



Andy Warhol, Campbell's Soup Can, 1962

AHST 2331-001 (80234)
Understanding Art
Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
University of Texas at Dallas
Fall 2011
MWF 10:00-10:50
SOM 1.212

Office Hours: Mondays 2:30-4:30
Office Location: JO 3.920
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Description:

"Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it."

Bertolt Brecht

This course offers an introduction to art as both object and experience. We will be guided this semester by the fundamental thesis that art is a means of **critical thinking**. We think through art as it relates us to other people and the rest of the world. We think through art as it is an object, experience, discourse, market, and belief system.

Goals:

- general familiarity with and comfort around art
- to think critically about the world by way of art
- ability to identify salient characteristics of a given 'work' of art
- clarity of thinking and writing about works of art
- familiarize students with public art institutions
- habituate close and careful readings of text
- habituate close and careful readings of art
- habituate keen phenomenological awareness (understanding through the five senses) of surrounding environment

Requirements:

Students are required to attend every class, complete all assignments, and participate with candor and verve in class. Students are allowed two unexcused absences after which each absence will result in the lowering of the final grade by one full letter. Students with illnesses that require extended periods of absence are encouraged to officially withdraw from class. **Under no circumstances do I accept late assignments. All written assignments must be printed and submitted in class on paper: I do not accept digital documents.**

Required Textbook:

1. John Berger. *Ways of Seeing*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1990.

Readings available at DOCUTEK:

The URL for the page with the electronic course reserves is:
<http://utdallas.docutek.com/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=1106>

Password: abstract

1. Walter Benjamin. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." (1936) available at: <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm>
2. Charles Baudelaire. "The Painter of Modern Life." *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*. London: Phaidon, 1995. 1-42.
3. Guy Debord. "Separation Perfected" and "The Commodity Spectacle." *Society of the Spectacle*. Detroit: Black & Red, 1983. 1-53.
4. Andy Warhol. *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol (From A to B and Back Again)*. New York: Harcourt, 1975. 73-104.

Slide Presentations:

The slides for each lecture will be posted at the following website after each class. Click on the "syllabi" icon to the left of the home page.

www.charissaterranova.com

Grades:

Your final grade is based on nine short written assignments of 200 words each and two quizzes. There is no midterm or final exam. Each written assignment is worth 10% and each quiz 5% for a total of 100%.

Written Assignments:

All written assignments must be typed, 10 or 12 pt. font, double spaced, paginated, and titled. The title should be underlined or italicized.

Assignment #1 Due Monday September 5: Are authenticity and originality important anymore? On Friday, September 2, we will discuss authenticity, originality, copies, and fakes. I will guide us through a discussion of the philosophically dense Walter Benjamin essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," which is also at the center of John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*. In 200 words please discuss the relevance of "authenticity" in the creative process in the 21st century.

Assignment #2 Due Monday September 14: After our site visit to the Nasher Sculpture Center on Friday September 9, write 200 words about one work of sculpture, providing its title, the name of the artist, and the year it was made. The Nasher Sculpture Center is located at 2001 Flora Street, Dallas, TX 75201. You should describe the work and briefly explain its importance in contemporary society.

Assignment #3 Due Monday September 26: After our discussion of the reading from Baudelaire on Friday September 23, please write 200 words about **one** quote of your choosing from the text. You should expand on the importance of the quote vis-à-vis the entire text and our own moment in time. The quote you choose should appear at the top of the first page.

Assignment #4 Due Monday October 3: We will visit the DMA on Friday September 30. A museum docent will guide you through a tour as we focus our discussion on the European painting gallery. Choose one painting there, cite it by artist's name, title, and write 200 words describing it. Please explain if you think what it depicts is important to the present world. Is the painting important for its content or beauty?

Assignment #5 Due Monday October 17: After our discussion of the Guy Debord reading on Friday October 14, choose **one** quote and write 200 words about its significance to the entire text and contemporary society. The quote you choose should appear at the top of the first page.

Assignment #6 Due Monday October 31: After our meeting at the Dallas Contemporary, 161 Glass Street, Dallas, Texas 75207 Friday October 28 to view the paintings of Aaron Parazette, choose one painting and write 200 words about what makes it modern. Think carefully here: Parazette is a contemporary artist. Please cite the title of the work. Think about the differences between “modern” and “contemporary.”

Assignment #7 Due Monday November 7: After our meeting at Northpark Mall on Friday November 4, write 200 words about Mark di Suvero’s *Ad Astra* (2005). NorthPark Mall is located at 8687 North Central Expressway, Dallas, TX 75225. Please include a photograph of the sculpture. You should describe the work and briefly explain its importance in contemporary society.

Assignment #8 Due Monday November 14: After our discussion of *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol* on Friday November 11, write 200 words focusing on **one** passage or quote. You should explain why it is important within the text and to our contemporary moment. The quote you choose should appear at the top of the first page.

Assignment #9 Due Monday December 5: After our site visit to the Goss-Michael Foundation and Gallery on Friday December 2, write 200 words about one work of art. Please describe how the work of art captures something poignant about our contemporary moment. You should cite the work of art by title, name of the artist, and date it was made. The Goss-Michael is located at 1405 Turtle Creek Boulevard, Dallas, TX 75207.

In-class Discussions:

For in-class discussions, students should come to class prepared with **one question and one argument** on the reading assignment.

Standard UTD policies regarding classroom behavior, religious holidays, withdrawals, etc.:

<http://www.utdallas.edu/deanofstudents/conductguidelines.html>

<http://provost.utdallas.edu/>

<http://www.charissaterranova.com/syllabi/utd-policies.htm>

Schedule:

Wednesday August 24: Introduction What is critical thinking?

Friday August 26: Art as Critical Thinking
Berger, parts 1-2

Monday August 29: Art as Critical Thinking
Berger, parts 3-4

Wednesday August 31: Art as Critical Thinking
Berger, parts 5-6

Friday September 2: In-class discussion of authenticity, copies, and Walter Benjamin Benjamin, “Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (I will walk us through the main ideas of this essay together in class.)

Monday September 5: Form and Idea

Assignment #1 Due

Wednesday September 7: Form and Idea

Friday September 9: Form and Idea Site visit: Nasher Sculpture Center, 2001 Flora Street, Dallas, TX 75201

Monday September 12: In-Class Film Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*

Wednesday September 14 Art and the City

Assignment #2 Due

Quiz on Film

Baudelaire, "Painter of Modern Life," 1-42

Friday September 16 Art and the City

Baudelaire, "Painter of Modern Life," 1-42

Monday September 19 Art and the City

Baudelaire, "Painter of Modern Life," 1-42

Wednesday September 21 Art and the City

Baudelaire, "Painter of Modern Life," 1-42

Friday September 23 In-class discussion of Charles Baudelaire's "Painter of Modern Life"

Monday September 26 Media I: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture

Assignment #3 Due

Wednesday September 28 Media I: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture

Friday September 30 Site Visit Dallas Museum of Art 1717 North Harwood Street, Dallas, TX 75201

Monday October 3 Media I: Painting Sculpture, Architecture

Assignment #4 Due

Wednesday October 5 In-class Film *Society of the Spectacle*

Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 1-53

Friday October 7 In-class Film Jacques Tati's *Mon Oncle*

Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 1-53

Monday October 10 Media II: Film, Video, New Media

Quiz on films

Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 1-53

Wednesday October 12 Media II: Film, Video, New Media

Friday October 14 In-class discussion of Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*

Monday October 17 History and "-ism"

Assignment #5 Due

Wednesday October 19 History and "-ism"

Friday October 21 History and "-ism"

Monday October 24 Modernism

Wednesday October 26 Modernism

Friday October 28 Site Visit: Dallas Contemporary, 161 Glass Street, Dallas, Texas 75207

Monday October 31 Modernism
Assignment #6 Due

Wednesday November 2 Postmodernism

Friday November 4 Site Visit: NorthPark Mall: We will meet at Mark di Suvero's *Ad Astra* (2005) at NorthPark Mall, 8687 North Central Expressway, Dallas, TX 75225.

Monday November 7 Postmodernism
Assignment #7 Due
Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, 73-104

Wednesday November 9 Postmodernism
Warhol, *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*, 73-104

Friday November 11 In-class discussion of Andy Warhol's *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol*

Monday November 14 Contemporary Art and Architecture
Assignment #8 Due

Wednesday November 16 Contemporary Art and Architecture

Friday November 18 Contemporary Art and Architecture

Monday November 21 Identity Politics in Art and Architecture

Wednesday November 23 Identity Politics in Art and Architecture

Friday November 25 Happy Thanksgiving!

Monday November 28 Power and Institution within Art

Wednesday November 30 Power and Institution within Art

Friday December 2 Site Visit: Goss-Michael Foundation 1405 Turtle Creek Boulevard, Dallas, TX 75207

Monday December 5 In-class Grading Exercise
Assignment #9 Due