

ART 2003C-05
Survey of Studio Art Practices
(Florence, Italy)
Spring 2009

instructor: **Andrew Ross**
email: **andrew@andrewross.com**
Italian mobile phone: **349.886.3619**
office hours: **TBA, or by appointment**

Course Syllabus

General Information

Meetings: Monday, Wednesday 11:30am – 1:00pm
Classroom: O.W. III
Prerequisite: an interest in learning about art!

Course Description and Objectives

This course covers the approaches and critical methods to the study of contemporary visual arts. We will explore the many ways and media that artists use to create their works. An emphasis is given to visual perception and basic art making in Contemporary Art and Design.

You will be introduced to esthetic concepts, theory and criticism, and a visual vocabulary. We will visit artists' studios, museums and galleries, as well as film screenings and performances. We will explore contemporary art in the city of Florence and the surrounding areas. This course will incorporate the creative process, style, and subject matter; the social, political, and economic factors that effect how art is produced and looks; and historical precedence to Contemporary Art.

You will be asked to be an active participant in the learning of the material presented to you. We will focus on the art-making practice and how we can read into the works we view – with a goal of looking for the ideas and concepts that are revealed through contemporary art. To help achieve this goal, you will have ten 300-word (~1 typed page) writing assignments in which you will question and analyze ideas from readings and the art we view. In addition, you will have one semester-long individual project: an *artist's book*. This book will help you to grow visually and conceptually as an artist as well as give you a lasting document of your time in Florence. To foster your visual perception and provide you with a better understanding of the various art-making processes we consider in this course, various “creative” assignments will be handed out for inclusion in your artist's book.

Class Format

The class periods will consist of slide lectures; video presentations; and field trips to artists' studios, galleries, museums, and other areas of artistic interest. You are expected to attend all classes, as this is where we will unite the ideas presented in the readings with a look at the actual works they connect with. In addition, we will look for ways to incorporate the “tours” of Italy into our studies of Contemporary Art.

Grading

Your overall grade will consist of 10 writing assignments (worth 4% each, 40% total), your artist's book (40%), and a participation score (20%). Writing assignments are assessed on an understanding of and your own insights drawn from the readings or artworks. The artist's book is your chance to show me your creativity and personal awareness of the practice of Contemporary Art. You will be expected to attend all classes, complete all writing assignments, produce a full artist's book, and participate fully in class discussions.

Grading Scale:

- A** excellent work – writing assignments show exceptional understanding and insight to the readings; creative and unique execution and presentation of the artist's book
- B** good work – writing assignments show good understanding of the readings; strong execution and presentation in the artist's book
- C** average work – writing assignments achieve basic understanding of the readings; basic execution and presentation in the artist's book

- D** below average work – writing assignments do not show an understanding of the readings; artist's book consists of poor execution and presentation
- F** failure – writing assignments and/or artist's book not completed; showing total disregard for the class; also given to any student with 6 or more unexcused absences

I have a very strict late policy, so be sure to turn in all writing assignments on time. Writing assignments turned in late are penalized one letter grade (10%) *per class* late after the due date. Finish them on time! **A late artist's book (these will be collected on Friday, 17 April) will not be accepted at all!**

Note: you must complete all writing assignments to pass this class. This is a "Gordon Rule" class that requires 3,000 words of writing.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation is essential to academic success. Therefore, I include attendance and participation in my grading. Missing class will cause you to quickly fall behind on the materials and concepts. And I see participation in class discussions as providing the wonderful benefit of peer-to-peer learning.

Whereas participation is a factored percentage of your overall grade, attendance has the ability to raise or lower your final grade from your earned score. Poor attendance will result in a lowering of your overall grade, but I will also reward good attendance with bonus points, as follows:

- If you do not miss a single class during the entire semester, 5 points will be added to your overall grade (that's half a letter grade!)
- If you miss only one class, 2 points will be added to your overall grade
- Missing up to four classes is acceptable and will result in no penalty
- Each class missed beyond four will result in a drop of one letter grade (10 points), with 6 unexcused absences resulting in failure
- In addition, three late arrivals to or early departures from class count as an absence

Excused absences are absences none-the-less – I make no differentiation. I have no qualms about failing you for poor attendance. This policy is not flexible, so be in class and be on time!

Required Readings

Various articles to be distributed in PDF or printed format throughout the semester.

Recommended Readings

Alberti, Leon Battista and Kemp, Martin, editor. On Painting. Penguin Classics, 1991.
(or *Della pittura*, if you wish to read the original Italian)
ISBN-10: 0140433317, ISBN-13: 978-0140433319

Adams, Robert. Why People Photograph. Aperture Foundation, 1994.
ISBN-10: 0893816035, ISBN-13: 978-0893816032

Harper, Glenn and Moyer, Twylene, editors. Conversations on Sculpture (Perspectives on Contemporary Sculpture). Oakland Museum of California, 2007.
ISBN-10: 0295987413, ISBN-13: 978-0295987415

Supplies Needed

- A bound artist notebook, at least 5"x8", plain paper, at least 70 pages
(**note: you need to bring this to class every day**)
- Various tools to be creative in your book: pencils, pens, paper, glue, tape, found objects, etc.

Note: your Artist's Book is a multipurpose document of your artistic experiences during the semester. This can include sketches, collages, journaling or other writing, pasting in items you find along the way, attaching photos, etc. It should not be used for your notes in other classes. It should be creative. It should be personal. It should represent your time in Florence. Hopefully it will become one of your favorite mementos of your time studying abroad!

Resources for Art Supplies

- Zecchi, Via dello Studio 19/r (they give a student discount)
- Bati, Via Verdi 67/r (at Via Giuseppe Verdi, one block from school)
- Rigacci, Via dei Servi 71/r
- Salvini, Via degli Alfani 127/r

Email/ Cell Phone Policy

I highly recommend that you check your email often, as this is where outside-of-class updates and notices will be sent (I will have you provide me with your preferred email address). Because I realize in Florence checking of email may not be as frequent as in the U.S., I will try my best to not use email contact for anything that I do not back up or repeat in class.

Cell phones are both a blessing and a curse. The number I provided above is for my mobile phone here in Italy, so please do not call me late at night or on the weekends expecting to just “leave a message”. Generally, I prefer you contact me via email. For your own cell phones, *I don't want to see or hear them during class*. You won't see me making or answering phone calls (or text messaging) in class, so pay fellow students and me the same respect – **turn it off or silence it!**

If your phone rings during class or I see you using it, I will ask you to leave and mark you absent for that class. Or you can accept the alternative punishment of bringing treats for the *entire* class during our next meeting.

Course Calendar

My intention with this course in Florence is to keep the calendar fluid and evolving, reacting to new possibilities and discoveries made during the semester. My plan is for us to be *outside* of the classroom at least once a week, if not both class sessions. I will also keep a number of slide and video lectures prepared for if the weather is bad, to supplement what we see in person, or when similar aspects of contemporary art are not readily available in the vicinity.

However, one aspect of the course will be very structured. The writing assignments will occur every week and will be due on each Monday (excluding the first week of the semester, and the first week after Spring Break). I will also pass out the next reading and/or the writing assignment question on Mondays.

About every two weeks during the semester, I will hand out various “creative” assignments, which will be hands-on projects for you to develop your talents within your artist's book. These will be viewed and graded as part of your final, completed artist's book.

The Fine Print...

Florida State Academic Honor Policy

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of student's academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “be honest and truthful and... [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University.” (The full Academic Honor Policy is at <http://www.srr.fsu.edu/academic.htm>)

Americans with Disabilities Act Policy

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should: (1) Register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. (More information about services available to FSU students with disabilities can be found at <http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu>)

Non-Discrimination Policy

Discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated in this course.
(Information on Florida State University's non-discrimination policy can be found at <http://www.diversity.fsu.edu>)

Sexual Harassment Policy

Sexual Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in this course.
(Information on Florida State University's non-discrimination policy can be found at <http://www.auditservices.fsu.edu/sh>)

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. Version 1.0, created 8 January 2009