

The Artist in Contemporary Culture

ART 2

Spring 2026 Section 82 Fully Online 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/22/2026

Course Description and Requisites

Introduces art beginners to roles that artists play in contemporary culture. Critical readings and problem-solving: principles of form and theory and research applied to real-world situations confronted by contemporary artists. Orientation to SJSU.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

Classroom Protocol

The class should be a safe space for every student to learn, express and grow. The environment should be a medium for self-discovery, doubt, experimentation and new challenges. Through basic empathy and respect, deep conversations about philosophy, artistic concept and content, and visual communications should be at the center of every interaction and conversation.

You should be on time, prepared for class and prepared to give your full attention. It is equally important that you have eaten, used the facilities and have had proper sleep the night before so that you can fully engage with the teacher and your fellow students. If for any reason you miss a class or any portion thereof, it is your responsibility to review Canvas, speak with your fellow classmates, or come to my office hours to understand what you need to do to remain current with all lessons.

Cell phones, music devices and any other distractions to yourself and others around you are not permitted unless approved for class purposes. If improperly used your participation grade will be affected.

Since each class will be taught via zoom, each student needs to have their camera on, microphone off when not speaking, and be engaged. This is a professional educational setting, so attire and actions during class should be commensurate. In other words, no drinking of alcohol, looking at other technology (telephone, TV, etc.) or inappropriate behavior will be tolerated. Remember, you are attending a college course, so please maintain respect for the institution, yourself and fellow students, and the professor.

No class will be recorded to allow every student the opportunity to freely express themselves. If you need to tape or record any portion of class, each student must follow University protocol with announcements and permissions.

University Policies

General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU's policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises. See [University Policy S90-5](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf>. More detailed information on a variety of related topics is available in the [SJSU catalog](#), at <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html>. In general, it is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not serve to address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as a next step.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's [Catalog Policies](#) section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the [Academic Calendars webpage](#) at http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/. The [Late Drop Policy](#) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

[University Policy S12-7](#) <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- "Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material."
 - It is suggested that the green sheet include the instructor's process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.

- In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.
- “Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

Academic integrity

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf> requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](#) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. [Presidential Directive 97-03](#) at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center](#) (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See [University Policy S14-7](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf>.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the [Academic Success Center](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/> located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

SJSU Peer Connections

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit [Peer Connections website](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu) at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu> for more information.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook. (Note: You need to have a QR Reader to scan this code.)

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual,

couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

Program Information

Department Name: Art and Art History

Department Office: ART 116

Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/art

Department Email: art@sjsu.edu

Department phone number: 408-924-4325

Course Goals

Acknowledgement

We respectfully recognize that this University exists on the unceded, traditional lands of the Muwekma Ohlone, who have stewarded this land for generations.

Course Description

This is an introductory course examining the roles that artists play in contemporary culture. Through critical reading, writing, discussions and problem-solving, students will consider principles of form, theory and research as they are applied to real-world situations confronted by contemporary artists.

This course will be divided into four philosophical quadrants and relating assignments.

1. Identity
2. Body; performance, activism, interactive
3. Spiritual; personal, environmental, higher planes
4. Collaborative: artist collectives, partnerships vs. working in silos

Course Goals

Introduces art beginners to roles that artists play in contemporary culture. Students will encounter critical readings and problem-solving: principles of form and theory and research applied to real-world situations frequently confronted by contemporary artists.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Course Learning Outcomes for ART 2

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

CLO 1: demonstrate skills in creative problem solving, brainstorming, and visual communication

CLO 2: deploy their skills in visual research and in applying theory to new situations

CLO 3: demonstrate familiarity with the language of visual critique

CLO 4: expand their skills in writing to include formats of written proposal, formal description and analysis, and critical blog

CLO 5: decipher the cultural roles played by various contemporary artists

Course Materials

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

The main weekly reading will consist of subscribing to the free service e-flux.com. Additional reading assignments will be assigned on an as needed basis from a number of resources such as art publications, art websites, and theoretical texts. The goal is to read about current trends more so than historical text.

Other equipment / material requirements

Each student must have a computer with a functioning camera and microphone to be used for all zoom classes. All materials required to complete the artwork assignments will be at the student's expense.

Library Liaison

Michael Aguilar

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library

San José State University

michael.aguilar@sjsu.edu

(408) 808-2131

You may also visit the library website at: <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/collectiondevelopment/CDhumanities>

Course Requirements and Assignments

Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

Department Advising

For information about majors and minors in Art & Art History, for a change of major/minor forms and a list of

advisors: <http://www.sjsu.edu/art/> or the Art & Art History department office in ART 116,
408-924-4320, art@sjsu.edu

More Faculty Information:

MySJSU Faculty Center Tutorials: http://my.sjsu.edu/employees/employee_tutorials/faculty_tutorials/index.html

Canvas: <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/canvas/>

Canvas Faculty Resources: http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/canvas/faculty_resources_new/index.html

Grading Policy

Although this course will embrace flexibility and experimentation which are some of the benchmarks for success, there will be five main components that will be reviewed and evaluated throughout the semester. Each student will have ample time to make revisions to submit their best possible submission to receive the desired grade however quality and meeting deadlines will be paramount to receiving the best grade possible. Each component will comprise a percentage of your overall grade. The main elements for this course are: research / verbal presentation, conceiving and creating a performance artwork, curating a group exhibition, creating a collaborative based artwork, 3 presentations, and class participation. A full grade deduction will occur for every week the assignment is turned in late. Assignments will not be accepted after the second week past the due date. The assigned grade will be 59 points. Exceptions may be granted on a case by case situation.

Presentation:

Your five minute presentation should be a deep dive into your identity. Most importantly, this assignment should be introspective. Based on research, personal views, and class lectures and discussions, each student will need to deliver a five minute presentation on where they see themselves within the Art World. Are there biases or benefits you are receiving? What are the current trends and how can you optimize them for yourself or the greater good. The presentation may be created on PowerPoint, keynote or google slides to the class on zoom. DO NOT upload or send me your presentation. Please see assignment for detailed grading structure. CLO 1, 2, 3, 5.

Performance art:

This assignment aims to allow the student to work outside their comfort zone and also experiment in an art discipline in the periphery of the Art World. You are to conceive and create a new artwork but rather than an object you will create a live performance. The performance artwork must be documented through videos and photo stills. The artwork may be created for only personal expression, small viewing or

a large audiences. The artwork should address discussions on body; activism, performance, interactive art. Please consider breaking your comfort zone. Who is your audience is? It is preferable that you participate in the performance but you can also create and direct it instead. A link to your performance artwork will need to be emailed to me so I may view, comment and grade the assignment. NO ONE other than myself will see this performance, however students will have the opportunity to share them with the class if desired.

A 1 page artist statement explaining the thought behind the artwork, personal and / or social value and meaning, risks and challenges, and outcomes such as audience reactions or personal growth of overcoming issues should also be submitted with the link to your performance piece. CLO 1, 2, 3, 5.

Curated group exhibition:

Each student will play "curator" for this assignment. Based on class interaction concentrating on spiritual and environmental concerns, each student will curate a contemporary art exhibition. The exhibition will exist as a virtual show and accessible online through a dedicated website. You may use a simple and free website template on a free platforms or code a special website if you have the time and skill. The "curator" will develop their theme and make all the artist and artwork selections. Each artwork will require a caption and a narrative as to the value and importance of the artwork and how it connects to the other artworks. Naturally, through the selection of at least 8 artworks, your overall narrative should be palpable. You should cull from art history, fellow students and even yourself as the basis of your exhibition. At least half of your selected artists / artworks should be established artists with a professional exhibition history. Feel free to include yourself, if appropriate, however this is not a requirement. You will need to email me the link to your www.

All promotional materials such as poster design, social media outreach and press release will need to be created and utilized. CLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Collective artwork (with at least one other person) you must create an artwork and present it to the class at the FINAL to receive credit:

You are challenged to create an artwork through a collaborative process. This means rather than working alone in a silo, you will determine who to collaborate with and what artwork you will make. Materiality, narrative, scale is completely up to you. The only requirement is working with other people and/or artists. You may partner with family members, other students, past professors to realize your content based work on what was covered during the entire semester in this course.

You will need to submit a pdf. The pdf should include a 1 page narrative / description which includes your description and another 1 page with the conceptual underpinnings of the inspiration and hopeful outcome of the artwork. You may include information about the process and your successes and failures as a portion of either essay. In addition to the text components, please include overall photos of the artwork as well as detail images. CLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Presentations:

There will be three 5 min presentations that you will perform to the class. They are based on your completed assignments.

Class participation:

Each class will be very interactive, reactionary, and hopefully fun. Participation and the ability to share your thoughts in an unedited but constructive yet respectful fashion will help cut to the chase and get to the true substance of each lecture, discussion and idea. Each class will be divided into lecture and process time. The teacher will lead the lecture portion of the class followed by a Q & A period. In this period, it is anticipated that you will come with thoughts, images, and questions to further the discussion.

✓ Grading Information

Grades

All grades will be available on Canvas and as quickly as possible. Any assignment turned in late will automatically receive one lower grade per week late.

Grade Breakdown

Research project / Presentation 1: (10%)

Performance art: (10%)

Curated exhibition: (10%)

3 presentations: (30%)

Collaborative artwork: (20%)

Participation: (10%)

Grade Scale

A+ = 97-100

A = 93-96

A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89

B = 83-86

B- = 80-82

C+ = 77-79

C = 73-76

C- = 70-72

D+ = 67-69

D = 63-66

D- = 60-62

F = 59 and below

A = Excellent work

B = Above average work

C = Average work

D = Below average work

F = Unsatisfactory work

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Art 2 / Artist in Culture, SP 2026, Section 82

Below is week-by-week guide for the course however some minor alterations may be made on an as needed basis. In the unlikely event of a schedule change students will be given ample warning for any changes. This class will also be meeting twice a week – on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 - 10:15 AM

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/22 – TH	Introductions, review of Green Sheet, description of class learning objectives and grading procedure, review of class and school policies, preview of all the class assignments and deadlines.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
2	1/27 - T	Introduction of assignment 1 / Lecture on Identity Lecture on how to do a good PPT
2	1/29 - TH	Lecture on Zanele Muholi
3	2/3 - T	Lecture Judy Chicago / Jacolby Satterwhite
3	2/5 - TH	First assignment due: Student presentations
4	2/10 - T	Student presentations
4	2/12 - TH	Student presentations Introduction of Assignment 2
5	2/17 - T	Research "Performance Art"
5	2/19 - TH	Marina Abramovic / Performance & body art
6	2/24 - T	Lecture on Interactive art / Cao Fei
6	2/26 - TH	Lecture on Political art / Krysztof Wodiczko
7	3/3 - T	Lecture on Activist art / Tanja Bruguera
7	3/5 - TH	Performance art assignment due Student sharing of student performances
8	3/10 - T	Student sharing of student performances
8	3/12 - TH	Lecture on curated exhibition assignment Lecture on "Constellation" curatorial process

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
9	3/17 - T	Lecture on Kim Sooja
9	3/19 - TH	Lecture on Social Justice art / Minerva Cuevas
10	3/24 - T	Lecture on Environmental art / Olafur Eliasson
10	3/26 - TH	Curation assignment work time
11	3/31 - T	SPRING BREAK
11	4/2 - TH	SPRING BREAK
12	4/7 - T	Curated exhibition assignment due / Presentations of group exhibitions
12	4/9 - TH	Presentations of group exhibitions
13	4/14 - T	Student conversation about artist roles within the Art World
13	4/16 - TH	Lecture on art collaborative artwork assignment / Guerilla Girls / Colab / Fluxus / Chim Pom
14	4/21 - T	One on One with professor
14	4/23 - TH	One on One with professor
15	4/28 - T	One on One with professor
15	4/30 - TH	One on One with professor
16	5/5 - T	Students share Collaborative artwork assignment - in progress
16	5/7 - TH	Students share Collaborative artwork assignment - in progress

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
Final Exam	5/19 - T	Zoom / 8:30 - 10:30 AM Submit FINAL assignment