Modern Philosophies of Art: from Baudelaire to Baudrillard

Professor: Dr. David A. Lewis
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Office AR 102 (turn right after the Art Office entrance, first door on the facing wall).
Office Hours: M/W 1:30am-4:30AM; T/R 2:30-5:00pm and by appointment
(Additional hours can be made available during exam week.)
SFA School of Art

Face-to-Face Class meets in Art Building, Room 106, M/W 5:00-6:15PM
ZOOM access will be available during the regular class period.
Classes will be recorded on ZOOM and posted to D2L-BrightSpace for review.

Principal Text:

Professor Lewis will also provide several readings as handouts D2L Brightspace postings from time to time, beginning with the following:

Supplemental reading: George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language” (One of the best guides for any scholar wanting to understand how to—and how NOT to—write effectively and escape the pedantry of academic writing)

Other Resources:
Document Sources—
Herschel B. Chip, Theories of Modern Art, A Sourcebook by Artists and Critics, 1984
Kristine Styles and Peter Selz, eds. Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art, A Sourcebook of Artist’s Writings, 1996

Histories—
Robert Rosenblum, 19th Century Art, second edition, 2004
Sam Hunter, John Jacobus, Daniel Wheeler, Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, 2000
Erika Doss, American Art of the 20th–21st Centuries, 2017
Michael Archer, Art Since 1960, 1997
Barbara Haskell, The American Century: Art and Culture, 1900-1950, 1999
Patricia Hills, Modern Art in the USA, Issues and Controversies of the 20th Century, 2000
David Hopkins, After Modern Art, 1945-2000, 2000
Patricia Kaplan and Susan Manso, Major European Art Movements 1900-1950, 1977

Critical Theory—
Cynthia Freeland, Art Theory, Avery Short Introduction, 2003
Catherine Belsey, Poststructuralism, A Very Short Introduction, 2002
NOTE: The Oxford Series of "Very Short Guides" includes many other inexpensive, well written books art, cultural studies, philosophy and theorists, and lists are included in advertisements in the front of each volume.

General Guides/Handbooks –
__________.
ArtSpoke, a Guide to Modern Ideas, Movements and Buzzwords, 1848-1944, 1993
Amy Dempsey, Styles, Schools and Movements, 2002
Nikos Stangos, ed., Concepts of Modern Art: from Modernism to Postmodernism, 1994

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

ARTS 5391, requires graduate standing. Except for filmmaking, it is required of all SFA School of Art graduate students to complete their graduate programs. ARTS 5391 is a reading intensive course investigating the ideas and issues of modern art and some postmodern art theories, from Baudelaire to Baudrillard. Working within the framework of an “Art in Context” approach, lectures and discussions will examine representative works and seek to place them within the broader historical milieu. The instructor encourages lively discussion among the students, who may wish to explore more fully certain issues raised in either the class lectures or assigned readings.

Course Contact Hours: As an intensive graduate level course which meets three in-class hours per week, students should expect to spend to devote nine or more hours of study beyond the classroom weekly. This will vary from week to week as some readings are lengthier and/or more difficult than others. You will want to keep a dictionary handy!

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

ARTS 5391 provides an intensive introduction to key theories of modern art from Baudelaire through Baudrillard. Students who successfully complete the course will demonstrate the ability to identify and know the significance of major European and American theorists as they relate the following larger themes and concepts of modern (and some postmodern) art theory:

1) the idea of Modernity; the change from Modern to Postmodern thought & experience
2) Conceptions of reality and unreality as defined by artists, critics and theorists
3) the Rational vs. the Irrational in the creation and interpretation of modern art
4) the relationship between the individual and the social (the ego and the other)
5) the nature and role of Avant-garde cultures and subsequent decay in Postmodern art
6) Art and Politics, and the roles of arts and critics in a rapidly changing society
7) Art Theory (theories) and the transformation from modern to postmodern modalities.

Class meetings will normally consist of introductory lectures and discussions of assigned readings (assignments will be announced weekly). Each student will also take a turn at leading a discussion section, both individually and in groups. It is important to be especially well prepared for days in which the student acts as discussion leader: have key passages marked and offer questions and/or arguments for interpreting the writings in specific ways. There will be three exams, a term project (to
be determined by the student in consultation with the supervising professor, and a final critique session (attendance and active participation in the critique session is mandatory).

Regular attendance and participation is essential and required. Two absences are allowed without consequence, but students may expect a ten-point reduction of the final course grade for each additional absence: no excuses will be accepted.

**STUDENT EVALUATION:**

Exams: 3 @ 100 pts. Each [Includes the final exam]
Class participation: 50 pts.
Class presentation or project: 50 pts.

**TERM PROJECTS:**

Each student will develop a lecture or paper topic individually in conference with the instructor. Students may wish to consider aspects of a particular theory (e.g., Formalism, Post-structuralism), theorist or critic (e.g., Fry, Greenberg, Barthes, Lacan), or artist responding to (or embodying) aspects of a specific critical theory (e.g., Dali responding to Freudian psychology, or comparing Andy Warhol’s use of pop culture with Marshall McLuhan’s theories of mass media culture. Plan on 5 to 7 pages of text for an 25 to 40 minute presentation. Students are encouraged to meet with the professor and discuss one or two drafts of their presentation or paper well in advance of the due date. Presenters will need to submit their lecture notes in legible outline form, with bibliography. Students electing to submit a paper without presenting it, must use standard footnote and bibliographic apparatus and conform either to the *MLA Handbook*, Turabian’s *Guide*, or *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Students are strongly encouraged to consult Strunk and White’s *The Elements of Style* once they have completed a draft of their papers and begin making revisions for the final copy.

**Academic Integrity (4.1)**

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used
previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**Mental Health and Wellness**

SFA values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**

**SFA Counseling Services**
[www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices](http://www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices)
Rusk Building, 3rd Floor
936.468.2401

**SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic**
[www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp)
Human Services, Room 2029 36.468.1041
Crisis Resources:
Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
Crisis text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

TERM SCHEDULE:

This term, the ART 5391 class assignments will be structured loosely to allow for focus on topics that may prove to be of greater importance to class participants: not all readings listed below will be given attention in class discussion, but those that aren’t are listed for your independent review. Regular class times will be strictly observed.

Course schedule is subject to modification.

Readings may vary from the schedule below and will be assigned weekly. Introductory notes/lecture will generally precede each class discussion.

Week #   Topics and Reading assignments: (subject to modification at instructor’s discretion)

                    Handout: 'Mr. Whistler’s Ten O’Clock Lecture’ (20 February 1885)
                    Handout: from Whistler’s *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, 1890
                    (revised and enlarged, 1892)

                    Harrison and Wood (Hereafter H&W), *Art in Theory*, selections:
                    Sigmund Freud, from “On Dreams” (1901)
                    Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1902-03)
                    Henri Bergson, excerpt from “Creative Evolution” (1907)

                    Handout: Henri Matisse, from “Notes of a Painter” (1909)
                    H&W, Wassily Kandinsky, from *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911)
                    H&W, Benedetto Croce, “What is Art?” (1913)
                    H&W, Clive Bell, “The Aesthetic Hypothesis” (1914)

                    and Excerpt from *The Cubist Painters* (1912)
                    H&W, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, from *The Rise of Cubism* (1915-20)
                    H&W, Georges Braque, “Thoughts on Painting” (1917)
                    H&W, Pablo Picasso, “Picasso Speaks” (1923)

                    H&W, Percy Wyndham Lewis, “Our Vortex” (1914)
                    H&W: Kasimir Malevich, *From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism:...
The New Realism in Painting (1915-16)
H&W, Olga Rozanova, “The Basis of the New Creation” (1913)
H&W, De Stijl: “Manifesto 1” (1918)
H&W, Theo van Doesburg, from Principles of Neo-Plastic Art (1917-25)
H&W, Piet Mondrian, Neo-Plasticism: the General Principle of Plastic Equivalence (1920-21) and “Plastic and Pure Plastic Art” (1937)

First Take Home Exam, Sept 27, due Monday, October 2, 4:00PM.
Readings:
H&W, Oswald Spengler, from The Decline of the West (1918)
H&W, Alexander Blok, The Decline of Humanism” (1918)
H&W, P. Wyndham Lewis, “The Children of the New Epoch” (1921)
Handout- Jose Ortega y Gasset, from The Dehumanization of Art (1925)
H&W, Hugo Ball, “Dada Fragments” (1916-17)
H&W, Marcel Duchamp, “The Richard Mutt Case” (1917)
H&W, Tristan Tzara, “Dada Manifesto 1918” (1918)
H&W, Richard Hülsenbeck, “First German Dada Manifesto” (1918-20)

7. Oct. 9, 11.
Readings:
H&W, Andre Breton, from the “First Manifesto of Surrealism” (1924) and “Surrealism and Painting” (1928)
H&W, Georges Bataille, “The Lugubrious Game” (1929)
H&W, Salvador Dali, “The Stinking Ass” (1930)

Readings: H&W, Osip Brik, “Photography vs. Painting” (1926)
H&W, Sigfried Kracauer, from “Mass and Ornament” (1927)
H&W, Walter Benjamin, “The Author as Producer” (1934) and “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1936)
H&W, Theodor Adorno, “Letter to Benjamin” (1936)

Readings: H&W, Clement Greenberg, “Avant-garde and Kitsch” (1939) and “Towards a Newer Laocoon” (1940)
Jean-Paul Sartre, from Existentialism and Humanism (1946) and “The Search for the Absolute” (1948)
Handout: Hans Hofmann from The Search for the Real (1948)
H&W, Ad Reinhardt, “Art as Art” (1962)
Second Take Home Exam, Oct 25; due Wed, November 1st, 4:00PM.

Readings: H&W, Lawrence Alloway, “The Arts and the Mass Media” (1958)
H&W, Marshall McLuhan, from Understanding Media (1964)
H&W, George Kubler, from The Shape of Time (1962)
H&W, Donald Judd, “Specific Objects” (1965)
H&W, Robert Morris, “Notes on Sculpture 1—3” (1966-67)
H&W, Sol Lewitt, “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art” (1967) and “Sentences on Conceptual Art” (1969)
H&W, Robert Smithson, “Cultural Confinement” (1972)
    H&W, Michel Foucault, “What is an Author?” (1969)
    H&W, Roland Barthes, “From Work to Text” (1971)

    H&W, Rosalind Kraus, “A View of Modernism” (1972)

13. THANKSGIVING BREAK, November 18—26

    H&W, Jürgen Habermas, “Modernity—an Incomplete Project” (1980)

    Rosalind Kraus, from “The Originality of the Avant-garde” (1981)
    Jean-François Lyotard, from *The Postmodern Condition: a report on knowledge* (1979)

    Readings to be reviewed in final discussion/critique session:
    H&W, Hal Foster, from “Subversive Signs” (1982)

15. Finals Week Take Home Final to be posted December 4th—due December 11th, 4:30PM.