

Introduction to Critical Art Theory

Course code: Art 273/Art 573

Semester and year: Spring 2021

Day and time: Monday 18:30-21:15

Instructor: Dr. Tomáš Hříbek, Phd.

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Consultation hours: 18:00-18:30 and by appointment

Credits US/ECTS	3/6	Level	Choose an item.
Length	15 weeks	Pre-requisite	Choose an item.
Contact hours	42 hours	Course type	Bachelor, Master

1. Course Description

This course will introduce students to a range of critical theories from the early modern to the contemporary times. Some of the texts we shall be studying have been influential in a variety of humanistic disciplines, but we shall focus on their uses in the study of visual arts. We shall also examine the limitations of each theory that we shall study.

2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and articulate the salient critical-theoretical points.
- Analyze artworks in the language of the modern critical theories of art.
- Apply the theoretical tools to art practices, either in critical writing or art practice.
- Improve their academic writing skills specifically by adopting the language of critical theories of art.
- Create works of art that incorporate the concerns of the critical theories of art (creating a work of art is acceptable as a substitute for an essay from art students – see further sections 4, 5 and 6 below).

3. Reading Material

Required Materials

- Donald Preziosi, *The Art of Art History, A Critical Anthology*. New Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009
- Several additional texts shall be available online and/or photocopies.

Recommended Materials

- Anne D'Alleva, *Methods and Theories of Art History*. London: Laurence King Publishers, 2009
- Charles Harrison, Paul Wood & Jason Gaiger (eds.), *Art in Theory 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.
- Charles Harrison & Paul Wood (eds.), *Art in Theory 1900-2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003

4. Teaching methodology

Background information about the texts, their context, and relevant artworks, will be provided by means of PowerPoint presentations. However, the main focus of the course is on a classroom discussion of the assigned texts, and their application to a wide range of works of art. Students will also be encouraged to visit on their own art museums and exhibits, and use their knowledge of the critical theories in interpreting art. Art students will test the acquired theoretical knowledge through creating artworks specifically for the class.

5. Course Schedule

Date	Class Agenda
Feb 08	Topic: Introduction Description: An overview of different theories of art and its history
Feb 15	Topic: Art as History Description: Art writing before art history Reading: Vasari, excerpt from <i>Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects</i> , Winckelmann, "Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture", Davis, "Winckelmann Divided: Mourning and the Death of Art History", Baxandall, excerpt from <i>Patterns of Intention</i>
Feb 22	Topic: Aesthetics Description: Classical aesthetics as the source of modern art history Reading: Kant, "What is an Enlightenment?", Kant, excerpts from <i>The Critique of Judgement</i> , Hegel, excerpt from <i>Philosophy of Fine Art</i> , Rodowick, "Impure Mimesis, or The Ends of the Aesthetic"
Mar 01	Topic: Style Description: The early history of art as an evolution of styles Reading: Wölfflin, excerpt from <i>Principles of Art History</i> , Summers, "'Form', Nineteenth-Century Metaphysics, and the Problem of Art Historical Description", Gombrich, "Style"
Mar 08	Topic: Anthropology as Art History Description: History of art as a set of solutions to common problems Reading: Riegl, "Leading Characteristics of the Late Roman Kunswollen", Warburg, "Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America", Iversen, "Retrieving Warburg's Tradition"
Mar 15	Topic: Iconography and Semiology Description: The study of pictures as texts Reading: Panofsky, "Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art", Damisch, "Semiotics and Iconography", Bal and Bryson, "Semiotics and Art History: A Discussion of Context and Senders" Study guide for the mid-term available
Mar 22	Topic: Formalism and Minimalism Description: Art as form and art as a mere object Reading: Greenberg, "Modernist Painting", Morris, "Notes on Sculpture", Fried, "Art and Objecthood"
Mar 29	Topic: Critical Theory and Cultural Materialism Description: On the material preconditions of cultural production Reading: Adorno and Horkheimer, "Enlightenment as Mass Deception", Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproducibility", Mitchell, "The Rhetoric of Iconoclasm: Marx, Ideology and Fetishism" Mid-term exam in class
Apr 05	Holiday – Easter Monday
Apr 12	Topic: Modernism and Postmodernity

	<p>Description: Theory of art after the demise of modernity Reading: Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field", Foucault, "What is an Author?", Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism"</p>
Apr 19	<p>Topic: Art and the Unconscious Description: The unconscious sources of artistic creativity Reading: Freud, "the Uncanny", Freud, "Fetishism", Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"</p>
Apr 26	<p>Topic: Art and Truth Description: The ontological import of art Reading: Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art", Schapiro, "The Still-Life as a Personal Object—A Note on Heidegger and van Gogh", Derrida, "Restitution of the Truth in Pointing [<i>Pointure</i>]"</p>
May 03	<p>Topic: The Gendered Subject Description: Masculine, Feminine etc. in Art Reading: Salomon, "The Art Historical Canon: Sins of Omission", Kelly and Smith, "No Essential Femininity", Jones, "Postfeminism, Feminist Pleasures, and Embodied Theories of Art" Study guide for the final available</p>
May 10	<p>Topic: Queerness Description: Beyond heteronormativity in art theory Reading: Riviere, "Womanliness as Masquerade", Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory", Doyle, "Queer Wallpaper"</p>
May 17	<p>Topic: Postcolonialism and the Other Description: Against the Eurocentric Bias Reading: Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order", Duncan, "The Art Museum as Ritual", Coombes, "Inventing the 'Postcolonial': Hybridity and Constituency in Contemporary Curating"</p>
May 24	<p>Topic: Concluding discussion and presentation of artworks created by art students. Final exam in class</p>

6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

Assignment	Workload (average)	Weight in Final Grade	Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
Attendance and Class Participation	42	10%		2
Mid-term test		25%		1
Final exam		25%		1
Essay/artwork		40%		1
TOTAL	150	100%		

*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

7. Detailed description of the assignments

Exams

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Accuracy of knowledge	100%

Essay

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Accuracy of exposition	40%
Critical analysis	30%
Composition and structure	20%
Citations and references	10%

1. General Requirements and School Policies

General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

Electronic communication and submission

The university and instructors shall only use students' university email address for communication, with additional communication via NEO LMS or Microsoft Teams. Students sending e-mail to an instructor shall clearly state the course code and the topic in the subject heading, for example, "COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question". All electronic submissions are through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take-home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

Attendance

Attendance, i.e., presence in class in real-time, is expected and encouraged. However, the requirement that students miss not more than 35% of real-time classes is temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Absence excuse and make-up options

Should a student be absent from classes for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), s/he can submit to the Dean of Students an Absence Excuse Request Form supplemented with documents providing reasons for the absence. These must be submitted within one week of the absence. If possible, it is recommended the instructor be informed of the absence in advance. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if s/he submits an Absence Excuse Request Form along with the finalized add/drop form.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean of Students are entitled to make up assignments and exams provided their nature allows. Assignments missed due to unexcused absences which cannot be made up, may result in a decreased or failing grade as specified in the syllabus.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week of the date the absence was excused to arrange for make-up options.

Late work: No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

Electronic devices

Electronic devices (e.g. phones, tablets, laptops) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information, etc.). Any other use will result in the student being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. No electronic devices may be used during tests or exams unless required by the exam format and the instructor.

Eating is not allowed during classes.

Cheating and disruptive behavior

If a student engages in disruptive conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the class and shall report the behavior to the Dean.

Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misconduct, the exam or assignment will be failed and the student will be expelled from the exam or class.

Plagiarism and Academic Tutoring Center

Plagiarism is "the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work." (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Random House, New York, 1993)

Turnitin's White Paper 'The Plagiarism Spectrum' (available at <http://go.turnitin.com/paper/plagiarism-spectrum>) identifies 10 types of plagiarism ordered from most to least severe:

1. CLONE: An act of submitting another's work, word-for-word, as one's own.
2. CTRL-C: A written piece that contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations.
3. FIND-REPLACE: The act of changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source in a paper.
4. REMIX: An act of paraphrasing from other sources and making the content fit together seamlessly.
5. RECYCLE: The act of borrowing generously from one's own previous work without citation; To self-plagiarize.
6. HYBRID: The act of combining perfectly cited sources with copied passages—without citation—in one paper.
7. MASHUP: A paper that represents a mix of copied material from several different sources without proper citation.
8. 404 ERROR: A written piece that includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources
9. AGGREGATOR: The "Aggregator" includes proper citation, but the paper contains almost no original work.
10. RE-TWEET: This paper includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text's original wording and/or structure.

At minimum, plagiarism from types 1 through 8 will result in a failing grade for the assignment and shall be reported to the Dean. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Allegations of bought papers and intentional or consistent plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

If unsure about technical aspects of writing, students are encouraged to consult with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at: <http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/>.

Course accessibility and inclusion

Students with disabilities are asked to contact the Dean of Students as soon as possible to discuss reasonable accommodations. Academic accommodations are not retroactive. Students who will be absent from course activities due to religious holidays may seek reasonable accommodations by contacting the Dean of Students in writing within the first two weeks of the term. All requests must include specific dates for which the student requests accommodations.

8. Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage*	Description
A	95 – 100	Excellent performance. The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
A-	90 – 94	
B+	87 – 89	Good performance. The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
B	83 – 86	
B-	80 – 82	
C+	77 – 79	Fair performance. The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
C	73 – 76	
C-	70 – 72	
D+	65 – 69	Poor. The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student's work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
D	60 – 64	
F	0 – 59	Fail. The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by and when:

Tomáš Hříbek, 29. 11. 2019

Approved by and when: