

## **AH211: Introduction to Twentieth-Century Art: From Van Gogh's *Starry Night* to Jeff Koons' *Made in Heaven***

Seminar Leader: Dr. Laura López Paniagua

Course Times: Tuesdays, 9:00 - 12:15

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Office hours: by appointment.

### **Course Description**

Around 1890, Vincent van Gogh painted his popular *Starry Night* (1890) and *Bedroom in Arles* (1888). A century later, Damien Hirst encased a shark in formaldehyde and displayed it as an artwork titled *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* (1991). In the same decade, Tracey Emin won the prestigious Turner Prize showing her own dirty bed (*My Bed*, 1998) and Jeff Koons produced sculptures and prints portraying himself and his then-wife, the former porn actress Ilona Staller (also known as Cicciolina), engaged in erotic acts in the series *Made in Heaven* (1989-1991). What happened in one century to transform art so radically? This course will examine the political and technological transformations—catastrophic, neutral, or beneficial—that precipitated alterations in views of representation and of the status of art itself. In our survey, we see the value of figurative realism interrogated and undermined by a myriad of different approaches. Dadaism, Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, Viennese Actionism, Minimalism, Conceptual Art and the relation of each to contextual pressures will all be addressed in our question concerning the fate of art in the twentieth century.

Please note: Students will need to bring their own laptops to class.

This course is organized with Google Classroom. All the readings will be provided in this portal.

### **Week 1**

03.09.2019, Tuesday, 9.00 – 12.15

#### **Introduction**

#### **Avant-garde, Dada, Surrealism, Marcel Duchamp**

First approach to “disruptive”, avant-garde modes of thinking through Surrealist methodologies. Such as the ones listed in *A Book of Surrealist Games*, ed. Mel Gooding, 1995.

### **Week 2**

10.09.2019, Tuesday, 9.00 – 12.15

#### **“Language is a Virus I”**

Bjorn Melhus, Hans Bellmer, Unika Zürn

Reading- activity in class:

“The Invisible Generation”, William S. Burroughs, 1966.

Home reading:

<https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2018/04/04/the-chimerical-creatures-of-unica-zurn/>

### **Week 3**

17.09.2019, Tuesday, 9.00 – 12.15

#### **“Language is a Virus II”**

Class activities:

Experimentation with Epic Theater, montage and poetry.

Home reading:

“What is Epic Theater?”, in “Understanding Brecht”, Walter Benjamin, p. 15-18.

### **Week 4**

24.09.2019, Tuesday, 9.00 – 12.15

#### **Aesthetics and Politics: Leni Riefenstahl, “Entartete Kunst”, “Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung”**

In class:

Filmography of **Leni Riefenstahl (DVD):**

*TAG DER FREIHEIT*

*SIEG DES GLAUBENS*

*TRIUMPH DES WILLENS*

*OLYMPIA*

Home: documentary:

[https://vimeo.com/250264053?utm\\_medium=website&utm\\_source=archdaily.com](https://vimeo.com/250264053?utm_medium=website&utm_source=archdaily.com)

### **Week 5**

1.10.2019, Tuesday, 9.00 – 12.15

#### **Monuments and Counter-monuments**

Class reading:

“The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today”, James E. Young, 1992.

Home watching:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38675835>

### **Week 6**

8.10.2019, Tuesday, 9.00 – 12.15

#### **ATTENTION: Visit Berlin’s Monuments and Anti-Monuments**

**Readings: (Readings will be assigned to groups in preparation for the visit)**

Conflict and Commemoration: Two Berlin Memorials, Henry W. Pickford

Germany's Holocaust Memorial Problem-and Mine, James E. Young

Counter-monuments: the anti-monumental and the dialogic, Quentin Stevens, Karen A. Franck & Ruth Fazakerley

Memory and Counter-Memory: The End of the Monument in Germany, by James E. Young

### **Week 7**

15.10.2019, Tuesday, 9.00 – 12.15

Discussion mid-term papers (the papers will consist of the edited presentation for the excursion plus a personal reflection. We shall discuss any question that could arise regarding this assignment.)

### **Troubles with Remembrance: Guernica and The Valley of the Fallen**

#### **Documentary that will be screened in class:**

Simon Schama's Power of Art: Guernica

### **Week 8**

22.10.2019, Tuesday, 9.00 – 12.15

### **Reactions: Pop, Anti-Pop, Abstract Expressionism and Viennese Actionism**

Reading to prepare at home and to be discussed in class:

"Boris Lurie: Anti- Pop", Peter Weibel, 2017.

*29.10.2019 - 04.11.2019 Fall Break*

### **Week 9**

05.11.2019, Tuesday, 9.00 – 12.15

### **Conceptual Art and Minimalism**

Home reading:

Art After Philosophy, Joseph Kosuth

### **Week 10**

12.11.2019, Tuesday, 9.00 – 12.15

### **Joseph Beuys: Art, Politics, and Education**

Beuys Video Documentation

Home reading: Joseph Beuys. Appeal for an Alternative, 1978.

**Week 11**

19.11.2019, Tuesday, 9.00 – 12.15

**The End of Art and History, Archive Fever**

In class:

Les vies possibles de Christian Boltanski, Heinz Peter Schwerfel (Documentary)

Class reading:

„An Archival Impulse“, Hal Foster, 2004.

Home reading:

<https://aeon.co/essays/even-if-the-story-of-art-has-died-does-art-still-live-on>

**Week 12**

26.11.2019, Tuesday, 9.00 – 12.15

**Art Beyond the Limits of Acceptability**

Reading:

“Death and Transfiguration: On Paul Thek“, Mike Kelley, 1992.

**Week 13**

14.12.2018, Tuesday, 9.00 – 12.15

**New Ways of Understanding the Object: Mike Kelley, Jeff Koons, Young British Artists**

Video

Mike Kelley in conversation with Jerry Fialka:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6D6lmIMyyc>

Home reading:

Haim Steinbach, Jeff Koons, Sherrie Levine, et al., “From Criticism to Complicity“, 1986.

**Week 14**

17.12.2018, Friday, Tuesday, 9.00 – 12.15

**Wrap-up session**

**Requirements**

**Attendance**

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than one absence in the seminar (e.g. one double session) will significantly affect the grade for the course. Please also make sure you depart early in order to reach the museums and exhibition spaces in time.

If absent, a short notification via email, sent before the beginning of class, is expected. Please note that punctuality is essential.

Students are advised to consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

### **Assessment**

The course assessment consists of the overall seminar work (one presentation in addition to class participation) and two essays. See also "Grade Breakdown".

### **Presentation**

The students will be divided in groups to prepare the visit to the Monuments and Anti-Monuments of Berlin. They should deliver a presentation of the site assigned during class.

Each student will receive a presentation grade.

### **Writing Assignments**

There are two essays for this course, one mid-term essay (ca. 2000 words) and one longer final essay (ca. 3000 words).

For the mid-term essay, each student will hand in an edited version of the presentation of the visit to the Monuments and Anti-Monuments of Berlin (prepared in common with the other members of their group) plus a personal reflection on the visit (both texts will sum ca. 2000 words).

The mid-term essay is due on 21th October, midnight.

The final essay is due on 20th December, midnight.

Essays should include footnotes/references, bibliography and a list of illustrations. The structure and draft of your essays can be discussed in individual tutorials.

### **Policy on Late Submission of Papers**

All written work must be submitted electronically and on time. Please note that essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C.

Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

### **Grade Breakdown**

Seminar Grade, ie attendance/preparation of texts/participation in discussions: 30%

Presentation during visit to the Monuments & Anti-Monuments in Berlin: 20% (note that this 20% will be the same for all the members of the group)

Essay 1: 20 %

Essay 2: 30 %