

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

Seminar Leader: Laura López Paniagua

Course Times: Mon, 14:00-17:15

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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.

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

Week 1

29.08.2021

Introduction

Avant-garde, Dada, Surrealism, Marcel Duchamp

Avant-garde manifestos.

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.

Dalí:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCitwgX8z34>

Home activity (documentary):

Bauhaus:

https://vimeo.com/250264053?utm_medium=website&utm_source=archdaily.com

+ Reading: Bauhaus manifesto.

Week 2

5.09.2022

Discussion of reading

“Language is a Virus”

Surrealists Hans Bellmer, Unika Zürn and their influence (Bjorn Melhus).

Experimentation with Epic Theater, montage and poetry.

Reading- activities in class:

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

“What is Epic Theater?”, in “Understanding Brecht”, Walter Benjamin, p. 15-23.

Home reading:

Preparation for museum visit,

Catalogue Texts „Louise Bourgeois - The Woven Child“

Week 3

12.09.2022

ATTENTION, VISIT:

LOUISE BOURGEOIS - THE WOVEN CHILD

Martin Gropius Bau Berlin

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

Week 4

19.09.2022

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

DEGENERATE ART. THE NAZIS VS EXPRESSIONISM (1993 documentary)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QE4Ld1mkoM>

Monuments and Counter-monuments

Discussion of Midterm Assignment

Assignment of readings for visit (groups):

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 5

26.09.2022

ATTENTION: Visit Berlin's Monuments and Anti-Monuments

Home reading:

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

Week 6

03.10.2022

ATTENTION: Federal Holiday – Day of German Unity

Week 7

10.10.2022

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

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.)

Documentary:

Simon Schama's Power of Art: Picasso (Guernica), 2006

No home activity (mid-term paper).

The mid-term essay is due on 15th October, midnight.

Week 8

17.10.2022

Troubles with Remembrance: Guernica and The Valley of the Fallen

Artist Lecture:

Dodi Reifenberg: Looted Art and Restoration (Jewish Museum Berlin)

Home readings:

Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting", 1965.

-----Fall Break Monday, October 24 – Sun, October 30 -----

Week 9

31.11.2022

Discussion of reading

Conceptual Art and Minimalism

Class reading: Art After Philosophy, Joseph Kosuth

Students research artists:

Christian Jankowski

John Baldessari

Sol LeWitt

Mary Kelly

Piero Manzoni

Hanne Darboven

Chris Burden

Athur Danto, "After the End of Art", 1997

Week 10

07.11.2022

Joseph Beuys: Art, Politics, and Education

Introduction to Joseph Beuys

Beuys Video Documentation

Home reading:.

Joseph Beuys. Appeal for an Alternative, 1978.

Week 11

14.11.2022

Discussion of reading.

Art and Feminism

Women, Art, Revolution! (2011)

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

Guerrilla Girls, Martha Rosler, Judy Chicago

Home activity:

Documentation for Monica Bonvicini's show. Artist talk:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPv7VWtzB9s>

Week 12

21.11.2022

ATTENTION: Visit

Monica Bonvicini

Neue Nationalgalerie

<https://www.smb.museum/en/exhibitions/detail/monica-bonvicini/>

If the Neuenationalgalerie is closed on Monday, the visit will take place on Saturday, 26.11.

Home Reading: "Death and Transfiguration: On Paul Thek", Mike Kelley, 1992.

Week 13

28.11.2022

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>

Class reading:

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

Week 14

05.12.2022

Wrap-up session

Course conclusions

Comments on final paper

Week 15

12.12.2022

Completion Week

The final essay is due on 17th December, midnight.

Requirements

The use of laptops or tablets is compulsory during seminars (this course is organized through Google Classroom).

Please also make sure you depart early in order to reach the museums and exhibition spaces in time.

This course requires the active participation of students in the form of:

- Participation in group discussions
- Museum visits
- Attendance to lectures
- Research and presentation of results in class

The students will be required to hand in two essays for midterm and final evaluation.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

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.

Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FALL 2022: Some students may need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. Instructors should make efforts to offer alternatives to in-person attendance where needed, including remote participation or asynchronous options.

Assessment

The course assessment consists of the overall seminar work (including active class participation, research, and presentations), plus two essays. See also “Grade Breakdown”.

Assignments

There are two written pieces for this course.

The first written piece will consist of a redacted version of the notes used for the student presentations during the visit to the Berlin Memorials (done in groups), plus c. a. 1500 words of personal commentary about the visit.

The second piece (c.a. 3000 words) will be an essay divided in the usual sections expected in academic writing (instructions will be provided).

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

The mid-term essay is due on 15th October, midnight.

The final essay is due on 17th December, midnight.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to 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. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors’ office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Grade Breakdown

Midterm Grades (September-October):

Seminar Grade: 50%

(attendance, preparation of texts/participation in discussions, presentation during visits)

Midterm Essay:

25% Edited notes Berlin Monuments Visit

25% Personal Commentary

Second Grades (November-December):

Seminar Grade: 50%

(attendance, preparation of texts/participation in discussions, presentation during visits)

Second Essay: 50%

Final grades: 50% midterm grades, 50% second grades