

ARLD 6395/4397: Art & Social Justice
Room: FA 106
Time: Fridays 9:30am – 12:30 pm
Master of Arts in Arts Leadership Program
Fall 2023



Image credit: A photograph of Breonna Taylor, projected onto the statue of Robert E. Lee on Monument Avenue in Richmond, Va., July 2020

Instructor: Dr. Amanda Cachia, Ph.D., acachia@uh.edu

Student Drop-In Hours: Thursdays from 4-5pm, or Fridays, from 1-2pm

Office location: FA 102

Course summary:

Students will explore important social justice issues including colonialism, racism, LGBTQ rights, gender equality, disability rights, imperialism, war, police misconduct, and environmental justice and how those issues are expressed through the arts. The course will explore current issues of social justice and how they interface with the cultural sector through scholarly readings, case studies and a line-up of working artists across the US and the world. The course will give students the opportunity to explore critical issues of how activism and the arts intersect from many different points of view, by artists currently doing the work of art and social justice within communities and in professional arenas.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Have a greater understanding and awareness of the origins, triumphs, challenges and histories of various social movements and the role art played in catalyzing them.
2. Have the ability to analyze arts organizations' actions as either active or complicit in the fight against racism.
3. Articulate the importance of positionality and self-awareness when seeking to engage in social justice efforts as arts leaders.
4. Gain heightened consciousness on the depth and breadth of possibilities within socially-engaged art and approaches employed by artists working towards social change.
5. Understand community-engaged work as a people-intensive, collaborative learning process, and can describe the collaboration, consensus building, negotiation, advice, and consent required for that learning to succeed.
6. Articulate the primary forms of bias in information gathering and decision-making, both by individuals and groups, and the strategies available to counter those biases
7. Understand the legacies and histories of oppression and racism within the United States.
8. Review practical scenarios and approaches to developing anti-racist practices as arts leaders.
9. Prepare you for a career in arts administration by linking the content of the course, both theory and practice, with your own experiences and future career objectives.

Best Practices:

Best Practices, in this instance, are directly informed by the student's use take their experiential knowledge and lessons learned during the course to achieve the following:

1. Ongoing self-reflection on how they as individuals may have upheld and/or been impacted by systems of oppression and how this informs their praxis and everyday existence.
2. Question core assumptions of how social justice is informed and defined by artistic practice.
3. Establish on-going evaluation of arts-based institutions and how they can support artists in the work of achieving social justice.

Requirements for the Course:

1. Read the assignments and carefully prepare for each class
2. If you miss more than two classes without a good valid reason, you are out of the course. Notify me if you cannot be present for a class.
3. Regularly participate in seminar discussions based upon the readings and your experience.
4. Turn in graduate-level quality papers on time both hard copy and by email.

Academic Honesty Policy

High ethical standards are critical to the integrity of any institution, and bear directly on the ultimate value of conferred degrees. All UH community members are expected to contribute to an atmosphere of the highest possible ethical standards. Maintaining such an atmosphere requires that any instances of academic dishonesty be recognized and addressed. The [UH Academic Honesty Policy](#) is designed to handle those instances with fairness to all parties involved: the students, the instructors, and the University itself. All students and faculty of the University of Houston are responsible for being familiar with this policy.

Title IX/Sexual Misconduct

Per the UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and state law and must report incidents of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, intimate partner violence, or stalking) about which they become aware to the Title IX office. Please know there are places on campus where you can make a report in confidence. You can find more information about resources on the Title IX website at <https://uh.edu/equal-opportunity/title-ix-sexual-misconduct/resources/>.

COVID-19 Information

Students are encouraged to visit the University’s [COVID-19](#) website for important information including on-campus testing, vaccines, diagnosis and symptom protocols, campus cleaning and safety practices, report forms, and positive cases on campus. Please check the website throughout the semester for updates.

Vaccinations

Data suggests that vaccination remains the best intervention for reliable protection against COVID-19. Students are asked to familiarize themselves with pertinent [vaccine information](#), consult with their health care provider. The University strongly encourages all students, faculty and staff to be vaccinated.

Reasonable Academic Adjustments/Auxiliary Aids

The University of Houston is committed to providing an academic environment and educational programs that are accessible for its students. Any student with a disability who is experiencing barriers to learning, assessment or participation is encouraged to contact the Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center (Dart Center) to learn more about academic accommodations and support that may be available to them. Students seeking academic accommodations will need to register with the Dart Center as soon as possible to ensure timely implementation of approved accommodations. Please contact the Dart Center by visiting the website: <https://uh.edu/accessibility/> calling (713) 743-5400, or emailing jdcenter@Central.UH.EDU.

Excused Absence Policy

Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) and [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the course grade or a satisfactory alternative. Please read the full policy for details regarding reasons for

excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).

Recording of Class

Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the [Justin Dart Jr. Student Accessibility Center](#). If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with anyone without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

Syllabus Changes

Please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through email and in-person during class time.

Resources for Online Learning

The University of Houston is committed to student success, and provides information to optimize the online learning experience through our [Power-On](#) website. Please visit this website for a comprehensive set of resources, tools, and tips including: obtaining access to the internet, AccessUH, and Blackboard; requesting a laptop through the Laptop Loaner Program; using your smartphone as a webcam; and downloading Microsoft Office 365 at no cost. For questions or assistance contact UHOnline@uh.edu.

UH Email

Please check and use your Cougarnet email for communications related to this course. Faculty use the Cougarnet email to respond to course-related inquiries such as grade queries or progress reports for reasons of FERPA. To access your Cougarnet email, [login](#) to your Microsoft 365 account with your Cougarnet credentials. Visit [University Information Technology \(UIT\)](#) for instructions on how to connect your Cougarnet e-mail on a mobile device.

Webcams

Access to a webcam is required for students participating remotely in this course. *Webcams must be turned on during exams to ensure the academic integrity of exam administration.*

Honor Code Statement

Students may be asked to sign an honor code statement as part of their submission of any graded work including but not limited to projects, quizzes, and exams: "I understand and agree to abide by the provisions in the (select: [University of Houston Undergraduate Academic Honesty Policy](#), [University of Houston Graduate Academic Honesty Policy](#)). I understand that academic honesty is taken very seriously and, in the cases of violations, penalties may include suspension or expulsion from the University of Houston."

class grade. **Attendance** is mandatory. Students are required to attend the full length of the classes to get credit for their attendance.

2. Field Trip Reports x 2: worth 20% of grade

Submit two four-page (double-spaced) reports on our visit to Project Row Houses and UH Public Art (the Shazia Sikander installation) on the UH campus. How do these spaces, objects or organizations reflect a commitment to social justice? What are their strengths and weaknesses? What did you personally enjoy or find challenging during your visit? Please include images from your visit.

3. Student-Led Class Facilitation Informed by Readings: worth 20% of grade

Students will independently facilitate a 60- minute class discussion every session using a powerpoint or slide show of artwork examples and other multimedia materials (apart from the first session). If we have guest speakers the group will be in charge of moderating the conversation. I will have a Sign-Up sheet the first day of class. Facilitations will provoke dialogue about; 1-the central argument(s) of the scholarship being engaged, 2-the theoretical and methodological approaches utilized and innovated by the scholars and artists both in the readings and in the field more broadly 3-the potential social, cultural, and political stakes of the work, 4-how the work connects to other scholarship and artwork we have engaged with in the class. I encourage the student-led facilitation to utilize all kinds of media (such as short video screenings), along with developing group activities (such as free writing or creative writing exercises), and other methods to create a dynamic space. What is most important is that we have a quality exchange in the class. Please upload your powerpoint to Canvas at the end of the day in which you have led the discussions.

4. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Research Assignment: worth 20% of grade

Research one major arts and cultural organization in Houston and examine their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion through their DEI statements, their mission, and their program and funding achievements directed towards DEI initiatives. Write a summary of your findings in a 6 page (double-spaced) paper, pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of how their arts leadership is supporting DEI and social justice (NB. Must not include organizations we cover in our field trips). I also encourage you to contact the organization directly and interview staff to aid in your research.

5. Final Presentation + Paper: worth 30% of grade

The primary course requirement is a critical essay, which is to be based on original research and to be 10-12 pages in length (double-spaced). The essay should advance a critical argument based on an issue of your choice pertaining to one of the topics of the course. Your analyses should be based on readings, site visits, primary and secondary sources, and additional research. On the last day of class, each student will present their findings in a 10 minute presentation on Zoom.

Grading

• Participation and Attendance	10% (10 points)
• Field trip reports x 2	20% (10 points each)
• Student-Led Discussions	20% (20 points)
• DEI Research Assignment	20% (20 points)
• <u>Final Project + Paper</u>	<u>30% (30 points)</u>
	100% (100 possible points total)

Grade Breakdown

A	4.00	94%-100%
A-	3.67	90%-93%
B+	3.33	87%-89%
B	3.00	84%-86%
B-	2.67	80%-83%
C+	2.33	77%-79%
C	2.00	74%-76%
C-	1.67	70%-73%
D+	1.33	67%-69%
D	1.00	63%-66%
D-	.37	60%-62%
F	0.00	Below 59%

Assignments-Grading Elements:

- **Purpose** (Link the content of the course, both theory and practice, to the assigned topic to demonstrate your understanding of the course work applicability. Demonstrate your comprehension of the material)
- **Creativity** (Challenges oneself to use unconventional or exploratory formats to complete assignments)
- **Evidence Based Reasoning** (Use concepts, models, methods etc. from the class)
- **Organization** (Flow of ideas and analysis)
- **Mechanics and Style** (Mechanical errors, clarity, precision and economy of expression)
- **Spelling and Grammar**
- **Timely Submission**

Textbooks/Reading:

PDFs and excerpts will be pulled from various texts and supplies on Canvas.

(Please Note: The information contained in this class syllabus is subject to change without notice. Students are expected to be aware of any additional course policies presented by the instructor during the course)

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

The University of Houston has a number of resources to support students' mental health and overall wellness, including [CoogsCARE](#) and the [UH Go App](#). UH [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) offers 24/7 mental health support for all students, addressing various concerns like stress, college adjustment and sadness. CAPS provides individual and couples counseling, group therapy, workshops and connections to other support services on and off-campus. For assistance visit uh.edu/caps, call 713-743-5454, or visit a [Let's Talk](#) location in-person or virtually. [Let's Talk](#) are daily, informal confidential consultations with CAPS therapists where no appointment or paperwork is needed.

The [Student Health Center](#) offers a Psychiatry Clinic for enrolled UH students. Call 713-743-5149 during clinic hours, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. to schedule an appointment.

The [A.D. Bruce Religion Center](#) offers spiritual support and a variety of programs centered on well-being.

Need Support Now?

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call CAPS crisis support 24/7 at 713-743-5454, or the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: call or text [988](#), or chat 988lifeline.org.

List of Discussion/Lecture Topics + Assignment Dates

Class 1: Friday August 25

Introduction to Course – Personal Introductions

Overview of the Course Syllabus, Assignments, Expectations

Class 2: Friday September 1

Topic: A History of Art for Social Change

Reading:

1. Claudia Mesch, "Introduction," Claudia Mesch, in *Art and Politics: A Small History of Art for Social Change Since 1945*, London and New York: I.B. Taurus, 2013.
2. Gregory Sholette, "The Contemporary Artist as Activist" in *The Art of Activism and the Activism of Art*, Lund Humphries London, 2022.
3. Selections from Nato Thompson, *Seeing Power: Art and Activism in the 21st Century*, Brooklyn and London: Melville House, 2015.
4. "The 25 Most Influential Works of American Protest Art Since World War II," *New York Times*, October 15, 2020

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/15/t-magazine/most-influential-protest-art.html>

Class 3: Friday September 8

Topic: Imperialism and War

Reading:

1. Selections from *Artists Respond: American Art and the Vietnam War, 1965-1975* edited by Melissa Ho, based on exhibition held at the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, 2019
2. Maria Viatkana, "How Can Art Heal the World? Anti-war paintings of the past that tried to change the future," Medium, March 31, 2022, <https://medium.com/smart-art-art-history-escape-blog/how-can-art-heal-the-world-anti-war-paintings-of-the-past-that-tried-to-change-the-future-193090a84572>
3. Selections from James Reston Jr., *A Rift in the Earth: art, memory, and the fight for a Vietnam War Memorial*, New York: Arcade Publishing, 2017
4. Claudia Mesch, "The Anti-War and Peace Movements," in *Art and Politics: A Small History of Art for Social Change Since 1945*, London and New York: I.B. Taurus, 2013.
5. Film screening: Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision, 1994

Additional resources:

Ukrainian Art as Protest and Resilience, <https://nanovic.nd.edu/features/ukrainian-art-as-protest-and-resilience/>

Class 4: Friday September 15

Topic: Gender Equality & Social Justice

Reading:

1. Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" 1971
2. "Feminist Curating as Curatorial Activism: A Roundtable," published in ON CURATING, Fall 2021
3. Selections from Katy Hessel, *The Story of Art Without Men*, 2023
4. Selections from *Guerilla Girls: The Art of Behaving Badly*, Chronicle Books, 2020
5. Claudia Mesch, "Feminisms" in *Art and Politics: A Small History of Art for Social Change Since 1945*, London and New York: I.B. Taurus, 2013.
6. Film screening: Barbie the movie, 2023

Additional resources:

<https://www.guerrillagirls.com/>

Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Brooklyn Museum,

<https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/about>

<https://www.maurareilly.com/>

Class 5: Friday September 22 – Law, Community, and Social Justice Conference

We will be attending this exciting event as a group, along with Fleurette Fernando.

Please meet at the University of Houston Law Center John M. O’Quinn Law Building on Friday September 22 at 9:30am. The event is from 9:45am – 4pm, but you are welcome to stay during class hours only.

<https://law.uh.edu/events/conference.asp>

****Due: Field Trip Report #1, Sunday September 24, at 11:59PM on Canvas.**

Class 6: Friday September 28

Topic: Race, Police Misconduct & Social Justice

Reading:

1. Claudia Mesch, “Post-Colonial Identity and the Civil Rights Movement,” in *Art and Politics: A Small History of Art for Social Change Since 1945*, London and New York: I.B. Taurus, 2013.
2. Aruna D’Souza, selections from *Whitewalling: Art, Race & Protest in 3 Acts*, 2018
3. Gregory Sholette, “Black Lives Matter: Fugitivity in Plain Sight,” in *The Art of Activism and the Activism of Art*, Lund Humphries London, 2022.
4. Candice L. Edrington and Victoria J. Gallagher, “Race and Visibility: How and Why Visual Images of Black Lives Matter,” in *Visual Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 26, October – December 2019
5. Shaun Leonardo, www.shaunleonardo.com
6. Hank Willis Thomas, <https://hankwillisthomas.com/>

Class 7: Friday October 6

Topic: LGBTQ rights & Social Justice

Guest Zoom Lecture with Robert Andy Coombs, <https://www.robertandycoombs.com/>

Film screening: Gregg Bordowitz, *Fast Trip, Long Drop*, 1993

Reading:

1. Jack Lowery, “Introduction: Another Kind of Propaganda,” in *It Was Vulgar & It Was Beautiful: How AIDS Activists Used Art to Fight a Pandemic*, New York: Bold Type Books, 2022.
2. Gregg Bordowitz, “Picture a Coalition,” *October* Vol. 43, Winter 1987
3. Zoe Leonard, *I Want a Dyke for President*
4. Claudia Mesch, “Gay Identity/Queer Art,” in *Art and Politics: A Small History of Art for Social Change Since 1945*, London and New York: I.B. Taurus, 2013.

Additional resources:

Jeffrey Mouton Benevedes, “Shifting Identity, Emerging Self: An Interview with Robert Andy Coombs, aka CripFag,” *Jung Journal* 2020

Brian Droitcour, “Living With, Dying From: The Art of Gregg Bordowitz,” <https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/features/gregg-bordowitz-aids-covid-1234603677/> *Art in America*, September 13, 2021

<https://visualaids.org/>

Class 8: Friday October 13

This week the Professor will be absent. During class time, please work on the DEI Research assignment.

****DEI Research Assignment Due: Sunday October 15 at 11.59pm on Canvas.**

Class 9: Friday October 20

Topic: Disability Rights & Social Justice

Reading:

1. Amanda Cachia, “‘Disabling’ the Museum: Curator as Infrastructural Activist” *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, Volume 12, Issue 3, 2013. Published by Taylor & Francis.
2. Selections from “The Call for Disability Justice in Museum Education: Reframing Accessibility as Anti-Ableism,” in *The Journal of Museum Education*, Vol. 47, No. 2, 2022
3. Selections from Shayda Kafai, *Crip Kinship: The Disability Justice & Art Activism of Sins Invalid*, 2021
4. Amanda Cachia, “Chapter Five: Exhibition Design,” in *The Agency of Access: Contemporary Disability Art and Institutional Critique*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, forthcoming 2024

Class 10: Friday October 27 – Project Row Houses Field Trip

Field trip to Project Row Houses with Professor Assata Richards. Meet at 9:30am on site at Project Row Houses.

Reading:

1. “A Soft Place to Stand: Escaping the Interlocking Systems of Race, Class, and Gender” by Assata-Nicole Richards, PhD, Founding Director of the Sankofa Research Institute (SRI) and Young Mothers Residential Program alumna, in *Collective Creative Actions: Project Row Houses at 25*, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2018.

Additional resources:

<https://projectrowhouses.org/>

Class 11: Friday November 3

This week the Professor will be absent. During class time, please work on and submit your UH Project Row Houses Trip Report.

****Project Row Houses Field Trip Report #2 Due: Sunday November 5 at 11:59pm on Canvas.**

Class 12: Friday November 10

Topic: Colonialism, Indigeneity & Museums

Reading:

1. Celia Martínez-Sáez, “The Forgotten Flesh: Confronting Western Epistemologies through Parody in Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco's "The Couple in the Cage" (1992),” *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, Fall 2018, Vol. 51, No. 2, pp. 13-25
2. Selections from Alice Procter, *The Whole Picture: The Colonial Story of the Art in Our Museums, and Why We Need to Talk About it*, 2021
3. Kate Morris, Linda Morris, “Camping Out with Miss Chief: Kent Monkman’s Ironic Journey,” in *Studies in American humor*, 2020, Vol. 6, No. 2
4. Kent Monkman, *Revision and resistance: mistikosiwak (Wooden Boat People) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Art Canada Institute, 2020
5. Film screening: *The Couple in the Cage*, Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez -Peña

Additional resources:

Fred Wilson, Mining the Museum, <https://bmoreart.com/2017/05/how-mining-the-museum-changed-the-art-world.html>

Class 13: Friday November 17

Topic: The Environment & Social Justice

Reading:

1. Lucy R. Lippard, “Describing the Indescribable: Art and the Climate Crisis,” in *The Routledge Companion to Contemporary Art, Visual Culture, and Climate Change*, edited by T.J. Demos, Emily Eliza Scott and Subhankar Banerjee, New York and London: Routledge, 2021
2. Selections from *Mary Mattingly: What Happens After*, edited by Nicholas Bell and Julie Decker, Hirmer Publishers, 2023
3. Selections from Salar Mameni, *Terracene: A Crude Aesthetics*, Durham North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2023
4. Claudia Mesch, “Environmental Art,” in *Art and Politics: A Small History of Art for Social Change Since 1945*, London and New York: I.B. Taurus, 2013.
5. Film screening: Through the Repellant Fence, 2017, <https://www.throughtherepellentfence.com/>

Class 14: NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Class 15: Friday December 1

Final Presentations on Zoom today.

****Due: Final papers & presentations due Friday December 8 at 11:59pm on Canvas during Reading Week.**

Orgs/Entities for Discussions and Assignments: I’m open to suggestions!

Sins Invalid

Critical Access Lab

BFTA Collective

viBe Theater Company

Junebug Productions/Free Southern Theater

Springboard for the Arts

3 Walls

3Arts

USA Artists

Creative Capital

Laundromat Project

Chinatown Art Brigade

NALAC

USDAC

People’s Kitchen Collective

The Black School