Course Description

Art 122Y is an introduction to commentary about contemporary art and its significance and implications for today’s visual culture. The course is intended to help students better understand the creation and implications of today’s art so that they may critically and reflectively evaluate their experiences as artists and designers and as members of local and global art audiences.

The course content explores a diverse array of themes through assigned readings, online media, virtual discussions, presentations, and course projects and the demonstration of critical thinking in written expression is given primary emphasis. Consequently, the course emphasizes an active engagement with contemporary art through critical, intellectual, and creative means. The Art 122Y curriculum is organized into modules that correlate with the different themes discussed in the course text, which provides a contextual framework for the course’s various assignments and projects. Course projects require students to respond to ideas and concepts presented to them and to develop critiques of contemporary works through a variety of formats. Students build critical thinking and writing skills by reading and analyzing assigned readings and developing research- and reflection-based projects about contemporary works of art, artists, and art exhibitions.

The "Y" in Art 122Y signifies that Art 122Y satisfies both a "writing intensive" and a "United States Culture" requirement. "Writing intensive" means that the course curriculum is designed to offer opportunities to explore its academic content through a variety of selected writing experiences. In addition to written responses to questions about assigned readings, students are asked to write papers and develop projects that focus on course topics as well as other topics about contemporary art that they would like to further explore. "United States Culture" indicates that a significant portion of the course content considers how the course topics relate to different aspects of the culture of the United States.

Learning Objectives

Art 122Y is designed to provide students with an introduction to the critical inquiry of contemporary art. The spirit in which class topics are presented is intended to provide multiple pathways for students to explore, learn about, and to reflect on the different issues discussed and to engage in lively discussions as well as private reflections about them. Thus it is a primary aim that the content examined and the issues that are explored in the course introduce as many questions as they attempt to answer. The Art 122Y course content focuses on the examination of contemporary art through a thematic framework. By exploring the study of contemporary art through this type of framework, the student will learn about individual artists, the historical and contemporary social and cultural forces that inspire and influence artists today, and the institutional constructs in which art is presented and experienced.

The following learning objectives are designed to encourage the student to reflect on these issues and on the ways in which contemporary art and artists affect the world in social, environmental, political, and spiritual ways. Through the successful completion of this course, the student will:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objective</th>
<th>How the Student’s Mastery of Objective Will Be Measured</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify and analyze issues and problems relating to contemporary art, artists, and the institutional frameworks in which art is experienced.</td>
<td>The student will demonstrate his / her mastery of this objective in the following course projects / assignments:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret, assess, and evaluate the diversity and complexity of the contemporary art world and its interrelationships with the world at large and express his / her thoughts in written and visual form.</td>
<td>• Module Exercises (1 – 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on the issues that affect the role of contemporary artists and art institutions in society and express his / her opinions about those issues in an interactive, online discussion environment.</td>
<td>The student will demonstrate his / her mastery of this objective in the following course projects / assignments:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Curatorial Project</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The student will demonstrate his / her mastery of this objective in the following course projects / assignments:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Online Discussions (1 – 6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Define, apply, and convey his / her understandings of and opinions about contemporary art in discipline-specific written conventions.

The student will demonstrate his / her mastery of this objective in the following course projects / assignments:

- Baffled, Bewildered, and Smitten
- Module Exercises (1 – 7)
- Curatorial Project

Textbooks

The following textbook is required:


Learning Modules

The content of Art 122Y is presented in a series of sequential learning modules, each of which focuses on a different thematic subject related to contemporary art criticism. The module titles are presented below (brief descriptions of the modules are provided online in the “Syllabus” section of the course website:

- Module 1: The Art World Expands
- Module 2: Identity
- Module 3: The Body
- Module 4: Time
- Module 5: Place
- Module 6 (includes Fall Break Week): Language
- Module 7: Science / Spirituality

Course Projects and Grading Scale

Course assignments and projects in Art 122Y provide opportunities for multiple kinds responses to the topics and issues discussed in class. Specific details about the different assignments may be found in the Course Projects section of the course website. Course assignments include the following:

- **Orientation Quiz:** The Orientation Quiz serves as a means for students to verify that they are familiar with the course structure and are able to easily locate important course information. Students will be permitted several opportunities to successfully complete the Quiz during the initial weeks of the semester.

- **Baffled, Bewildered, and Smitten:** This is the introductory assignment for the Art 122Y course and, as such, represents an opportunity for the student to explore and reflect on the nature of his or her response to a selected work of contemporary art and to discuss his or her thoughts in relationship to ideas presented in a piece of recent art commentary.

- **Participation in Online Class Discussions:** Participation in the Online Class Discussions includes posting responses to class readings and assignments as well as engaging in the conversations that ensue. Students may also be asked to document and provide links to their responses to select course assignments (i.e., the Curatorial Project).

- **Module Exercises:** Module exercises vary in format and may include both written and creative activities. The individual exercises are described in detail in the Projects / Assignments area of the course website.

- **Curatorial Project.** A curator is an individual who organizes an exhibition by selecting works and placing them within a particular context or arrangement so as to create some kind of meaning. The Curatorial Project asks students to create an exhibition of digital art or design and to present it online using their personal PSU web space or to submit it to the instructor as a PDF, Powerpoint, or Flash-based document.
The contribution that each assignment makes to the final grade is listed below.

### Table 1. Art 122Y Assignments and Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Project/Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation Quiz</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baffled, Bewildered, and Smitten</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Online Class Discussions</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module Exercises (7)</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curatorial Project</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2. Final Grade Matrix

- A = 950 - 1000
- A- = 900 – 949
- B+ = 870 - 899
- B = 830 - 899
- B- = 800 - 869
- C+ = 750 - 799
- C = 700 - 749
- D = 600 - 699
- F = 0 - 599

**Evaluation of written assignments:** The particular criteria used in the evaluation of specific assignments may be viewed online in the Projects / Assignments area of the course website. In general, however, clarity of discussion, the conceptual structure and development, and a demonstration of an understanding and analysis of assigned readings and research materials are the primary criteria used in the evaluation of projects and assignments. Technical craftsmanship (i.e., grammar, structure, and spelling) is also considered in the determination of grades. Excessive or careless technical errors will compromise the grade received for a particular assignment. Electronic files sent as e-mail attachments will not be accepted.

**Submission of written assignments to Turnitin.com:** The written components for most assignments will be submitted by the instructor for review to Turnitin.com for instances of plagiarism or possible misuse of research information and sources.

**Late submission of assignments:** Each student is granted one “72-hour Late Pass” during the semester. The Late Pass grants permission to the student to submit one assignment up to 72 hours late over the course of the semester without penalty to his/her grade. After the expiration of the 72-hour period, the late assignment will be subject to a 10% penalty for every 24 hours or portion thereof that it is submitted late, including weekends and holidays. The student must notify the instructor of his/her intent to use the Late Pass a minimum of 24-hours prior to the assignment’s due date. The decision to apply the Late Pass should be reserved for serious situations in which the student is very ill (such as with influenza) or in the midst of a severe personal crisis. The Late Pass should not be used merely because of poor planning or time management.

All other papers or projects that are submitted late (i.e., past their due date and time) will be subject to a 10% penalty for every 24 hours or portion thereof that they are submitted late, including weekends and holidays. After seven days, no submission will be accepted unless extremely unusual circumstances warrant an exception and the student (or his/her authorized agent) has conferred with the instructor. Examples of such exceptions would include a student’s hospitalization or a death in a student’s immediate family.

**Participation**

Each student’s active participation in the Art 122Y course is of utmost importance. An important part of each student’s intellectual and creative growth takes place through effective communication between the instructor and the student and between the student and his or her peers. It is the responsibility of every student to stay in close touch with the professor and the teaching assistant throughout the semester and to actively participate in online class discussions and activities.

**Digital Electronic Media**

- **Course Web site, Online Readings, and Electronic Media:** Art 122Y has an extensive course web site that includes the course syllabus, schedule, assignments, and selected online resources including electronic readings and media. All students enrolled in Art 122Y are required to verify their access to the course web site.

- **ANGEL:** All students actively enrolled in Art 122Y have full access to select course materials and services available through the ANGEL course management system. These include integrated access to the external course website (i.e., course syllabus, schedule, and assignment descriptions); attendance manager; class communications; assignment drop boxes; and special announcements. Each student is expected to check the Art 122Y ANGEL materials on a regular and consistent basis.
• **E-mail:** Enrollment in Art 122Y requires that students have access to a reliable email system. The University provides free and ready access to electronic mail for all students and each student is expected to verify that his or her PSU access account is active and functioning. You are responsible for all information sent to you via your University-assigned email account and I advise you to check your email at least every other day, if not every day, to take note of course announcements or changes to the course schedule. If you choose to forward your University email account, you are still responsible for all the information sent to your University email account. Except in the case of emergencies or unavoidable problems, course announcements made via email will be made well in advance. Excuses that you did not check your e-mail, and hence did not know about a course announcement, will not be accepted as justification for missing class activities or assignment deadlines. Please make sure that you include reference to “Art 122Y” in the subject line of your message and your full name and section number at the end of any email messages that you send to the instructor.

**A Note on Technical Skills**

Some students will come to Art 122Y with advanced digital media production skills, others with very limited skills. This is okay and to be expected. Advanced skills are not necessarily needed in order to work successfully in the course. Digital technologies are numerous and complex. They change very quickly and keeping up with them is a continuous, never ending task. The most important technical skills you can learn are: how to teach yourself what you need to know in order to realize your ideas; how to find ways to realize your ideas given the skills and resources you reasonably can acquire; and how to partner or collaborate with others who have skills you need but don’t have and don’t want to acquire yourself. That said, there is no substitute for learning by doing. Seek out opportunities to learn new technical skills and to apply them to real situations or problems and always strive to maintain a playful and experimental attitude toward the technologies you use.

**Technical Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating System</th>
<th>Windows 2000/XP or Vista, Mac OS X 10.2 or higher (10.3 or higher recommended)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Processor</td>
<td>1 GHz or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>256 MB of RAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard Drive Space</td>
<td>500 MB free disk space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Browser**

Mac OS X: Firefox, Safari (current version)
Windows: Firefox, Safari, Internet Explorer (current version)

Note: Cookies, Java, and JavaScript must be enabled. Pop-up Blockers should be configured to permit new windows from Penn State web sites.
Due to nonstandard handling of CSS, JavaScript and caching, we do not support using Internet Explorer 6 as your browser.
Firefox and Safari are preferred as they will provide the fastest experience possible for e-Learning Institute courses.

**Plug-ins**
Adobe Reader ([Download from Adobe](https://get.adobe.com/reader/)), Flash Player ([Download from Adobe](https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/))

**Additional Software**
Microsoft Office, [itunes/Quicktime](https://itunes.apple.com/)

**Internet Connection**
Broadband (cable or DSL) connection required

**Printer**
Access to graphics-capable printer

**DVD-ROM**
Required

**Sound Card, Microphone, and Speakers**
Required

**Monitor**
Monitor (Capable of at least 1024 x 768 resolution)
Technical Assistance

If you encounter any technical issues regarding this course please contact the appropriate people as listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues/Complications</th>
<th>Point of Contact</th>
<th>Method of Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions/concerns regarding the course content</td>
<td>Dr. Janet Hartranft (Course Instructor)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jlh18@psu.edu">jlh18@psu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems pertaining to this course site</td>
<td>Megan Marut (Instructional Designer)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:msm26@psu.edu">msm26@psu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems resulting in Angel (quizzes not functioning, inability to access your course section, etc.)</td>
<td>Angel Support</td>
<td><a href="mailto:AngelSupport@psu.edu">AngelSupport@psu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Submitting Requests for Technical Assistance: When sending your initial request for technical assistance, it’s important to be as detailed and precise as you can when describing the issue—precise and detailed information may help speed resolution of the problem, sometimes resulting in technical support solving the problem within minutes of receiving your initial email. If the information you provide is not very detailed or precise, resolving the problem may require a series of emails (to obtain the right details to identify the source of the problem) and take days to resolve the issue. This can result in important deadlines being missed and valuable assignments receiving point deductions for tardiness. When submitting requests please include the following information:

Information needed:  
Good example:  
Bad example: 
Name and ID  
Jane Smith, js101  
Hey there its Jimmy, my course site isn’t working can you fix it? 
Course Title, section #, and group or team assignment  
Physics 101, section 2, team 1  
Browser and version  
Mozilla Firefox, version 3.0.7  
Specific description of the problem including any error messages you receive  
When I try and save content to the page I get an error message that says “Unable to upload content at this time.”  

Communicating Online

Communicating online is an everyday activity for most of us; so much so that the tone and form of our communications oftentimes becomes highly informal and abbreviated. A breezy, informal communication style is fine with our friends or family (people who know us and likely understand our perspectives) but can become problematic when we’re trying to communicate with formal acquaintances (i.e., class instructors) or in situations (such as in online course discussions) where we might be trying to convey or discuss complex ideas with relative strangers.

Email Communications

Your online communications are considered part of a college course, so your writing style should conform to the rules of Standard English. The following points should be remembered when sending email in formal or semi-formal situations:

1. Introduce yourself — use your first and last name.
2. Clearly state your reason for making contact.
3. If you are responding to an email, include at least the beginning part of message to which you are replying.
4. Spell check messages before sending them or posting them online.
5. Refrain from using emoticons, slang, or instant texting terms. Never resort to using vulgar language.
6. Refrain from using all capital letters, it gives the impression you’re SHOUTING!
7. Ask permission before forwarding someone’s email.
8. Review/re-read the message to ensure the message is clear and the intent is appropriate.
9. Be professional and respectful — treating someone in a courteous and respectful manner encourages them to respond to you in a similar way.

The above points are adapted from Anna Divinsky, Penn State University, http://elearning.psu.edu/elearning/files/art_10_syllabus.pdf
Communicating in Online Discussion Environments

The following points should be remembered when posting messages in online discussion environments:

1. Operate from the perspective that everyone in the discussion is participating with the goal to create a lively, interesting conversation. Try your best to live up to that expectation.
2. You must be prepared to participate in the discussions—do the readings, review media that may be assigned and think about the issues or questions that have been posted in relationship to the discussion topic.
3. If you are not certain about the meaning of a comment, ask the original poster to elaborate or clarify what they’ve written.
4. Recognize and value the experiences, abilities, and knowledge each person brings to class. Acknowledge the diverse perspectives and viewpoints of class members.
5. Ideas are presented for discussion and that sometimes includes pointed disagreement. When disagreeing with the ideas of another, be sure that your comments are directed toward his or her ideas and not the actual person. Never use personal attacks to express your disagreement.
6. Use your comments, whether they be supportive or challenging, as a means to encourage the development of a conversation and not as a means to embarrass or silence others.
7. Be cautious about injecting humor into your comments and remember that it’s easy to misinterpret humor in written language. In voice conversations, our body language and the inflections of our voices help others to discern when we are being humorous.
8. A brief summary or reference quote from the comment you are responding will help provide a context for your comment and identify who you are responding to.
9. Don’t just jump into a long thread; review earlier comments and postings so that you simply repeat what others have written.
10. Take care to post your responses under the appropriate heading or thread.
11. Acknowledge the source of your information by citing your references. Provide links to online material that might help expand or illustrate your points.

The above points adapted from 1) Dr. Susan Shaw, Oregon State University, OSU Extended Campus at http://k12online.oregonstate.edu/tutorials/discussion_board.htm and 2) Website for Beginning Online Learners at http://www.emoderators.com/dltutorial/discussion_board_etiquette.htm

Controversial Subject Matter: Disclaimer

Contemporary art is often provocative and frequently explores topics in ways that may be unexpected and startling in nature. These characteristics can present distinct challenges to some individuals’ beliefs about art in ways that may, at times, be perceived as offensive. In this course, we will look at, reflect on, and discuss art that may include strong and / or explicit language; confrontational examinations of sexuality, religion, and race; nudity; and radical political viewpoints, etc. If you have any concerns, please consult the instructor.

Students with Disabilities

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities.

If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please contact Penn State’s Office of Disability Services (University Park) or Students with Disabilities (World Campus) for additional information and/or to verify your eligibility for disability accommodations. Appropriate documentation from the Office of Disability Services verifying eligibility must be provided to the Instructor before accommodations will be extended.

Academic Integrity

University Policies and Rules Guidelines states that academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University’s Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students’
dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the
fruits of their efforts. Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification,
misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the
University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others. [See
http://www.psu.edu/ufs/policies/]

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to acts such as cheating on exams or assignments; plagiarizing the
words or ideas of another (see definition below); fabricating information or citations; facilitating acts of academic
dishonesty by others; claiming authorship of work done by another person; submitting work completed in previous
classes; and/or submitting the same work to multiple classes in which a student is enrolled simultaneously.

**Plagiarism.** To plagiarize means to take the words or ideas of another and to present them as your own without appropriate
attribution to the author. It is, in short, a form of theft. Sometimes plagiarism is a deliberate act; more often, however, it is
accidental and the result of careless research or note taking. If you utilize the words or ideas of another (and you should not
hesitate to do so), be conscientious and responsible and acknowledge the source of your information within the text of
your paper and in the paper’s bibliography. If you are unsure about citing another as the source of an idea, it’s better to err
on the side of conservatism and acknowledge the source or sources for the ideas you are using. Direct quotations should
always be enclosed in quote marks and properly accredited.

**Special Fall 2009 Flu Protocols**

In compliance with Pennsylvania Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control recommendations, students should
NOT attend class or any public gatherings while ill with influenza. Students with flu symptoms will be asked to leave campus
if possible and to return home during recovery. The illness and self-isolation period will usually be about a week. It is very
important that individuals avoid spreading the flu to others.

Students with the flu do not need to provide a physician’s certification of illness. However, ill students should inform their
teachers (but not through personal contact in which there is a risk of exposing others to the virus) as soon as possible to
review policies for late submission of assignments.

If you have questions about academic policy-related issues, please call the Associate Dean/Chief Academic Officer of your
college. For health-related questions you can email Dr. Margaret Spear, director, University Health Services, at
uhsinfo@sa.psu.edu.
# Class Schedule

This section provides a weekly class schedule that includes associated topics, general activities, readings, and assignments.

**Dates: 8/23 – 8/29**

### Course Orientation and Introduction

**Readings:** Course Welcome Letter and Course Syllabus  
**Tasks / Activities:** Complete Course Orientation in ANGEL to be completed by 9/4/2009 at 5:00 PM.

**Dates: 8/30 – 9/12**

### Module 1: The Art World Expands

**Textbook Reading:** 1) Introduction in *Themes of Contemporary Art*, pp. 3 – 7 and 2) Chapter One: The Art World Expands in *Themes of Contemporary Art*, pp. 9 – 35  
**Online Readings:**  
**Reference Links:**  
**Activities:** Module Exercise #1 to be completed by 9/11/2009 at 5:00 PM, Discussion 1 Original Posting to be completed by 9/5/2009 at 11:30 PM, Discussion 1 Follow-up Responses to be completed by 9/12/2009 at 11:30 PM.

**Dates: 9/13 – 9/26**

### Module 2: Identity

**Textbook Reading:** Chapter Two: Identity in *Themes of Contemporary Art*, pp. 37 – 71  
**Reference Links:**  
**Tasks / Activities:** Module Exercise #2 to be completed 9/25/2009 at 5:00 PM, Discussion 2 Original Posting to be completed by 9/19/2009 at 11:30 PM, Discussion 2 Follow-up Responses to be completed by 9/26/2009 at 11:30 PM.

**Dates: 9/27 – 10/10**

### Module 3: The Body

**Reading:** Chapter Three: The Body in *Themes of Contemporary Art*, pp. 73 – 109  
**Online Media:**  
**Reference Links:**  
**Tasks / Activities:** Module Exercise #3 to be completed 10/9/2009 at 5:00 PM, Discussion 3 Original Posting to be completed by 10/3/2009 at 11:30 PM, Discussion 3 Follow-up Responses to be completed by 10/10/2009 at 11:30 PM.

**Dates: 10/11 – 10/24**

### Module 4: Time

**Reading:** Chapter Four: Time in *Themes of Contemporary Art*, pp. 110 – 49  
**Online Media:**  
**Reference Links:**  
**Tasks / Activities:** Module Exercise #4 to be completed 10/23/2009 at 5:00 PM, Discussion 4 Original Posting to be completed by 10/17/2009 at 11:30 PM, Discussion 4 Follow-up Responses to be completed by 10/24/2009 at 11:30 PM.
Dates: 10/25 – 11/7

Module 5: Place

Reading: Chapter Five: Place in Themes of Contemporary Art, pp. 151 – 89

Online Media:

Reference Links:

Tasks / Activities: Module Exercise #5 to be completed 11/6/2009 at 5:00 PM, Discussion 5 Original Posting to be completed by 10/31/2009 at 11:30 PM, Discussion 5 Follow-up Responses to be completed by 11/7/2009 at 11:30 PM.

Dates: 11/8 – 11/21

Module 6: Language

Reading: Chapter Six: Language in Themes of Contemporary Art, pp. 191 – 231

Online Media:

Reference Links:

Tasks / Activities: Module Exercise #6 to be completed 11/20/2009 at 5:00 PM, Discussion 6 Original Posting to be completed by 11/14/2009 at 11:30 PM, Discussion 6 Follow-up Responses to be completed by 11/21/2009 at 11:30 PM.

Dates: 11/22 – 11/28

Thanksgiving Break

Dates: 11/29 – 12/11

Module 7: Science / Spirituality


Website:

Reference Links:

Tasks / Activities: Module Exercise #7 to be completed 12/11/2009 at 5:00 PM.

Schedule Changes

Although every effort will be made to adhere to the class schedule and content as presented, the instructor reserves the right to make changes to specific course content, assignments, and dates of presentation when it is in the best interest of the course objectives and goals.