



Ed Ruscha, *The Old Tech-Chem Building*, 2003

AHST 2331.001
Understanding Art
Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
JO 4.102
Mon.-Wed. 4:00-5:15
Office Location JO 4.620
Office Hours:
Tue. 5:00-6:45
Wed. 2:00-3:45
terranova@utdallas.edu

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. Under the umbrella of "critical thinking," the course is organized according to the following themes: form, media, idea, heritage, history, style, "-ism," modernism, postmodernism, the contemporary, power, institution, and business.

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 institutions of art
- familiarize students with art criticism
- habituate engagement with public institutions of art
- habituate close and careful readings of text
- habituate close and careful readings of works of art
- habituate keen phenomenological awareness (understanding through the five senses) of surrounding environment

Required Texts:

1. Margaret Lazzari and Dona Schlesier. *Exploring Art: A Global, Thematic Approach*. New York: Wadsworth Publishing, 2007. 3rd Edition.
2. John Berger. *Ways of Seeing*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1990.

Exercises in Critical Thinking – Writing and Debates:

WRITING

Below you will find details on seven 300-word written assignments. Your writing should be analytical, descriptive, and in the third-person voice. Please do not write sentences starting with "I think..." or "I believe..." Each assignment should be typed in 12 pt. font and double-spaced with standard margins. **I do not accept electronic documents. If you plagiarize, you will be expelled from the class and receive an "F" for the course.**

Due Monday January 24: Written Assignment #1 Light, Space, and Sculpture

Write 300 words (no more and no less) about James Turrell's *Tending, (Blue)* (2003) in the sculpture garden at the Nasher Sculpture Center, 2001 Flora Street, Dallas, TX 75201. You should describe the work and briefly explain its importance in contemporary society.

Due Monday February 7: Written Assignment #2 The Tradition of Painting

Write 300 words (no more and no less) about Gustave Courbet's *Fox in the Snow* (1860) in the European galleries on the 2nd floor of the Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 North Harwood Street, Dallas, TX 75201. You should describe the work. You might also briefly explain its importance in its own context and in contemporary society.

Due Monday February 21: Written Assignment #3 Consumerism and Art as Spectacle

Write 300 words (no more and no less) about Mark di Suvero's *Ad Astra* (2005) at NorthPark Mall, 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.

Due Monday March 7: Written Assignment #4 Identity and Space

Write 300 words (no more and no less) about the architecture and space of the Interfaith Peace Chapel, Cathedral of Hope, 5910 Cedar Springs Road, Dallas, TX 75235-6806. Please include photographs of the building. Your writing might include a description of the space inside and outside of the building, its footprint, volumetrics, siting, and urban context.

Due Monday March 14: Written Assignment #5 Exhibitions and Curation

Write 300 words (no more and no less) about one of two exhibitions, *David Willburn* or *Michel Verjux*, at the Dallas Center for Contemporary Art, 161 Glass Street, Dallas, TX 75207. You should summarize the idea of the exhibition and explain whether you think the installation of the works of art is successful or not. Please include a photograph of the exhibition that supports your writing.

Due Monday March 28: Written Assignment #6 Art as Discourse

Write 300 words (no more and no less) summarizing an art review in the Friday edition of the *New York Times*. Please staple a copy of the review to your summary.

Due Monday April 11: Written Assignment #7 Layered Apertures: Mobility and the Image

This assignment is an exercise in photography and writing combined, with a guiding theme of "mobility." Using preferably your cell phone (other cameras will function too), take a photograph while you are moving – walking, riding a train, in a car, or on an airplane. The goal is to layer apertures – the eye, camera, and window – while moving. In 300 hundred words (no more and no less) describe where you are and the significance of the view and the role technology plays in shaping it. Your writing might discuss experience, architecture, urbanism, the landscape, and/or modes of technology. Please include the photograph about which you write.

DEBATES

For the debating exercises you will be placed in groups of two and assigned one work of art about which to present your position in a public debate of 15 minutes before your classmates. This means you will each be given roughly 7.5 minutes to argue your position. You must meet with your sparring partner and decide on your positions. You cannot have the same position. Your position on the work of art should be one of three: approval, disapproval, or indifferent. You will prepare an outline of your argument that will then be submitted as partial documentation for your grade. You should do research in preparing your position as your goal is to win the debate: to make the most persuasive and eloquent argument as to **why** that work of art is important or not, that is, why you have approved or disapproved of it, or are indifferent. The reasons for your position might include how the work was made, historical circumstances, marketplace considerations, economy and class, political context, issues of identity and gender, and/or questions of technology.

Monday April 18 In-Class Debates

Wednesday April 20 In-Class Debates

Monday April 25 In-Class Debates

Wednesday April 27 In-Class Debates

Exams:

There are two exams in this class, a mid-term and final. Both tests require students to define in short answers terminology introduced in the class. The information on the tests will be culled from the professor's lectures and reading assignments. The final exam is cumulative.

Wednesday March 9 regular class time: Mid-Term Exam

Friday May 6 2:00 pm: Final Exam

Grading:

Written Assignment #1:	10%
Written Assignment #2:	10%
Written Assignment #3:	10%
Written Assignment #4:	10%
Written Assignment #5:	10%
Written Assignment #6:	10%
Written Assignment #7:	10%
Debate (with outline):	10%
Mid-Term Exam:	10%
Final Exam:	10%
TOTAL	100%

UT DALLAS POLICIES

Field Trip Policies, Off-Campus Instruction, and Course Activities

Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at the website address http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm. Additional information is available from the office of the school dean. Below is a description of any travel and/or risk-related activity associated with this course.

Student Conduct & Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD printed publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year. The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Series 50000, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391) and online at <http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs/UTDJudicialAffairs-HOPV.html>

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. Scholastic Dishonesty, any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials, including music and software. Copying, displaying, reproducing, or distributing copyrighted works may infringe the copyright owner's rights and such infringement is subject to appropriate disciplinary action as well as criminal penalties provided by federal law. Usage of such material is only appropriate when that usage constitutes "fair use" under the Copyright Act. As a UT Dallas student, you are required to follow the institution's copyright policy (Policy Memorandum 84-1.3-46). For more information about the fair use exemption, see <http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/copypol2.htm>

Email Use

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the

respondent”). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent’s School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean’s decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

Incomplete Grade Policy

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester’s end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of **F**.

Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with the Coordinator of Disability Services. The Coordinator is available to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Services to notify them of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. Disability Services can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations. It is the student’s responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:

The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22

800 W. Campbell Rd.

Richardson, Texas 75080-3021

(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

disabilityservice@utdallas.edu

Religious Holy Days

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment. If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may

request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

Policy on Make-ups, Lateness, and Attendance

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. If you will not be able to attend a specific session, you must make arrangements with another student to get copies of notes, etc. You are allowed two unexcused absences, after which your grade will be lowered one half grade. Assignments must be turned in on time; for each 24-hour period an assignment is late, one full grade will be deducted (e.g., an "A" paper will become a "B" paper). Appropriate medical and family excuses will be accepted in order to establish new dates for assignments. Make-ups for the Final Exam will require substantial justification. Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity will be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work.

Schedule:

Monday January 10: Introduction, Syllabus, and Defining Terms

Wednesday January 12: Art and Critical Thinking
Berger Ch. 1-2
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch. 1

Monday January 17: MLK Day No Class

Wednesday January 19: Art and Critical Thinking
Berger Ch. 3-4
Lazzari and Schlesier, pp. 84-94

Monday January 24: Form and Idea
Written Assignment #1 Due
Berger Ch. 5-6

Wednesday January 26: Form and Idea
Berger Ch. 7
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch. 2

Monday January 31: Media I
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch. 3

Wednesday February 2: Media I
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch. 4

Monday February 7: Media II
Written Assignment #2 Due
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch. 5

Wednesday February 9: In-Class Film: *Man with a Movie Camera*

Monday February 14: Media II
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch. 6

Wednesday February 16: Heritage versus History
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch. 7

Monday February 21: Heritage versus History
Written Assignment #3 Due
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch. 8

Wednesday February 23: Style
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch. 9

Monday February 28: Style
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch. 10

Wednesday March 2: "-ism"
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch. 12

Monday March 7: "-ism"
Written Assignment #4 Due

Wednesday March 9: Mid-Term Exam

Monday March 14: Spring Break No Class

Wednesday March 16: Spring Break No Class

Monday March 21: Modernism
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch. 13

Wednesday March 23: Modernism
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch. 15

Monday March 28: Post-Modernism
Written Assignment #5 Due
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch. 14

Wednesday March 30: Post-Modernism
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch. 16

Monday April 4: Contemporary
Written Assignment #6 Due

Wednesday April 6: Power
Lazzari and Schlesier Ch 11

Monday April 11: Institution
Written Assignment #7 Due

Wednesday April 13: Business

Monday April 18: In-Class Debates

Wednesday April 20: In-Class Debates

Monday April 25: In-Class Debates

Wednesday April 27: In-Class Debates

Monday May 2: Final Exam Review

Friday May 6 2:00 pm: Final Exam