World Currents</i> (Lawrence King Publishing Ltd, 2011): 296-315.</p> <p>Mary Leclere: The question of (e)quality: art in the age of Facebook  <a href="http://x-traonline.org/article/the-question-of-equality-art-in-the-age-of-facebook/">http://x-traonline.org/article/the-question-of-equality-art-in-the-age-of-facebook/</a></p>
<p><b>12. April 17</b></p>	<p><b>**PAPERS (undergrads) DUE during class hours!</b></p> <p>John Roberts, "The Political Economization of Art," &amp; 5a Angela Dimitrakaki and Kirsten Lloyd "comment on art" from <u><i>It's the Political Economy, Stupid: The Global Financial Crisis in Art and Theory</i></u></p> <p>Yates McKee, "contemporary art and the politics of democracy, 1987-2011," in <i>Strike Art</i> (Verso 2016): 37-83</p>
<p><b>13. April 24</b></p>	<p>Graduate Student Paper Presentations (Graduate Papers due)</p> <p>Undergraduate Student Presentations (part of 15% participation grade, more info provided in lectures)</p>
<p><b>14. May 1</b></p> <p>*Note: make sure your museum of choice is open on Monday</p>	<p>Museum Visit: visit a museum of your choosing (make sure it features contemporary art). Write a subjective report, 2-3 pages in a style that reflects your experience and your personality, telling your reader your impressions of the museum and/or the exhibit. This exercise is open to considered forms of creative writing. Please prepare yourself in advance by reading several exhibition reviews, and take notes during your visit.</p> <p><b>Museum Visit Report DUE on the day of the Final Exam, Monday May 15. Please bring a hard copy to the exam and include a scan or photograph of your museum entry slip.</b></p>
<p><b>15. May 8</b></p>	<p><b>NO CLASS – STUDY WEEK</b></p>
<p><b>16. Final Exam</b></p>	<p><b>Monday, May 15, 2017  7:15PM - 9:15PM <u>according to campus exam schedule.</u>  Bring blue books.</b></p>