COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on how curatorial decisions and practices frames and revises understandings of art history and studio practice within the spaces of art museums and galleries. We will critically assess how curators structure arguments about the history and meaning of art through ideological and practical terms, including education, collections management, publications, visitor experiences, and conservation. Students will develop an advanced understanding of the methods available to curators for researching, organizing, and expressing an art historical question in the form of an exhibition.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course participation, which includes completing all readings on time and engaging regularly in class discussion, is essential. Students will be responsible for an oral presentation at the end of the semester.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The objectives for this course are:

- Build knowledge of art historical material, vocabulary, and methods
- Develop written and oral communication skills through both individual and collaborative work
- Develop critical thinking and analysis of both visual evidence and textual sources dealing with art
- Inculcate awareness of the global production of visual culture

These objectives correlate to the following IDEA objectives:

- Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends) – IDEA #1
- Developing skills in expressing oneself orally or in writing – IDEA #8
- Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories – IDEA #2
- Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual-cultural activity – IDEA #7
LEARNING RESOURCES

There is no required textbook for this course; all course materials, including pdfs of readings and links to websites, videos, etc., are posted on Canvas. All course content, grades, and communications will occur via Canvas.

ASSIGNMENTS

Object Curation (15%)
Due: January 27
Choose between 5-10 objects (any media and date) and write a brief narrative (500-1000 words) for them. How are they connected? What do they “mean”? What story is told by grouping them together? What historical questions does this group raise?

Object Profile (25%)
First Draft Due: February 24
Choose an object from the NEHMA collection listed on the object list (posted on Canvas under ‘Files’). Research the object, the artist, the style, and the medium. Write a brief text (500-1000 words), to be placed in the museum’s object file and posted online.

Object History (15%)
Due: March 2
Reconstruct the life of an object from the Metropolitan Museum of Art OR the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. An exhibition history is listed with most major objects. For example: (Met) Joan Miró, Dutch Interior (III), 198; (NGA) Mary Cassatt, Little Girl in a Blue Armchair, 1878. Write a brief statement (500-1000 words) on how the meaning of the object changes when included in different exhibitions.

Object Controversy (15%)
Due: March 23
Choose one of the controversial exhibitions listed below. Research the background of and backlash to the exhibition and write a brief statement (500-1000 words) on how you would defend the exhibition.
Family of Man (1955)
Harlem on My Mind: Cultural Capital of Black America 1900-68 (1969)
The Spirit Sings (1988)
The Perfect Moment (1988-89)
Magiciens de la terre (1989)
Sensation (1997-2000)
Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture (2010-11)

Object Construction (30%)
Artist Statement Due: April 6
Final Exhibition/In-class presentation Due: April 20 & 27
GRADING

Your final grade is based on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100 – 94%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>93.9 – 90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89.9 – 87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86.9 – 84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>83.9 – 80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79.9 – 77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76.9 – 74%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>73.9 – 70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69.9 – 67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66.9 – 64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>63.9 – 60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59.9 – 0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

COURSE POLICIES

Canvas Notification Preferences

Please make sure your Canvas notification preferences are set so that you will receive course announcements ASAP or Daily.

Instructor Feedback/Communication

The quickest way to get ahold of me is via email (marissa.vigneault@usu.edu). I will respond to emails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours over the weekend.

Syllabus Changes

This syllabus is subject to change due to weather, class discussion, etc. I will notify the class regarding all changes via Canvas announcements.

Late Work

No late submissions will be accepted. I will only accept late submissions in the case of an acceptable emergency. All due dates are clearly stated on the syllabus and it is your responsibility as a student to note when assignments are due and to give yourself adequate time to finalize them.

COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: Readings, Videos, etc. are to be completed for the day under which they are listed. All readings are available on Canvas under ‘Files.’

January 13th
Curating as Art History, Art History as Curating

January 20th
What is a Curator? What is Curating?


Assignment (Due 1/27): Choose between 5-10 objects (any media and date) and write a 500-1000 word narrative for them. How are they connected? What do they “mean”? What story is told by grouping them together? What historical questions does this group raise?

January 27th

Contemporary Curating


Lucy Lippard, “Curating by Numbers, Tate Papers 12 (Autumn 2009).

N6538.N5 J664 2011


February 3rd

No Class – College Art Association


Assignment (First Draft Due 2/17): Research and write NEHMA object profile.
February 10th

**Researching Objects: Documenting, Cataloging, Digitizing**


February 17th

**Making the Cut: Objects in the Exhibition**


February 24th

**Constructing an Argument through Objects**

*Discussion with Whitney Tassie, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, UMFA*


**Assignment (Due 3/2):** Reconstruct the life of an object from the Metropolitan Museum of Art OR the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. An exhibition history is listed with most major objects. For example: (Met) Joan Miró, *Dutch Interior (III)*, 198; (NGA) Mary Cassatt, *Little Girl in a Blue Armchair*, 1878. Write a brief statement (500-1000 words) on how the meaning of the object changes when included in different exhibitions.

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**March 2nd**

**Biases and Historical Omissions**


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**March 9th**

**No Class – Spring Break**

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**March 16th**

**Exhibition vs. Catalogue**

*The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920*


**The West as America reviews:**

“Showdown at “The West As America Exhibition,”” *American Art* 5, no 3 (Summer 1991): 2–11


Alan Trachtenberg, "Contesting the West". *Art In America* 79:9 (September 1991): 118.


Curator’s Response:


*Assignment (Due 3/23):* Choose one of the controversial exhibitions listed below. Research the background of and backlash to the exhibition and write a brief statement (500-1000 words) on how you would defend the exhibition.

*Family of Man* (1955)


*The Spirit Sings* (1988)

*The Perfect Moment* (1988-89)

*Magiciens de la terre* (1989)

*Sensation* (1997-2000)

*Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture* (2010-11)

March 23rd

*Censorship and Controversies*


March 30th

*Tangled Histories: Issues of Repatriation*


Assignment (Due 4/6): Write an Artist Statement.

April 6th
Outside the Museum: Alternative Spaces


April 13th
The Artist as Curator


April 20th
Student Presentations
UNIVERSITY POLICIES and PROCEDURES

Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities

Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. Faculty Code Policy #403 (Links to an external site.) further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

Academic Integrity – "The Honor System"

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. The Honor System is designed to establish the higher level of conduct expected and required of all Utah State University students.

The Honor Pledge (Links to an external site.): To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge: "I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."

A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

Academic Dishonesty

The instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to Academic Dishonesty, as defined the University’s Student Code. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- Cheating: using, attempting to use, or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity. Unauthorized assistance includes:
  - Working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done “individually;”
  - Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
  - Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;
  - Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;

- Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.

- **Falsification**: altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.

- **Plagiarism**: representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one’s own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

### Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined by the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as any "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." If you feel you are a victim of sexual harassment, you may talk to or file a complaint with the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Office located in Old Main, Room 161, or call the AA/EEO Office at (435) 797-1266.

### Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term ‘extenuating’ circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

### Students with Disabilities

Students with ADA-documented physical, sensory, emotional or medical impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Veterans may also be eligible for services. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Please contact the DRC prior to or as early in the semester as possible. Alternate formats for course content are available with advanced notice. Contacting the Disability Resource Center (DRC):

- On Campus: Room 101 of the University Inn
- Phone: 435-797-2444
- Website: [http://www.usu.edu/drc/](http://www.usu.edu/drc/)

Disability related resources for current students:

- DRC Student Handbook
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Student Handbook
- Disability Related Scholarships
- Campus Resources
- Documentation Guidelines
- Online Resources for Students with Disabilities

### Diversity Statement
Regardless of intent, careless or ill-informed remarks can be offensive and hurtful to others and detract from the learning climate. If you feel uncomfortable in a classroom due to offensive language or actions by an instructor or student(s) regarding ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, contact:

- Student Services: http://www.usu.edu/studentservices/ (Links to an external site.), 435.797.1712, studentservices@usu.edu, TSC 220
- Student Advocates: http://www.usu.edu/ususa/legal/ (Links to an external site.), 435.797.2912, TSC 340,
- Access and Diversity: http://www.usu.edu/accesscenter/ (Links to an external site.), 435.797.1728, mailto:access@usu.edu; TSC 315
- Multicultural Programs: http://www.usu.edu/accesscenter/multiculture/ (Links to an external site.), 435-797-1728, TSC 315
- LGBTQ Programs: http://www.usu.edu/accesscenter/lgbtqa/ (Links to an external site.), 435-797-GAYS, TSC 314
- Provost’s Office Diversity Resources: http://www.usu.edu/provost/faculty/diversity/ (Links to an external site.), (435) 797-8176

You can learn about your student rights by visiting:
The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University: http://www.usu.edu/studentservices/studentcode/ (Links to an external site.)

**Grievance Process**

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: Article VII. Grievances (Links to an external site.).

Full details for USU Academic Policies and Procedures can be found at:

- Student Conduct (Links to an external site.)
- Student Code (Links to an external site.)
- Academic Integrity
- USU Selected Academic Policies and Procedures (Links to an external site.)
- USU Academic Policies and Procedures (Links to an external site.)
- Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility Policy (Links to an external site.)

**Emergency Procedures**

In the case of a drill or real emergency, classes will be notified to evacuate the building by the sound of the fire/emergency alarm system or by a building representative. In the event of a disaster that may interfere with either notification, evacuate as the situation dictates (i.e., in an earthquake when shaking ceases or immediately when a fire is discovered). Turn off computers and take any personal items with you. Elevators should not be used; instead, use the closest stairs.