

## ARHA-92, Section 05: Art and its Display in the Twentieth Century

Spring Semester 2011

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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This seminar examines the history, theory, and practice of displaying art to the public in the twentieth century. Issues we will discuss include the diverse contexts in which art is shown, such as museum galleries, public spaces, and virtual realms; the evolving motivations for such displays; and the ways in which modes of exhibition change our interpretation of art. We will also consider the role art exhibitions play in our world today, as arbiters of history and culture but also as catalysts for controversy, as well as the expanded function of the museum, from a home or repository for the arts to a source of artistic inspiration and activity.

The readings for each class will be available either on 4-Hr. Reserve at Frost Library, or as E-Reserves, accessible through the Art Department website: <https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/art>.

Each class (with a few exceptions) will consist of FOUR, 30-minute student presentations based on the assigned readings for that day. Student presenters will summarize the main points of the reading assigned to them and facilitate discussion about the text, which should draw on the following approaches: close analysis of selected passages; presentation of the author's background and general position within the discipline of art history, museum studies, or visual culture; sharing images/examples related to the author's argument via Power Point for the class to discuss; relating the reading to the theme of the class (or earlier classes), and to overarching issues addressed in the course more broadly.

**\*\*Please note:** each student will lead class discussion in this manner THREE times during the course. Each of you will also be a discussant on a regular basis. For the success of the course, **it is crucial that each student read ALL of the readings assigned for each class.** Voicing your opinions AND listening carefully to what others have to say will yield the most stimulating, vibrant, and enjoyable learning experience for everyone.

Your progress in the course will be helped by the following guidelines:

- (a) Regular class attendance, including the field trip. Non-attendance and merely studying the material in the course texts is insufficient. It is also advisable to do substantial ongoing study of the course material, rather than postponing your study for the night before class.
- (b) Meticulous reading and study of the assigned course material and study of visual examples. The Frost Library and other libraries at the Five Colleges are amply stocked with books and journals in this area, and I would be happy to make recommendations. I also encourage you to frequent the exhibitions at local museums, as the more you see *in situ*, the more you will understand and have to contribute to the course.
- (c) Participation in class-discussion, for which you should expect to be called by name. This will be a class in which we will all learn from each other, and each student's contribution is vital to the course's success. If you would like to focus on a topic of particular interest to you, please let me know; likewise if you wish to organize a group visit to an exhibition nearby, or a film viewing.
- (d) One-on-one or small group appointments with me to discuss your work in the course, or any special interest in you may have in the area of Contemporary Art: simply put your name down on the appointment-schedule on my office door. **My office hours are THURSDAYS 11:30 – 1:30.**

The following are obligatory course requirements:

- (1) Student-led discussions. Each student will lead three, 30-minute discussions session during the course of the semester.
- (2) An exhibition review, which you should be prepared to share with your classmates for peer feedback. Based on our individual efforts, we will then write a collective exhibition review for publication on the Art Department website (and perhaps beyond!).
- (3) A final response paper of 12 to 15 pages (Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, Double-spaced, 1" margins on all sides). More on this to follow.

Your grade in the course will be computed on the following basis: (a) Student-led discussions / class participation = 50%; (b) Exhibition review project = 25%; (c) Final response paper = 25%.

## ARHA-92, Section 05: 'Art and its Display' in the Twentieth Century

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### COURSE OUTLINE

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<b>Jan</b>	25 [1]	Introduction: Course Overview; from <i>Wunderkammer</i> to the Avant-Garde in Exhibition
		I. <i>The Museum in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: History and Theory</i>
<b>Feb</b>	1 [2]	The Art Museum: Histories, Objectives, Queries
	8 [3]	In-class Writing Assignment (CAA Annual Conference)
	15 [4]	The Art Museum in the Postwar Context: Imagination, Disintegration [ <u>Student-led</u> ]
	22 [5]	The Exhibition Review: The Art of Writing about Art and its Display
	26 [ <i>Field Trip</i> ]	Mass MOCA (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art), North Adams - Meet with Denise Markornish, Curator Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown
		II. <i>On the Museum and the Production of 'Art'</i>
<b>Mar</b>	1 [6]	The Museum as Muse [ <u>Student-led</u> ]
	8 [7]	Location, Location, Location: When Images Become Art [ <u>Student-led</u> ]
		<i>Spring Vacation</i>
	22 [8]	Class Discussion and Collective Writing: Exhibition Review Project – Part III
		III. <i>Spatialities: On Art, Exhibition, and Architecture</i>
	29 [9]	The Exhibition: On Site-Specificity and Place [ <u>Student-led</u> ]
<b>Apr</b>	5 [10]	The White Cube, Inside and Out [ <u>Student-led</u> ]
	12 [11]	The Exhibition in Virtual Realms: The Impact of New Technology on Art [ <u>Student-led</u> ]
		IV. <i>Aesthetics, Ethics, Politics</i>
	19 [12]	On Art, Display, and Power [ <u>Student-led</u> ]
	26 [13]	Culture in the Courtroom: The Museum Between Ethics and Aesthetics [ <u>Student-led</u> ]
<b>May</b>	3 [14]	At the Intersection of Art and Economic Development [ <u>Student-led</u> ]
	10	<b>Response Paper DUE</b>