

About the Course

Course Title	ITDI 151H-01 The Politics of Gender in Art
Time and Location	MWF 2-2:50 PM, Booth (7A)-1400
Class Mode	In-Person

About the Instructor

Instructor	Dr. Heidi Nickisher
Office Hours	MWF 11-11:50 AM, in-person, by appointment. Booth (7A)- 3412. Other days/times can be virtually scheduled upon request. Emil me to set up an appointment; if you choose to meet virtually, I will send you a Zoom link.
Email	hcnfaa@rit.edu . I typically respond as soon as I am able, although no guarantees late at night nor on weekends. ☺

Course Overview

In this course, students will examine how issues of gender, including the role of women in artistic production, as well as race/ethnicity, have shaped and are shaped by the cultural landscape and all its norms and expectations. For example, in the Western world, when domestic partners are both practicing visual artists, how has society treated each? Who is well-known, who is not, and why? Through specific examples, students will encounter and consider issues of representation in terms of art/identity/politics. In the process, students will read challenging, sophisticated, and seminal texts and will demonstrate their command of such texts in short responses and class discussions. They will gain a new perspective on the role of gender and race in art history and their collective impact in and on culture/cultural production. By the end of the course, the student will have a broad knowledge of these issues/themes and the role that they play in the history of art in particular but also on culture in general.

Course Learning Outcomes

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- Identify key concepts by exploring pertinent local, regional, national or global issues through experiential and active learning.
 - Identify core arguments from published research and present conclusions.
 - Present pertinent issues and ideas related to the themes of the course.

Be Prepared to:

Confront artwork that makes you uncomfortable.
Participate in discussions.

Take risks in your thinking.
Work hard.

Some of the work that will be read about or viewed may be opposed to your expectations, to your tastes, and/or even to societal norms. It may be considered disturbing, irreverent, disgusting, graphic, shocking, etc. Continued enrollment in this class constitutes the agreement to view such materials. You are always permitted to leave the classroom space if you find yourself too uncomfortable to stay.

Course Materials

Required Texts and Resources

Presently, there is no text for this course. However, you will be required to read assigned pdf files as outlined on schedule below. These can be found on **MyCourses**.

Grading | Evaluation

3 exams: 15% each (45% of overall grade)

Each exam ("quiz" on MyCourses) will require students to write short answers to identify/analyze slides and longer essays on topics covered in lecture and from readings. These will be open notes quizzes – i.e., you may use lecture notes and return to the readings when composing your answers. Each exam will only cover the topics for that particular section of the course. In other words, they are non-comprehensive. Exams will be graded on a 100-point scale.

Summary/reflective essays on reading assignments (35%)

To ensure that you have a solid understanding of key ideas from course readings, and to allow me to offer feedback, **approximately every other week you will write a summary/reflective essay on the readings**. These essays will be graded on a 10-point scale.

Participation in weekly discussions (20%)

The topics of this course lend themselves to rich discussion and many perspectives. I hope you will engage with each other, respectfully and thoughtfully, in our class discussions.

RIT's Grading Policy can be found here: <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d050>

Based on the 100% total listed above, letter grades will be assigned as follows:

A >= 94%	A- 93.9 – 90%	B+ 89.9 – 87%	B 86.9 – 84%	B- 83.9 – 80%
C+ 79.9 – 77%	C 76.9 – 74%	C- 73.9 – 70%	D 69.9 – 60%	F 59% and below

Late Work

No late work will be accepted unless prearrangements have been made or there are extenuating circumstances.

Extra Credit

Typically, none.

Expectations

While RIT does not have a *requirement* for attendance, attendance *is* critical for success in all of your courses. RIT's official policy on attendance, <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d040>, in part reads: "Absences, for whatever reason, do not relieve students of their responsibility for fulfilling normal requirements in any course. **In particular, it is the student's responsibility to make individual arrangements** in advance of missing class due to personal obligations such as religious holidays, job interviews, athletic contests, etc., in order that they may meet their obligations without penalty for missing class." Understandably, therefore, **if one is not present, one is not participating.**

I expect you to engage with the modality of the course as outlined, barring any unforeseen issues such as illness, quarantine, etc. (More on this below.) These attendance expectations can be met by regularly attending class throughout the semester. But class attendance does **not** mean simply bodily presence. It *does* mean (1) being here at the beginning of class and remaining there until the end; (2) being alive as to what is taking place instead of texting, checking email, working on assignments for other classes, or whatever else one can get up to at a distance; and/or (3) contributing to discussions, asking intelligent questions, sharing any knowledge *you* may have of the topic, listening to and respecting the opinions and contributions of others, and generally promoting a healthy atmosphere conducive to learning. If you have questions about your attendance and participation in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Illness! We are barely into what some refer to as "post-pandemic," but as I'm sure you all know, vaccinated or not vaccinated, COVID is *still* making the rounds. Thus, this class will follow RIT's published COVID-19 guidelines for the fall, such as...

For students who test positive for COVID-19:

- Report your result to the **Student Health Center**. You will receive self-care instructions for isolation and will have access to telehealth and in-person student health services through the wellness portal. Currently, **CDC and Monroe County Department of Public Health isolation** is a minimum of five days, with day 0 as the day of symptom onset or positive test, whichever came first. Isolation may be longer if symptoms persist. Masking is recommended for an additional 5 days.
- Tell roommates and close contacts you have COVID-19, so they can take proactive steps to monitor their health.
- While in isolation, or if you are too ill to attend class, **please contact your faculty directly** to make up for missed work. **Your secure message from the Student Health Center can serve as an acknowledgment of your isolation time if required.**

If the latter is indeed the case, then I will provide recordings of class lectures. However, to be very clear: this is a fully in-person class! If you're not feeling well, have stomach issues, maybe a sprained ankle, what-have-you, then, of course, stay away if you are sick. In other words, do what you feel is best and appropriate for you to do. **Please be advised that I will NOT be providing recorded lectures for any absences other than for an official COVID-19 diagnosis.**

I feel very strongly that a university is a community of learners so poor attendance can undermine the work of the whole classroom. Students who fail to attend regularly should not have unreasonable expectations about their final grade.

Email / Communication Policy

While today's society has become very lax with communication, in an attempt to prepare you for the real world, I will not respond to emails that are written in a form that I cannot decipher or that come from unknown email addresses. And emails that more closely resemble text messages to your BFF rather than an email to a professor may go unanswered. Make your grandma proud - write a proper letter!

That said, emails to professors, to staff members, to potential employers, etc. should always include the following:

- To whom are you writing? Address them professionally! Dr., Prof., etc. If you do not know, Mr. or Ms. is acceptable but in college courses "Professor" is more appropriate.
- Course reference – of which class are you inquiring? Many of your professors teach more than one class. If it were for a job, what is the job title?
- Question(s), comment(s), etc. should be written in comprehensible English.
- What is your name? Professors, and others, would like to reply to you in a similarly professional manner. Do not assume that the RIT email system will tell us who you are – it often does not. YOU tell me who you are.

General Course Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

As an institution of higher learning, RIT expects students to behave honestly and ethically at all times, especially when submitting work for evaluation in conjunction with any course or degree requirement. We encourage all students to become familiar with the RIT Honor Code, <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/p030>, and with RIT's Academic Honesty Policy: <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d080>.

Accommodations

RIT is committed to providing academic adjustments to students with disabilities. If you would like to request academic adjustments such as testing modifications due to a disability, please contact the Disability Services Office (DSO). Contact information for the DSO and information about how to request adjustments can be found at <https://www.rit.edu/disabilityservices/>. After you receive academic adjustment approval, it is imperative that you see me during office hours so that we can work out whatever arrangement is necessary.

Course Copyright Policy

All course materials students receive or to which students have online access are protected by copyright laws. Students may use course materials and make copies for their own use as needed, but unauthorized distribution and/or uploading of materials without the instructor's express permission is strictly prohibited. [RIT Policy C03.2 Copyright Policy](#) addresses this issue. For example, uploading completed homework or other assignments to any study site constitutes a violation of this policy. Students who engage in the unauthorized distribution of copyrighted materials may be held in violation of the University's Code of Conduct, and/or liable under Federal and State laws.

Title IX

RIT is committed to providing a safe learning environment, free of harassment and discrimination as articulated in our university policies located on our [governance website](#). RIT's policies require faculty to share information about incidents of gender-based discrimination and harassment with RIT's Title IX coordinator or deputy coordinators when incidents are stated to them directly. The information you provide to a non-confidential resource which includes faculty will be relayed only as necessary for the Title IX Coordinator to investigate and/or seek resolution, <https://www.rit.edu/fa/compliance/report-title-ix-concern>. RIT Offices and employees who cannot guarantee confidentiality will maintain your privacy to the greatest extent possible.

If an individual discloses information during a public awareness event, a protest, during a class project, or advocacy event, RIT is not obligated to investigate based on this public disclosure. RIT may, however, use this information to further educate faculty, staff and students about prevention efforts and available resources.

If you would like to report an incident of gender based discrimination or harassment directly you may do so anonymously by using the online [TIX report form](#) or anonymously by using the [Compliance and Ethics Hotline](#). If you have a concern related to gender-based discrimination and/or harassment and prefer to have a confidential discussion, assistance is available from any of RIT's confidential resources listed below:

Spirituality and Religious Life

585-475-2137 (V)

www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/religion

NTID Counseling and Academic Advising

585-475-2255 (V)

<https://www.rit.edu/ntid/caas>

RIT Center for Women and Gender

585-475-7764 (V/TTY)

www.rit.edu/womenandgender

RIT Counseling and Psychological Services

585-475-2261 (V)

585-475-6897 (TTY)

www.rit.edu/counseling

RIT Ombuds Office

www.rit.edu/ombuds/contact-us

RIT Student Health Center

www.rit.edu/studentaffairs/studenthealth

Course Schedule

I have provided this syllabus as guide to our course and have tried to provide an accurate overview of the course. However, as instructor, I reserve the right to modify this document, if need be, during the semester. You will, of course, be notified of any changes through MyCourses and/or by email.

Week 1 (8/22-26)

Introduction: Discussion of syllabus, organization of course

Case Study: Carl Andre and Ana Mendieta

Reading for this week: (1) Jan Hoffman, "Rear Window: The Mystery of the Carl Andre Case," from *The Village Voice* (March 1988) and (2) Linda Nochlin, "Why Have there been no great women artists?" *ArtNews* (January 1971) for discussion in class. Also, **for Wednesday**, write a brief personal bio and reflection on your sense of your own identity and post to MyCourses under "Assignments" tab.

Week 2 (8/29-Sep 2)

Introduction to Gender Studies and Visual Culture

Case Study: Camille Claudel and Auguste Rodin

Reading for this week: (1) Carol Duncan, "The MoMA's Hot Mamas" (from *The Aesthetics of Power: Essays in Critical Art History*, 1993); (2) Ellen Fernandez-Sacco, "Museums" (from *A Companion to Gender Studies*, 2017); (3) Laura Gascoigne, "A Woman of Genius" (from *The Spectator*, 2017); and (4) Kristen Frederickson, "Carving out a place: Gendered critical descriptions of Camille Claudel and her sculptures" (from *Word & Image*, 2012)

Monday: Guest Lecture: "Artist as Working (New) Mother" (tentative)

Friday: Summary/Reflections due

Week 3 (9/5-9/9)

Gender, Class, and Display Part I: Masculinities

NO CLASS Monday, Labor Day

Readings: (1) Andrew Perchuk, "Pollock and Postwar Masculinity"; (2) Anne M. Wagner, "Lee Krasner as L.K."; and (3) Steve Edwards, ed., "Gender and Art," from *Art and Its Histories*.

Week 4 (9/12-16)

cont'd.;

Friday: Summary/Reflections due

Week 5 (9/19-23)

Readings: (1) Norman Bryson, "Géricault and 'Masculinity'," *Visual Culture:*

Images and Interpretations, ed. Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (Hanover, NH and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), pp. 228-259; and (2) Tamar Garb, "Masculinity, Muscularity and Modernity in Caillebotte's Male Figures," *In Visible Touch: Modernism and Masculinity*, ed. Terry Smith (Chicago: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 53-74.

Week 6 (9/26-30)

Gender, Class, and Display Part II: Female Sexuality

Reading: Sander Gilman, "The Hottentot and the Prostitute: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality," *Race-ing Art History*, Kimberly Pinder, ed. (London: Routledge, 2002).

Friday: 1st "quiz" (midterm exam #1)

Week 7 (10/3-7)

Gender, Class, and Display Part III: Female Embodiment in Surrealist Art

Reading: Mary Ann Caws, "Ladies Shot and Painted," *The Expanding Discourse*, Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, eds. (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

Friday: NO CLASS; Summary/Reflections due

Week 8 (10/10-14)

Questioning Constructions of Race and Gender

NO CLASS Monday, Fall Break

Readings: (1) Janice Helland, "Culture, Politics, and Identity in the Politics of Frida Kahlo," *The Expanding Discourse*, Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, eds. (New York: HarperCollins, 1992) and (2) Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gomez-Pena, "The Other History of Intercultural Performance," *English is Broken Here* (New York: The New Press, 1995).

Week 9 (10/17-21)

cont'd.

Friday: Summary/Reflections due

Week 10 (10/24-28)

Public Space and the Performative

Readings: (1) Nancy Nenno, "Femininity, the Primitive, and Modern Urban Space: Josephine Baker in Berlin," *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*, ed. by Katharina von Ankum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 145-161 and (2) Elizabeth Otto, "Real Men Wear Uniforms: Photomontage, Postcards, and Military Visual Culture in Early Twentieth-Century Germany," *Contemporaneity* Vol. 2, No. 1 (2012).

Week 11 (10/31-11/4)

Monday: 2nd "quiz" (midterm exam #2); no class meeting

Reading: A selection from the "Introduction" and "Rose is a Rose is a Rose: Gender Performance in Photography" from Jennifer Blessing, ed., *Rose is a Rose is a Rose: Gender Performance in Photography* (NY: Guggenheim, 1997).
Reading: Rodríguez, Xuxa "Listening to Ana," *Archives of American Art Journal* Fall 2021, Vol. 60 Issue 2, p46-61.

Wednesday, class cancelled – meet instead at Wegman's (MAGIC) theater at 6 p.m. Filmmaker Raquel Cecilia Mendieta (and Ana's niece) will visit RIT to share her years-long project of restoring/archiving Ana's original moving image works.

Friday: see above

Week 12 (11/7-11) Reading: Barbara Bloemink, "Florine Stettheimer: Hiding in Plain Sight," *Women in Dada: Essays on Sex, Gender, and Identity*, ed. Naomi Sawelson-Gorse (Cambridge: MIT Press, c1998).

Friday: Summary/Reflections due

Week 13 (11/14-18) **Queer Identities**

Readings: (1) Jan Zita Grover, "Dykes in Context: Some Problems in Minority Representation," *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, ed. Richard Bolton (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 1989), pp. 163-202; and (2) Richard Meyer, "Most Wanted Men: Homoeroticism and the Secret of Censorship in Early Warhol," *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), pp. 95-158

Week 14 (11-21) **cont'd.**

NO CLASS Wednesday and Friday, Thanksgiving Break

Week 15 (11/28-12/2) **Questioning Constructions of Race and Gender – Part II**

Readings: (1) Adrian Piper, "Passing for White, Passing for Black," *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age*, ed. Ella Shohat (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 75-112; and (2) Adrian Piper, "The Triple Negation of Colored Artists," *Out of Order, Out of Sight: Selected Writings in Meta-Art, 1968-1992* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), pp. 160-173.

Friday: Summary/Reflections due

Week 16 (12/5) **LAST REGULAR CLASS MEETING**

Reading (tentative): John B. Ravenal, "Shirin Neshat: Double Vision," in Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, eds., *Reclaiming Female Agency: Feminist Art History after Postmodernism* (2005), pp. 447-458.

Wednesday, 12/14 **3rd "quiz" (FINAL EXAM), 10:45 AM-1:15 PM**