

## **Art 507: Perspectives on Visual Art, Aesthetics, and Culture**

**Instructor:** Julia Schlosser, Lecturer, California State University, Los Angeles

**Class schedule:** 2 hours 50 minutes, [www.juliaschlosser.com](http://www.juliaschlosser.com)

### **ART 507 - Perspectives on Visual Art, Aesthetics, and Culture (3)**

Inquiries into the nature of and relationships among visual art, aesthetics, and culture from various theoretical, philosophical, socio-cultural, and political perspectives.

Topic: Since the 1960s, what strategies have artists used to incorporate the urban, public environment of Los Angeles into their artwork?

Through the exploration of four current art exhibitions, students will examine the methodologies of a variety of artists who engage the urban environment of Los Angeles. Then through critical readings, writing gallery reviews and reading summaries and classroom discussions, students will develop topically-based artist projects for presentation to the class.

### **Areas of Evaluation and Grading:**

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Your grade will be determined by the thoughtfulness and depth of your **written responses** to gallery exhibitions and assigned readings and your **participation** in the group discussions for each assigned reading. Instead of a mid-term or final exam there will be an **Artist Project** due at the end of the quarter.

**Written Responses:** You will be required to write a brief summary of each assigned reading, ***in your own words***. You will also formulate two questions of your own from each reading. These questions will be used to generate class discussion. The written responses along with your questions must be typed and **TWO copies** will be turned in at the beginning of class. Do not quote from the text directly. Instead put the text into your own words.

Each summary/gallery review is due at the beginning of the week in which we discuss the article(s) in class. If you don't have your summary/gallery review at the beginning of class on the day it is due, you will be marked down. Written responses to readings are accepted only on the day that the reading is discussed in class. Gallery reports are also due at the beginning of class, and will be marked down if handed in late. Your written responses to readings should be 1+ page double-spaced, size 12 font with one inch margins. Gallery reviews should be 2 to 3 pages in length, double-spaced, size 12 font with one inch margins.

4 gallery reviews

4 reading summaries

**Classroom Participation:** The class will be divided into study groups and part of each meeting will be devoted to small group conversations on the topic of the day as well as class discussion and presentation of related visuals. You are expected to attend each class with your completed written responses and be prepared to participate in the discussions, as a significant part of your grade will be based on active participation and attendance at field trips. I will take roll by 4:30 PM and late arrivals will be downgraded. If you are tardy to class, you will lose participation points. If you are more than 15 minutes late or leave more than 15 minutes early you will lose

your total attendance points for that week. You must be in the classroom when roll is taken or you will be counted as absent. If you are late to class or are not present when roll is taken, it is your responsibility to speak to me at the end of the class period and sign the late-roll sheet. If you forget, it will not be possible to sign the late-roll sheet after the class period in which you are tardy, and you will lose your attendance points for that week. If you have an unexcused absence (without university-approved documentation), you will lose your attendance and participation points for that week.

### **Artist Project:**

You have two options for your Artist Project. The first is to create an artwork of your own which engages the urban environment of Los Angeles in some way. The second is to develop a research project based on the topics suggested or an approved topic of your own. For each option you must present your findings to the class in a visual presentation, hand in a written essay, assign an appropriate reading to the class (which is due the week before your presentation) and lead a focused classroom discussion on your topic on the day of your presentation. Your presentation should include an historical overview contextualizing your project or artwork within art produced using LA as subject matter since the 1960s and a theoretical context as well.

If you miss your time slot for the visual presentation without a university-approved excuse and documentation, it may not be possible to reschedule your time slot and you will lose these points. **\*\*ALL written essays are due on the day of your visual presentation.\*\***

### **Grading:**

Written Responses: 40% Each of your written responses will be given a mark for points to be totaled at the end of the quarter.

Fieldtrip/Class Participation and Attendance: 30% You will be given a mark for points for each class meeting to be totaled at the end of the quarter.

Artist Project: 30% Half of the 30 points will be for the visual presentation and the other half for the written essay.

**CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:** Please be courteous to the professor and to fellow students. Please arrive on time to each class. Please respect your fellow classmates. **DO NOT** leave class to take phone calls or for any reason other than an emergency.

**\*\*CELL PHONES AND PAGERS MUST BE COMPLETELY TURNED OFF DURING CLASS TIME.\*\***

You are always welcome to ask me questions and to participate in our in-class discussion groups. However, please refrain from side conversations that are distracting to your fellow students.

**Penalties for Academic Dishonesty:** University policies on academic dishonesty are listed in the university catalog. Here at the university we take cheating and plagiarism seriously.

**PLEASE** be aware that if you use another person's words without quoting your source or if you

paraphrase another person's ideas and claim that they are your own, this is considered **PLAGIARISM/CHEATING**, and you will be held accountable for the consequences.

Four Required Field Trips:

1. **Plains of ID: Mapping Urban Intervention in Los Angeles (with class, week 2)**

2. **Hammer Projects: Mark Flores (with class, week 3)**

**Exhibition: All of this and nothing**

Film program **We are a camera: Films selected by Mark Flores**

3. **Vija Celmins: Television and Disaster 1964-1966 (on own, gallery review due: May 4)**

Ahmanson Building, Level 2

LACMA, check website for hours and free days

March 13, 2011 to June 5, 2011

Also view Chris Burden, *Urban Lights* while at LACMA

4. **William Leavitt: Theater Objects (on own, gallery review due: May 18)**

March 13 to July 3, 2011

Grand Avenue *and*

**Art in the Streets**

April 17 to August 8, 2011

The Geffen Contemporary

Museum of Contemporary Art

Check website for free day, both shows for one admission

#### **Potential Research Project Topics:**

\*Vija Celmins and Pop Art in LA during the 1960s\*

\*since we will take a field trip to LACMA to see the Vija Celmins show, I would like for someone to take this topic

\*Art in the Streets: Street Art in LA in the 1970s, 80s, 90s, now

\*since we will take a field trip to MOCA to see this show, I would like for one or more people to take this topic

\*The Los Angeles River: many artists have worked on this topic

Anthony Hernandez, John Humble, large-scale public art projects etc.

\*Public Art in Los Angeles: How it has changed over time since the 1960s?

Some specific aspect of Public Art in Los Angeles (see Miwon Kwon)

\*Site specific art in Los Angeles, how is this different than Public Art?

\*Artists from the *Plains of ID* show

\*William Leavitt, see MOCA show

\*Activist art in Los Angeles: Urban Intervention, Guerilla art, Chicano movement

\*Environmental activist art in LA (see Kim Abeles: Smog Portraits, Joel Tauber, Fallen Fruit)

\*Gary Beydler

\*Documentary art in Los Angeles

\*How does the geography of urban Los Angeles affect the art made here? (see Banham)

\*The Flaneur: Walking/Driving in LA

(Fallen Fruit, Ginny Bishoff, Victoria Martin, Stephen Berens, Yoko Kanayama: all generate art by walking or driving in their neighborhoods)

\*Google earth, Center for Land Use Interpretation (CLUI)

### **Selected Texts:**

Ault, *Come Alive: The Spirited Art of Sister Corita*

Francis Alys, *The Historic Centre of Mexico City*

*Politics of Rehearsal*

(Although Alys is not working in Los Angeles, he has employed a series of innovative strategies to incorporate the city into his work.)

Reyner Banham *Los Angeles: The architecture of four ecologies*

Nick Barley, *Breathing Cities: The Architecture of Movement*

(Nothing specific about Los Angeles, but may help generate project ideas)

Stephanie Barron, ed. *Reading California: Art, Image and Identity, 1900-2000*

Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*

*Ecology of Fear*

Harry Gamboa, Jr. *Urban Exile: Collected Writings of Harry Gamboa Jr.*

See also Gronk, Willie Heron, Patssi Valdez, Asco

Gloria Gerace, ed., *Urban Surprises: A Guide to Public Art in Los Angeles*

Gordillo, Nicole *Alternative Art Incubators: Cultivating Collaboration and Innovation in Los Angeles Public Art Practices* (unpublished dissertation)

Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*

Miwon Kwon, *One place after another: Site specific art and locational identity*

Joe Linton, *Down by the Los Angeles River: Friends of the Los Angeles River's Official Guide*

Lucy Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Sense of Place in a Multicentered Society*

Benjamin Lord, "Gary Beydler (1944-2010)," X-TRA magazine, Vol. 13, No. 3

Karen Piper, *Cartographic Fictions: Maps, Race and Identity*

(Consider the role of Google earth in the formation of Los Angeles' identity)

Jean-Paul Sartre, "American Cities" from *Literary and Philosophical Essays*

Allen J. Scott and Edward W. Soja, eds. *The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century*

Erika Suderburg, *Space Site Intervention: Situating Installation Art*

Cecile Whiting, *Pop L.A.: Art and the City in the 1960s*

### **Gallery Review #1:**

Write a 2-3 page gallery review of the *Plains of ID* show at the University Art Museum.

Describe the show, how was it installed in the gallery?

Describe the pieces in the show.

Describe the curatorial concept that generated the show (based on the information from the curator's talk.)

Briefly describe the artists in the show, using the materials I handed out or research on the web.

Make sure you properly attribute the sources you use.

Specifically highlight the types of strategies that each of the four artists/collective used to generate their artwork.

Compare those strategies to your own.

Have you ever used a strategy similar to those of any of the artists in the show?

Compare and contrast their strategies to those that you have used in a recent art piece.

Include a paragraph in which you give a personal response to the show. What was your reaction to the work? Like, dislike etc.

Include two questions to generate classroom discussion.