

## **ART 5320**

### **Art Criticism & Theory**

Instructor:  
Prof. Tore Terrasi

Office Location:  
FA 298

Email Address:  
toreterrasi@uta.edu

Office Hours:  
Tue & Thur 2 - 3  
or by appointment

Section Information:  
ART 5320 -001  
Tuesday 8:00AM -10:50 PM  
Room 2102 Fine Art Bldg

#### **Description of Course Content:**

A discussion of placing art within the context of the history of ideas.

This is a seminar class for graduate students and will focus on exploring research strategies including the collection, interpretation and presentation of visual information. Students will read selected writings by artists, film and video makers, art historians, critics, designers and arts professionals on a weekly basis, contribute to class discussions, and examine their own creative strategies. A major component of this course will also be a series of in-class presentations by UTA Art+Art History faculty. The purpose of these lectures is to provide new graduate students with access to the diversity of faculty and their own unique perspectives. Invited faculty will work with the course instructor in selecting topics and readings for discussion within the seminar.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. To examine contemporary art, design and film by considering their philosophies, writings, and working methodologies
2. To become familiar with contemporary theory and criticism as it applies to art, film and design
3. To apply and articulate an understanding of theory and criticism to class discussion and writing
4. To explore individual research and studio strategies through a variety of formal research-based and informal writing assignments and interaction with their professional communities

#### **Requirements:**

Students must attend the scheduled courses in addition to any other departmental and museum lectures. As a central component to this course, students must participate in both a lecture and seminar with the Language and Identity speaker. Students are asked to write one 5-page research paper (mentored by Art History faculty) related to a topic presented by the departmental faculty. Students will also be asked to participate in informal class blogging related to class topics, discussions, exhibitions and lectures. Attend guest speakers and some Tuesday at the Modern lectures.

#### **Required Textbooks:**

texts will be provided via PDF's and Video's. See Timeline.

#### **Suggested Blog Account:**

Wordpress <http://wordpress.com/>

*Eventually everything connects.*

-Charles Eames

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**Potential Participating Faculty**

Alexander, Amanda	Art Education
Belli, Melia	Art History
Graham, Lisa	Visual Communication
Dolezal, Ben	Visual Communication
Ho, Tuan	Visual Communication
Hower, Robert	Visual Communication
Huerta, Benito	Studio Intermedia
Ikeda, Seiji	Visual Communication
Jolly, Marilyn	Studio Intermedia
Lauster, Darryl	Studio Intermedia
Lima, Ben	Art History
Mary Vaccaro	Art History
McWilliams, Leighton	Studio Intermedia
North, Kenda	Studio Intermedia
Ortiz, Andrew	Studio Intermedia
Palmeri, Nancy	Studio Intermedia
Smith, Ya'ke	Film+Video
Terrasi, Salvatore (Tore)	Studio Intermedia
Weiss, Barton	Film+Video
Wood, Nicholas	Studio Intermedia
Laphisophon, Stephen	Studio Intermedia
Florentin, Bryan P	Studio Intermedia
Huckaby, Sedrick	Studio Intermedia

**Weekly Topics:**

Community / Culture/Society/Communication / Social Commentary  
Body / Identity  
Information Architecture  
Traversing media boundaries  
Narrative - Authenticity  
Language /Text / Semiotics  
Sustainability  
Beauty  
Light  
Virtual Media  
Research

*To develop a complete mind:  
Study the science of art. Study the  
art of science. Develop your senses  
- especially learn how to see.  
Realize that everything connects to  
everything else.*

- Leonardo da Vinci

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**Attendance Policy**

It is critical to be in class on time. Information will not be repeated and we have many guest speakers scheduled that we do not want to inconvenience. Three tardies will be counted as an absence. Missing more than 20 minutes of class will be counted as an absence. In the event of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to provide appropriate documentation from their doctor or Office of Student Life at UTA and make up all missed class work. Students with more than two unexcused absences from classes will have their final grade reduced by one letter grade. The grade will drop an additional letter grade for each unexcused absence after the second one. Please provide medical documentation of absences in a timely manner. Do not wait until the end of the semester to clear them up. Even if documentation of medical absences is provided, excessive absences may result in the reduction of your grade or it may be recommended that you drop the class since attendance is of primary importance.

**Librarian to Contact**

Beverly Carver, Art and Architecture Librarian <carver@library.uta.edu>

**Grading**

40%

Your regular class participation during the guest lectures or regular class discussions, written papers, short writing assignments in your blog and upkeep of journal - i.e. weekly assignments. Please also plan to attend at least two Tuesday Night at the Modern in Fort Worth lectures during this semester, more if possible, and to attend as many of the guest artist lectures in our department as possible.

25%

Individual presentations of creative activity and presentation of your journaling materials in the last individual presentation

35%

Five page research paper

attendance if then factored into final grade after the above criteria is averaged

**Grade Grievance Policy**

See student catalog

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**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/ses/fao>).

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

#### Emergency/Fire Evacuation Procedures

Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located at the central staircase in the FA bldg. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.

#### Academic Integrity:

All students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

Instructors may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System Regents' Rule 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Student Support Services:** UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources)

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabus. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

## **Readings & Written Documentation**

### **Readings and Viewings**

The goal of the course readings is to inspire and educate you. The selected texts range in discipline, time-period, style, subject matter and media. Some are regarded as classics in the field of visual art/ design while others are more esoteric. Regardless of your specific field of talent and creative activity the topics covered are wide-ranging enough to effect you and your discipline.

They have been selected to spark an internal ongoing dialogue; something to stay with you for years to come. They are also meant to spark dialogue with your classmates and colleagues and facilitate an exchange of ideas. How does exposure to these concepts, theories, approaches, criticisms, and stories inspire you, change you, or shape your work and ways of thinking? I don't want you to merely memorize the texts. You should aim to internalize their content and synthesize them into your growth as an artist/designer/creative thinker. It is critical to understand the authors' intent but it is equally important to form your own opinions and make the content relative to you.

### **Journal**

I will ask each student to keep a journal throughout this course of their thoughts and collected images of anything that interests them in relation to how they see things or what they notice in the world. The writing will consist of reflections about what you are seeing and noticing and thinking about in relation to visual information and the way it may affect your work or reflections on your research and class presentations. This will be very informal writing and does not have to be presentation ready. It is for the individual artist to explore your thinking only. This should, preferably, be done daily during the course, but at least 4 days a week. Along with the writing, I am asking you to keep some kind of visual journal. It can be sketches and images pasted into a paper journal, but it could also be digital images or some other digital format that can be shared with me. The purpose of this activity is to help you maintain a focus on your work in a regular practice of noting your thoughts and feelings, collecting ideas, images and information. This journal can be a place of brainstorming and discovery about yourself and the kind of artist you will be developing into. It's kind of like a sketch book, but much more comprehensive.

**Blog**      Wordpress      <http://wordpress.com/>

*I don't know the key to success,  
but the key to failure is trying to  
please everybody.*

*- Bill Cosby*

This will be an archive of your reflections in regards to our course readings and viewings. I am very flexible about the format and you may be creative here provided you demonstrate a clear understanding of the material at hand. Creative but not crazy: you may write a song, a poem, a short work of fiction or perhaps most simply a critical analysis/overview of the readings. Again, you must not only demonstrate you have read the material, but that you have internalized it. Present it back through your blog with an opinion, analysis, or clever way of demonstrating you understand the material you have read/ watched. A ballpark number of word length should be in the 500 - 1000 range for a written analysis.

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**Weekly Topics, Readings & Activities**

Reading materials, videos, and artist research should be completed by the class date listed...so you will need to look a week ahead to know what is due. For example be sure to have already read *The Rise of the Creative Class - The Creative Ethos* by Richard Florida AND *Right Brain Rising\_A Whole New Mind* by Daniel Pink by the Sept 3rd class period.

There may be assigned readings for some of the other presentations by other faculty that I do not have, yet. This schedule could change depending on unforeseen circumstances, but I will make every effort to adhere to this syllabus whenever possible and notify the class in a timely manner if changes need to occur.

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**Aug. 27**  
**Introductions**

We will go over the syllabus and course expectations. Introduce ourselves.

**Sept. 3**

First Impressions:

Each student will do a 10-15 minute power point presentation of their recent work and give a brief statement about their art and art philosophies or thinking about where they are at present and what direction they see their work moving.

The Rise of the Creative Class, Richard Florida - The Creative Ethos

Right Brain Rising\_A Whole New Mind\_Daniel Pink

**Sept. 10**

**Community/ Culture / Society / Communication**

Amanda Alexander and Sedrick Huckaby-How does community come into play in thinking about contemporary art making-what are some examples in contemporary art on a regional, national and international level? In their own work?

Is there a link to sustainability in some instances?

Look at the work of Kara Walker, Christo and Jeanne Claude, Yinka Shonibare

Why Designers Can't Think, Michael Bierut, Seventy-nine Short Essays on Design

Warning- May Contain Non Design Content\_Michael Bierut

This Is What I've Learned\_Milton Glaser

Ten Footnotes to a Manifesto, Michael Bierut, Seventy-nine Short Essays on Design

Kenneth Clark - Art and Society

I Shop Therefore I Am - Barbara Kruger

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**Sept. 17**

**Body & Identity**

Brian Florentin and Darryl Lauster-Discuss their use of intermedia/performance/use of digital media in conjunction with objects, relate their work to contemporary artists working in intermedia.

**Body**

Look to the work and biography of Chuck Close

On Having No Self, Buddha text

Preface\_Body\_William E Ewing

**Identity**

Look at the work of Liu Bolin and Cindy Sherman

Visual Biography and Autobiography\_The Methodologies of Art\_Laurie Schneider Adams

The Non Thing 1 and 2\_The Shape of Things\_Vilem Flusser

Questions To Students, The David Smith Papers, apprx 1953-54

**Sept. 24**

**Information Architecture**

Seiji Ikeda and Ben Dolezal on information architecture, the web and graphic design

Look at the work of Paul Rand

The Shape of Things, Vilem Flusser : About The Word Design

Escaping Flatland (Ch1), Envisioning Information, Edward R. Tufte

Information Design: A Graphic Designer's Salvation, by Roger Whitehouse,

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**Oct. 1**

**Traversing media boundaries**

Stephen Lapthisophon -Discuss use of intermedia and performance in contemporary art with a brief discussion of some of the most important contemporary philosophers who have shaped the thinking of some of the new art approaches-a little history of the beginnings of performative art.

Look at the work of Charles and Ray Eames and William Kentridge - the work of (drawing, theatre, animation, video, robotics)

Maya Lin, Boundaries / and the work of (sculpture, architecture, installation)

**Oct. 8**

**Narrative / Authenticity**

Nancy Palmeri and Ya'ke Smith-Different approaches to narrative-2-D and media-How does story telling/history/ personal experience impact their work?

Look to the work of Amy Cutler (PDF), Hiraki Sawa

Story\_A Whole New Mind\_Daniel Pink

Death of the Author, Roland Barthes (this text overlaps with Oct 15th topic/ semiotics)

**Oct. 15**

**Language/Text/ Semiotics**

Tore Terrasi - A look at the implications language (visual and verbal) and text (literal and implied) have in communication dialogue. Will look at work in both digital and analogue contexts.

Look at the work of Jenny Holzer

Semiotics 1\_The Methodologies of Art\_Laurie Schneider Adams

Semiotics 2\_The Methodologies of Art\_Laurie Schneider Adams

Word Text and Image\_Design Creativity and Culture\_Maurice Barnwell



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**Oct. 22**  
**Sustainability**

Lisa Graham and Robert Hower- Impact of sustainability focus on contemporary design and art. Any links to community?

Stephan Sagmeister. Milton Glaser, R. Buckminster Fuller

Designing Beauty: The Outrageous To The Sublime - Veronique Vienne

Introduction and Ch. 1 After Growth from Deep Economy by Bill McKibben

Chapter 13 Design Futures: Questions of Sustainability from Design, Creativity & Culture: an orientation to design by Maurice Barnwell

**Oct. 29**  
**Beauty**

Nick Wood & Melia Belli- Discuss idea of beauty in contemporary art, difference in interpretation of beauty due to cultural or other differences/Western versus Eastern aesthetics-reading from "In Praise of Shadows" by Jun'ichiro Tanizaki that describes the difference between the Western and Eastern aesthetic of appreciating light.

Sunday Afternoons: A conversation and a Remark on Beauty, Louise Bourgeois

**Nov. 5**  
**Light / Seeing**

Kenda North - A discussion of the different ways artists approach light in their work depending on their medium, materials and content.

Look at the work of James Turrell, Bill Viola, Eadweard Muybridge

VIDEOS

Ways of Seeing 1\_ Psychological-Aspects (Video)\_John Berger

Ways of Seeing 2\_Women in Art\_John Berger

Ways of Seeing 3\_Collectors and Collecting\_John Berger

Ways of Seeing 4\_Commercial Art\_John Berger

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**Nov. 12**

**Virtual Media**

Bart Weiss and Tuan Ho- Discuss uses of film and digital media to create virtual realities/expanded realities in contemporary art.

*Look at the work of David Small Design, Imaginary Forces, Nam June Paik*

Timeline\_Age Of Spiritual Machines\_Ray Kurzweil

From Screen Essays on Graphic Design, New Media, and Visual Culture, Jessica Helfand - One, Two, Three, Faux: The Myth of Real Time

TV 1st\_10 Myths about New Media\_Jessica Helfand\_Screen

The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, Walter Benjamin

**\*At the end of this class period students should begin to structure and write about their own work in relation to influences/ inspiration, process, historical context, media/medium, and concepts.**

**Nov. 19**

**Research**

Ben Lima-Discuss how to approach an academic paper-writing style, research, references, etc. Show examples of good writing. Students will be asked to write a minimum of 5 pages on their responses to any of the presentations or discussions from the class and correlate that with their own research/work during the course of the class.

Look to your own work

Think First, Design Later - DK Holland

**Nov. 26**

Class members will do a 15-20 minute power point presentation of their now current work and discuss the changes or evolution in their work during the semester. It is important to discuss the journaling process or presentations during the class that have been influential or beneficial for their work. You are encouraged to also show the collected images/ideas from your journaling that have been influential.

Class discussion and feedback.

**Dec. 3**

Turn in 5 page papers/sum up class activities - Left over presentations - course wrap up - sigh of relief

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Classmates UTA Contact

Diaz, David  
david.diaz25@mavs.uta.edu

Garcia, Laura  
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Hossain, Sarah  
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