

AR360 Contemporary Art and the Politics of Exhibition Culture: the Venice Biennial

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Course Times: Mondays, 14:00 - 17:15 (with study trip Venice, taking place during fall break)

Office Hours: Wed 10am – 12pm (and by appointment)

The highlight of this course will be the trip to a major international art exhibition: the Venice Art Biennial. The Biennale di Venezia is the oldest world exhibition of visual art: founded in 1895, it figures as a model (and counter-model) for many of the 200 international biennials and triennials that exist today. The 2024 edition is curated by Adriano Pedrosa, the first Latin American to curate the International Exhibition, in fact the first one based in the Southern Hemisphere. Titled “Stranieri Ovunque – Foreigners Everywhere”, the central themes of the exhibition are migration and decolonization. As indigenous artists will have a particular prominence, a focus of the course will be on indigenous art, more specifically on the work of Jeffrey Gibson, a Bard artist-in-residence, who will represent the United States at this year’s Biennial. Our trip to Venice will include attending a workshop on indigenous art, organized by Bard’s Center for Indigenous Studies. The excursion to Venice will be supplemented by pre- and post-sessions in Berlin. During these we will address the history, conceptual agenda and framework of the exhibition, and consider individual artists as well as artworks.

Requirements

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.

Accessibility

Bard College Berlin is committed to inclusion and providing equal access to all students; we uphold and maintain all aspects of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 3 of the German Disability Equality Act of April 27, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1468). If

you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, Atticus Kleen, (accommodations@berlin.bard.edu) to request an official accommodation.

Requests for longer-term accommodations should be made as early as possible to ensure adequate time for coordination and planning. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and may require advance notice to implement.

If you have already been approved for accommodations with the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, please arrange to meet with me outside of class so that we can develop an implementation plan.

Students may face extenuating circumstances related to various personal or external factors, which impact their academic performance. While these circumstances often do not fall within the legal framework of Disability Accommodations, Bard College Berlin is committed to supporting students experiencing such circumstances. A student needing a short extension or a replacement assignment because of an extenuating circumstance is encouraged to make arrangements directly with instructors if possible. If further support is needed, please visit the [Bard College Berlin Accessibility page](#). Questions about this process can be directed to James Harker (j.harker@berlin.bard.edu) or Maria Anderson-Long (m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu).

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.

Bard College Berlin may 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.

Assessment

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

Assignments

There are two essays for this course, one mid-term essay (ca. 2000 words) and one longer final essay (ca. 3000 words). A range of prompts will be provided in advance.

The mid-term essay is due on 18th 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

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 a professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it should be submitted by the new deadline agreed upon by both parties. 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

Seminar preparation, presentation, classroom participation: 40%

Essay 1: 25%

Essay 2: 35%

Schedule

Week 1

02.09., Monday, 14:00 – 16:00

Introduction

Contemporary Art: Discourses, Politics, Problems

Homework:

Post an artwork and/exhibition that impressed/interested you recently onto the padlet link that will be shared beforehand. Be prepared to discuss your post.

Week 2

09.09., Monday, 14:00 – 16:00

The Venice Biennial

The history, role, function and impact of an exhibition

Reading:

Vittoria Martini, "The Evolution of an Exhibition Model. Venice Biennale as an Entity in Time"
Published in: F. Martini, V. Martini (eds.), Just Another Exhibition. Histories and Politics of biennials, Postmediabooks 2001.

<https://www.on-curating.org/issue-46-reader/the-evolution-of-an-exhibition-model-venice-biennale-as-an-entity-in-time.html>

Week 3

16.09., Monday, 14:00 – 16:00

The Venice Biennial

Criticism and defenses

Reading:

Elena Filipovic, "The Global White Cube"

Published in: Barbara Vanderlinden, Elena Filipovic (eds.), The Maniasta Decade, Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-Wall Europe, MIT Press Massachusetts 2005

<https://www.on-curating.org/issue-22-43/the-global-white-cube.html>

Gioni, Massimiliano, "In Defense of Biennials", published in: Alexander Dumbadze, Suzanne Hudson (eds.), Contemporary Art: 1989 to the Present, Wiley and Sons, West Sussex, 2012

Kapur, Geeta, "Curating in Heterogenous Worlds", published in: Alexander Dumbadze, Suzanne Hudson (eds.), Contemporary Art: 1989 to the Present, Wiley and Sons, West Sussex, 2012

Caroline A. Jones, "Biennial Culture and the Aesthetics of Experience", published in: Alexander Dumbadze, Suzanne Hudson (eds.), Contemporary Art: 1989 to the Present, Wiley and Sons, West Sussex, 2012

Week 4

23.09. *no class*

Week 5

30.09., Monday, 14:00 – 16:00

Biennale Arte 2024: Stranieri Ovunque – Foreigners Everywhere

Reading:

Adriano Pedrosa, “Foreigners Everywhere – Stranieri Ovunque”

Adriano Pedrosa, interviewed by Julieta González

Claire Fontaine, interviewed by Adriano Pedrosa

All texts published in: La Biennale di Venezia, Exhibition Catalogue, 2024

Week 6

07.10., Monday, 14:00 – 16:00

Indigenous Art at the Biennial

Reading:

Kobena Mercer, “Art History After Globalization: Formations of the Colonial Modern”

Naina Terena de Jesus, “Crafts and the Indigenous Social Body”

Jaider Esbell, “Contemporary Indigenous Art as a Trap for Traps

Luce de Lire, “Representational Justice”

Walter D Mignolo, “Coloniality: The Dark Side of Modernity”

All texts published in: La Biennale di Venezia, Exhibition Catalogue, 2024

Week 7

14.10., Monday, 14:00 – 16:00

in-class work on presentations

Oct. 20 – 27 Study Trip to Venice

- Sunday, Oct. 20: travel to Venice
- Monday, Oct. 21: exhibition visits “Pierre Huyghe” at Pinault Collection and “Christoph Büchel” at Fondazione Prada
- Tuesday, Oct. 22: Venice Biennale, Giardini
- Wednesday, Oct. 23: Venice Biennale, Arsenale
- Thursday – Saturday, Oct. 25-26: Attend the conference on Indigenous Art
- Sunday, Oct. 27: travel back to Berlin

Week 8

28.10., Monday *no class*

Week 9

4.11., Monday, 14:00 – 16:00

Venice Biennale de-brief

Week 10

11.11., Monday, 14:00 – 16:00

Venice Biennale de brief

Zoom-guest: Erëmirë Krasniqi, Curator of the Pavilion for the Republic of Kosovo, Venice Biennale, and Bard College Berlin Alumna

Week 11

18.11., Monday, 14:00-16:00

Attention: **Field Trip to Gropius Bau**, visit of the exhibition “**Rirkrit Tiravanija: Das Glück ist nicht immer lustig**”

Meeting point at Gropius Bau

Week 12

Attention: Special Date 30.11. (Saturday), 14:00-16:00

Visit of the exhibition “**Nan Goldin**” at Neue Nationalgalerie

Week 13

2.12., Monday, 14:00-16:00

Final class, wrap-up